

10.2.1

Lesson 16

Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze paragraph 34 of “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (from “I hope the church as a whole” to “the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands”), in which King affirms the justice and inevitable success of his cause. Students explore how King uses rhetoric and the placement of the passage to advance his purpose.

Following an evidence-based discussion, students demonstrate their learning by completing a Quick Write on the following prompt: How does King’s use of rhetoric and placement of this paragraph advance his purpose? For homework, students preview the following lesson’s text by annotating paragraphs 35–39. Additionally, students continue to read their AIR text and prepare for a brief discussion on how they applied their chosen focus standard to their text.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RI.9-10.5	Analyze in detail how an author’s ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or longer portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).
RI.9-10.6	Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.
Addressed Standard(s)	
L.9-10.4.b	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grades 9–10 reading and content</i> , choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., <i>analyze, analysis, analytical; advocate, advocacy</i>).

Assessment

Assessment(s)
Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students respond to the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.

- How do King's use of rhetoric and placement of this paragraph advance his purpose?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Determine King's purpose in paragraph 34 (e.g., King's purpose in this paragraph is to claim the definite success of the civil rights movement; King's purpose in this paragraph is to establish the justice of his cause; King's purpose in this paragraph is to develop the idea of African-American history as linked to and echoing that of America itself; etc.).
- Discuss how King's use of rhetoric advances his purpose (e.g., King uses rhetoric to develop the idea of African-American history as linked to that of the United States. He uses repetition of the words *goal* and *freedom* in the fourth sentence of paragraph 34, to highlight the link between his movement's goals and those of America. Later in the sixth and seventh sentences, King uses historical references to highlight the fact that there were African-Americans in America before the United States even existed).
- Demonstrate how King's placement of the paragraph advances his purpose (e.g., King uses the placement of this paragraph to shift the tone of his letter: until this point, he has been justifying his actions and criticizing the white moderate and the church, but in this paragraph he makes the case for both the justice and the timeliness of civil rights action by highlighting both the injustices that African Americans face and their contribution to American history. By shifting the tone in this way, he increases the impact of his claims about the role of African Americans in the history of the United States).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- scorned (adj.) – treated or regarded with contempt or disdain
- heritage (n.) – something that comes or belongs to one by reason of birth; the traditions, achievements, beliefs, etc., that are part of the history of a group or nation

Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)

- foreparents (n.) – ancestors
- embodied (adj.) – given concrete form; expressed, personified and exemplified in concrete form

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<p>Standards & Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RI.9-10.5, RI.9-10.6, L.9-10.4.b Text: “Letter From Birmingham Jail” by Martin Luther King, Jr., paragraph 34 <p>Learning Sequence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of Lesson Agenda Homework Accountability Masterful Reading Reading and Discussion Quick Write Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5% 10% 5% 60% 15% 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the Rhetorical Impact Tracking Tool (refer to 10.2.1 Lesson 4)—Students may need blank copies of this tool if they have run out of space on their original tool.
- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 10.2.1 Lesson 1)

Learning Sequence

How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
10%	Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.
no symbol	Plain text indicates teacher action.
	Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.
	<i>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
▶	Indicates student action(s).
☞	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
ⓘ	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and assessed standards for this lesson: RL.9-10.5 and RI.9-10.6. In this lesson, students explore how King uses rhetoric and the placement of paragraph 34 to advance his purpose. Students engage in an evidence-based discussion and complete a brief writing assignment to close the lesson.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they applied their chosen focus standard to their text. Lead a brief share out on the previous lesson's AIR homework assignment. Select several students (or student pairs) to explain how they applied their focus standard to their AIR text.

- ▶ Students (or student pairs) discuss and share how they applied their focus standard to their AIR text.

Instruct students to work in pairs and to share their objective summaries of King's letter from paragraphs 10–33, comparing which aspects they chose to emphasize. Ask several students to volunteer to share their summaries.

- ▶ Student pairs share their objective summaries.

Lead a class share out of objective summaries.

- In the next section of the letter, King expresses his disappointment with white moderates and the white church who have failed to take a stand on desegregation. King criticizes the church and warns that it faces the judgment of both God and people, especially the young.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

5%

Have students listen to a Masterful Reading of paragraph 34 of “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (from “I hope the church as a whole” to “the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands”). Ask students to follow along and listen for rhetoric that advances King's purpose.

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently.

Activity 4: Reading and Discussion

60%

Lead a brief, whole-class discussion on the following prompt:

What is King’s purpose in paragraph 34?

- 🗨️ Student responses may include:
 - King’s purpose is to claim the definite success of the civil rights movement.
 - King’s purpose in this paragraph is to establish the justice of his cause.
 - King’s purpose in this paragraph is to develop the idea of African-American history as linked to and echoing that of America itself.

Instruct students to form small groups. Post or project each set of questions below for students to discuss.

Instruct student groups to read and analyze paragraph 34 (from “I hope the church as a whole” to “the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

- ① Consider asking students to number each sentence in paragraph 34 to enable them to reference the sentences more easily during discussion.

Paraphrase the first sentence of paragraph 34.

- 🗨️ I hope that the church will take a stand in support of civil rights.

How does this sentence build on and develop King’s ideas in paragraphs 26–33?

- 🗨️ Student responses may include:
 - This sentence develops King’s argument in paragraphs 26–33 that the white church should take a more active stand on civil rights issues. King criticized the white church for “stand[ing] on the sidelines and merely mouth[ing] pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities” (par. 30) and pointed out that the early church was “very powerful” because it involved itself in social issues (par. 31).
 - The phrase “this decisive moment” recalls King’s remark in paragraph 33 that “the judgment of God is upon the church as never before” and his warning that the church faces becoming irrelevant if it does not take a stand.
 - King further develops the idea that the church should act on social issues through the phrase “as a whole,” suggesting that it is not enough for “notable exceptions” to take “significant stands” (par. 26): the white church as an institution must do so.

Analyze the impact of King’s choice of the word *justice* in the second sentence of paragraph 34.

- King’s choice of the word *justice* (par. 34) to refer to his cause in sentence two shows that there is only one “just” position in the civil rights debate.

How does King use rhetoric to advance his purpose in the second and third sentences of paragraph 34?

- Student responses may include:
 - King uses repetition to emphasize his claims: “I have no despair about the future, I have no fear about the outcome of our struggle in Birmingham” (par. 34).
 - He uses repetition of the phrase “even if” to link the ideas of the white church failing to come to the aid of his cause and his motives being “misunderstood” (par. 34).

What relationship does King introduce in the third sentence of paragraph 34?

- King argues that the history of African Americans is an essential part of the history of America, because they both have the same goal, which is freedom.

How does King develop this relationship in the third and fourth sentences of paragraph 34?

- King equates the history of African Americans to that of America by widening the focus of his references: he initially refers to freedom in Birmingham as the goal, then broadens it to “the nation” of “America” (par. 34).

How does King’s use of the future tense in the fourth sentence of paragraph 34 develop the idea of inevitability?

- King’s use of the future tense in “[w]e will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham and all over the nation” (par. 34) implies certainty or inevitability that African Americans will have justice.
- ① Consider providing students with the following definition: *inevitable* means “sure to occur, happen, or come.”
- ▶ Students write the definition of *inevitable* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Which words or phrases are repeated in the fourth and fifth sentences?

- Student responses may include:
 - King repeats the word *goal* in the fourth and sentence.
 - King repeats the word *freedom* in the fourth sentence.
 - King repeats the word *destiny* in the fifth sentence.

How does King’s use of repetition develop his ideas in the fourth and fifth sentences?

🗨 Student responses may include:

- By repeating the words *goal* and *freedom* (par. 34), King shows that the goal of the civil rights movement is the same as the goal of America.
- King also repeats the word *destiny* (par. 34), which implies inevitability.

In the sixth and seventh sentences, what is King’s purpose and how does he use historical references and figurative language to advance this purpose?

🗨 Student responses may include:

- King’s purpose in these sentences is to show the history of African American people in the United States.
- He refers to founding events in U.S. history, the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth and the writing of the Declaration of Independence. He also uses repetition: “Before . . . we were here” (par. 34).
- He uses the image of Jefferson’s pen to increase the vividness of his reference to the Declaration of Independence.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider explaining to students that the image of Jefferson’s pen is an example of *synecdoche*, “a figure of speech in which a part is used for the whole or the whole for a part.”

What is the impact of the phrase “for more than two centuries”? How does this phrase build upon the idea that King has been developing in paragraph 34?

🗨 Student responses may include:

- King is emphasizing again that African American people have a long history in America.
- He is building upon the idea that he has been developing in paragraph 34 that the history of African Americans in America is longer than that of America itself.
- By building upon the idea of an African-American history in the United States, King shows that he and his associates are not “outsiders coming in” (par. 2) but truly Americans who deserve the same rights as other Americans.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider posing the following questions:

What common words or parts of words do you see in the word *foreparents*?

🗨 Student responses may include:

- *Foreparents* contains the word *parents*.

- It also contains *fore*, which relates it to the word *before*.

Define the word *foreparents*.

🗨️ *Foreparents* means “those who came before parents,” i.e. “ancestors.”

- ▶ Students write the definition of *foreparents* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

- ① Consider drawing students’ attention to their application of standard L.9-10.4.b through the process of using word parts to determine meaning.

Provide students with the following definition: *scorned* means “treated or regarded with contempt or disdain.”

- ▶ Students write the definition of *scorned* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

What is the impact of King’s description of the “brutal injustice and shameful humiliation” that African Americans have suffered in the United States?

🗨️ Student responses may include:

- King develops the link between past and present injustices through word choice. He has earlier referred to African Americans as being “abused and scorned” (par. 34), words which have similar connotations to “brutal injustice and shameful humiliation” (par. 34) and so he reinforces a link between modern African-American suffering and that of their ancestors.
- By emphasizing the part that African Americans played in the history of the United States—they “made cotton king,” for example—King shows again that African Americans are true Americans and deserve to be treated as such.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If time allows, consider including the following questions to build vocabulary acquisition skills:

What common word do you see in *embodied*?

🗨️ *Embodied* contains the word *body*.

Define the word *embodied*.

🗨️ *Embodied* means gave body to or made concrete.

- ▶ Students write the definition of *embodied* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

- ① Consider drawing students’ attention to their application of standard L.9-10.4.b through the process of using word parts to determine meaning.

Provide students with the following definition: *heritage* means “something that comes or belongs to one by reason of birth; the traditions, achievements, beliefs, etc., that are part of the history of a group or nation.”

- ▶ Students write the definition of *heritage* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Analyze how King uses the final two sentences of paragraph 34 to refine ideas developed throughout the paragraph.

🗨️ Student responses may include:

- In the final two sentences, King develops the idea of inevitability that he introduced earlier in the paragraph. Building on his earlier claim that “We will reach the goal of freedom” and his development of an African-American history as an essential part of American history, he contrasts the “inexpressible cruelties of slavery” with the mere “opposition” that the civil rights movement currently faces (par. 34).
- His use of the future tense in “the opposition we now face will surely fail” and “We will win our freedom” (par. 34) further creates a sense of inevitability.
- King also develops the idea that the history of African Americans’ struggle for freedom is the same as the United States’ struggle for freedom through his claim that “the sacred heritage of our nation . . . [is] embodied in our echoing demands” (par. 34).

How does the final sentence refine an idea from earlier in the text?

🗨️ Student responses may include:

- The final sentence refines the idea of a higher moral authority, which he introduced in paragraph 13. King refers to “the sacred heritage” of the United States and claims that the demands of African Americans embody “the eternal will of God.”
- King is again taking the moral high ground by showing how his cause is the same as other noble causes.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses. Then instruct students to use their Rhetorical Impact Tracking Tool to track and analyze King’s use of rhetoric in paragraph 34.

Instruct students to reread paragraph 34 (from “I hope the church as a whole” to “the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands”) in their groups and to answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

How does paragraph 34 shift the tone of King’s letter?

- In this paragraph, King shifts from criticism of white moderates and the white church to his hope for the future. While in earlier paragraphs he stated that “I have been disappointed” and referred to “blasted hopes” (par. 7) and “shattered dreams,” (par. 29) he now opens the paragraph with “I hope” and claims that “[w]e will win our freedom” (par. 34).

What is the rhetorical impact of this shift in tone?

- Student responses may include:
 - Through this shift, King emphasizes the timeliness and inevitability of progress and of the success of his cause.
 - Previously King has been justifying his actions and asking for the support of his addressees. In the second sentence of paragraph 34 however, he claims that his cause will be successful even without their support.
 - By shifting the tone of King’s letter, the paragraph undermines the position and authority of the clergymen to whom King is responding. King shows in this paragraph that neither he nor his movement need their approval, developing his claim in paragraph 33 that the church risks becoming irrelevant.

What is the impact of King's choice to place this paragraph here?

- Student responses may include:
 - By placing this paragraph immediately after a critique of the church, King offers a “closing argument” to that critique.
 - King places the paragraph after a long analysis in which he refutes criticism of the civil rights movement and critiques white responses to it. This placement strengthens King’s claim that the success of the civil rights movement is both inevitable and just through the contrast in tone.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses. Then, instruct students to use their Rhetorical Impact Tracking Tool to track and analyze King’s use of rhetoric in paragraph 34.

Activity 5: Quick Write

15%

Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

How do King’s use of rhetoric and placement of this paragraph advance his purpose?

Instruct students to look at their annotations to find evidence. Ask students to use this lesson’s vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses. Remind students to use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist to guide their written responses.

- ① Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.
 - ▶ Students independently answer the prompt using evidence from the text.
 - 🗣 See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.

Activity 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to preview the following lesson’s text by annotating paragraphs 35–39 (from “I must close now. But before closing” to “I beg God to forgive me”), using the annotation codes from 10.2.1 Lesson 1.

Also for homework, students should continue to read their AIR text through the lens of a focus standard of their choice and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of their text based on that standard.

- ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Preview the following lesson’s text by annotating paragraphs 35–39 using the annotation codes from 10.2.1 Lesson 1.

Also, continue reading your AIR text through the lens of a focus standard of your choice and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of your text based on that standard.

Model Rhetorical Impact Tracking Tool

Name:		Class:		Date:	
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Directions: Identify and record each of the following elements of the author’s argument in the text (or portion of text): central claim, supporting claims, evidence, and reasoning. Remember that evidence supports claims and reasoning connects evidence to a claim. Reasoning also may explain the relationship among claims or across evidence.

Text:	“Letter from Birmingham Jail”
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RI.9-10.6: Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

Rhetorical device and definition	Examples of the rhetorical device in the text (with paragraph or page reference)	Impact of the rhetorical device on point of view or purpose
Repetition	Repetition of “I have no despair about the future, I have no fear about the outcome of our struggle in Birmingham” (par. 34) Repetition of the phrase “even if” (par. 34) Repetition of the words <i>goal</i> and <i>freedom</i> (par. 34)	King uses repetition to emphasize his claims. Also, he uses repetition of the phrase “even if” to link the ideas of the church failing to come to the aid of his cause and his motives being “misunderstood” (par. 34). The repetition of “goal” and “freedom” creates a link between the King’s purpose and the ideal of America.
Synecdoche: a figure of speech in which a part is used for the whole or the whole for a part	“Before the pen of Jefferson scratched across the pages of history the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence, we were here” (par. 34).	Imagery highlights and increases vividness of the reference to Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence.