

10.2.1

Lesson 17

Introduction

In this lesson, students carefully read and analyze the final five paragraphs of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (from "I must close now" to "I beg God to forgive me"), in which King uses rhetoric to strengthen his claim that his cause is just and that his addressees are mistaken in their praise of the police and lack of support for the nonviolent demonstrators. As students read, they determine King's purpose for writing these paragraphs and explore his use of rhetoric to support this purpose.

Students participate in small group discussions to further their understanding of King's use of word choice and rhetoric to advance his purpose before completing a Quick Write on the following prompt: How does King's use of rhetoric in the final five paragraphs advance the purpose of the letter as a whole? For homework, students analyze King's use of rhetoric in a particular sentence from the text and continue their AIR text through the lens of a focus standard of their choice.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
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)	
W.9-10.9.b	<p>Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p>b. Apply <i>grades 9-10 Reading standards</i> to literary nonfiction (e.g., "Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning").</p>
SL.9-10.1.a-e	<p>Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues</i>, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</p> <p>a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of</p>

	<p>ideas.</p> <p>b. Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.</p> <p>c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.</p> <p>d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.</p> <p>e. Seek to understand other perspectives and cultures and communicate effectively with audiences or individuals from varied backgrounds.</p>
L.9-10.4.a	<p>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.</p> <p>a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.</p>

Assessment

Assessment(s)
<p>Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students answer the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does King’s use of rhetoric in the final five paragraphs advance the purpose of the letter as a whole?
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the purpose of King’s letter (e.g., to persuade readers to support direct action nonviolent protests; to gain support for civil rights; to criticize moderate whites who are not actively supporting—and in fact are resisting—King’s efforts to create change). Identify examples of rhetoric in the passage (e.g., emotional appeals: vivid language to describe the “inhuman treatment of Negroes here in the city jail” (par. 35); irony: King’s apology for not joining in the clergymen’s “praise for the police department” (par. 35); parallel structure: “[I]t is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends...[I]t is just as wrong, or even more, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends” (par. 36); etc.).

- Explain how these examples support the purpose (e.g., the vivid descriptions make it clear to King's readers, who might not have experienced police brutality first-hand, just what the African-American community is struggling against and creates support for his cause; King's irony makes it clear that the clergymen's response of praise for the police is wrong; the irony is also a criticism of the clergymen for their support of the brutal methods of law enforcement; the parallel structure demonstrates the logic of King's position and provides support for his methods; etc.).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- impelled (v.) – driven; urged forward
- provocation (n.) – something that causes anger, rage, exasperation, etc.
- indicative (adj.) – showing, signifying, or pointing out; expressive or suggestive (usually followed by *of*)
- disciplined (adj.) – having behavior in accordance with rules of conduct

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

- commended (v.) – cited or named with approval or special praise

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards: RI.9-10.6, W.9-10.9.b, SL.9-10.1.a-e, L.9-10.4.a • Text: "Letter from Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King, Jr., paragraphs 35–39 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Masterful Reading 4. Reading and Discussion Jigsaw 5. Small Group Discussion 6. Quick Write 7. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5% 2. 15% 3. 5% 4. 35% 5. 25% 6. 10% 7. 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)
- Copies of the Author’s Purpose Homework Tool for each student

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 text dependent questions.
	<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 the assessed standard for this lesson: RI.9-10.6. In this lesson students read the conclusion to Martin Luther King, Jr.’s, “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” observing how King uses rhetoric to strengthen his claim that his cause is just and that his addressees are mistaken in their praise of the police and lack of support for the nonviolent demonstrators. Students engage in evidence-based discussion and complete a brief Quick Write that assesses student learning.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

15%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they applied a focus standard to their AIR 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 then share how they applied their focus standard to their AIR text from the previous lesson’s homework.

Instruct students to form a new pair and share their annotations of paragraphs 35–39 (from “I must close now” to “I beg God to forgive me”).

Student responses may include:

- Exclamation point near “angry violent dogs literally biting six unarmed, nonviolent Negroes...slap and kick old Negro men and young boys” (par. 35) – noting the connection to brutality described in paragraph 11.
- Exclamation point near “refusing to give us food because we wanted to sing our grace together” (par. 35) – noting the connection to religious references throughout the letter.
- Exclamation point near “So I have tried to make it clear that it is wrong...to use moral means to preserve immoral ends” (par. 36) – noting the parallel structure and the connection to similar reasoning about just and unjust laws in paragraphs 12–18.
- Underlining of “One day the South will recognize its real heroes” (par. 37) – noting the power of the short phrasing following the long descriptive phrasing.
- Circles around “James Merediths” and “seventy-two-year-old woman of Montgomery, Alabama” (par. 37) – noting King’s use of references.
- Underlining of “My feet is tired, but my soul is rested” (par. 37) – noting the power of including a quote.
- Exclamation point near “when these disinherited children of God...the most sacred values in our Judeo-Christian heritage” (par. 37) noting the connection to religious references throughout the letter.
- Exclamation point near “precious time” (par. 38) – noting the connection to time throughout the letter.
- Exclamation point near paragraph 39 – noting the use of parallel structure, religious reference, and reasoning.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

5%

Have students listen to a masterful reading of paragraphs 35–39 of “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (from “I must close now” to “I beg God to forgive me”). Instruct students to follow along and listen for sections that are particularly powerful.

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently.

Activity 4: Reading and Discussion Jigsaw

35%

Explain to students that they are going to participate in a jigsaw activity. Instruct students to form home groups of five students. Instruct students in home groups to count off and then form new small groups

according to number. Each new group will assume responsibility for reading a different section of the conclusion and answering related questions.

Provide students with the following definitions: *impelled* means “driven or urged forward,” *disciplined* means “having behavior in accordance with rules of conduct,” *provocation* means “something that causes anger, rage, exasperation, etc.,” and *indicative* means “showing, signifying, or pointing out; expressive or suggestive (usually followed by of).”

- ▶ Students write the definitions of *impelled*, *disciplined*, *provocation*, and *indicative* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Instruct students within each group to form pairs to read their assigned section of the text to prepare for small group sharing. Provide each group with the questions pertaining to their assigned paragraph (see below).

- ▶ In pairs, students read and analyze one section of King’s letter.

Transition students to small group discussion. Instruct student groups to discuss the questions about the section they read. Explain to students that throughout the discussion, they should take notes about what has been discussed in preparation for a Quick Write assessment at the end of the lesson. Instruct students to take notes in their notebooks or add to their text annotation.

① This focused annotation supports students’ engagement with W.9-10.9.b, which addresses the use of textual evidence in writing.

- ▶ Students listen.

Instruct students to use their Rhetorical Impact Tracking Tool to track and analyze King’s use of rhetoric in their assigned passage.

① There are five sets of questions; each set has a different focus:

Question Set 1: Paragraph 35 (word choice, contrast)

Question Set 2: Paragraph 35 (vocabulary, ethos, understatement)

Question Set 3: Paragraph 36 (claims, parallel structure, reason)

Question Set 4: Paragraph 37 (word choice, repetition)

Question Set 5: Paragraphs 38–39 (word choice, ideas)

Question Set 1:

Instruct student group 1 to reread paragraph 35 and answer the following questions.

To what “other point” does King respond in paragraph 35?

- King responds to the clergymen's praise for the police force.

In paragraph 35, what is the impact of the word *impelled* on the tone of the second sentence?

- The word *impelled* gives the sentence an urgent tone and suggests that King had to respond to the clergymen's praise for the police department.

Based on what King says in paragraph 35, what can readers infer the clergyman said about the police department?

- Readers can infer that the clergymen said that the police should be commended for keeping "order" and "preventing violence" (par. 35).

How does King's use of the clergymen's words help to advance his purpose in paragraph 35?

- King uses the clergymen's words "order" and "preventing violence" to contrast these apparent good behaviors with the "ugly and inhuman treatment of Negroes" in the city jail (par. 35), which King goes on to describe.

What is the effect of contrasting the police behavior with the description of the protesters?

- Student responses should include:
 - The contrast makes it clear that the protesters did not pose a threat to the police.
 - The contrast makes it clear that the police were unjust in their "inhuman treatment" (par. 35) of the protesters.

① Differentiation Consideration: If students struggle to answer this question, considering asking the following questions:

What verbs does King use to describe the police force and its actions? What is the cumulative impact of these word choices?

- Student responses may include:
 - Verbs: push, curse, slap, kick
 - King's word choices make it clear that the police department's behavior was violent and unjust.

What adjectives does King use to describe the protesters? What is the cumulative impact of these word choices?

- Student responses may include:
 - Adjectives: unarmed, nonviolent, old, young
 - King's word choices make it clear that the protesters did not pose a threat to the police.

- ① If necessary, remind students of their work with pathos in previous lessons. Explain that King is appealing to his addressees' emotions of sympathy.
-

Question Set 2:

Instruct student group 2 to reread paragraph 35 and discuss the following questions.

What does King imply about the clergymen when he says that he doesn't believe that they "would have so warmly commended the police force" if they had seen what King describes?

- ☞ King implies that he doesn't think the clergymen would commend police brutality.

How does this statement impact King's tone toward the clergymen?

- ☞ It reinforces the tone King has taken throughout the letter that they "are men of genuine good will" (par. 1) who would not knowingly support something bad.

Remind students that this is an example of an appeal to character, or ethos. Remind students that appeals to ethos usually establish the good character of the author but can also appeal to the good character of the audience.

How does the final sentence of this paragraph help clarify the meaning of the word *commended* throughout the paragraph?

- ☞ In the final sentence King says that he cannot join the clergymen in their "praise" for the police department (par. 35). Earlier King says the clergymen "warmly *commended*" the police department (par. 35). The final sentence makes it clear that the word *commended* means "praised."
- ▶ Students write the definition of *commended* 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.a through the process of using context to determine meaning.

How does placing King's apology after the description of the police behavior impact the tone of the paragraph?

- ☞ Student responses may include:
 - Placing the apology after the description of police brutality makes the apology ironic because it is obvious that King would not commend this behavior.
 - The apology suggests disappointment, because it shows that he wishes the police behaved differently so that he could commend them (or that he wishes the clergymen knew better than to commend the police).

Explain that this is an example of the rhetorical use of understatement. Define *understatement* as “the deliberate expression of an idea as less important than it really is in order to create a desired effect, such as irony, emphasis, or politeness.” If necessary define *irony* as “the use of words to convey a meaning that is opposite of its literal meaning.”

How does King use rhetoric to further his purpose in paragraph 35?

💬 Student responses should include:

- King uses emotional appeals to further his purpose by using detailed descriptions of how the police were excessively violent against nonviolent protesters to support his position that they should not be commended.
 - King uses emotional appeals by making word choices that heighten the contrast between the police and the demonstrators to show why he must act.
 - King uses repetition to emphasize the violent behavior of the police to highlight why the clergymen should support King and not the police.
 - King appeals to the character of the clergymen to emphasize that they should not be commending the police.
 - King uses understatement to emphasize the clergymen’s mistake in commending the police.
-

Question Set 3:

Instruct student group 3 to read paragraph 36 and discuss the following questions.

What is King’s central claim in this paragraph?

💬 King’s central claim is that whether or not the police are “nonviolent,” they are working “[t]o preserve the evil system of segregation” (par. 36), so they are being immoral.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle to answer this question, considering asking the following questions:

What claim made by the clergymen do the first two sentences of the paragraph support?

💬 The first two sentences support the clergymen’s claim that the police have been disciplined and publicly “nonviolent” (par. 36).

① Consider reminding students that a claim is “an author or speaker’s main point about an issue in an argument.”

What is the impact of the word “But” at the beginning of the question in the third sentence?

💬 “But” shows that even though the first two sentences may be true (a concession), King disagrees with them in some way.

- ① Consider reminding students of their work in 10.2.1 Lesson 14, where they noticed King’s use of “But” to shift from concession to reproach.

According to King, why are the police being disciplined and nonviolent?

💬 The police are being disciplined and nonviolent as part of their work to keep segregation.

How does King use parallel structure to connect the demonstrators’ use of nonviolence to the police force’s use of nonviolence?

💬 Student responses may include:

- King uses parallel structure when he says that he taught that “the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek” (par. 36), suggesting that even if the police use the “pure means” (par. 36) of nonviolence, their ends, segregation, are still impure, so it does not matter.
- King also says that “it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends” and then goes on to say that it is “just as wrong, or even more, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends” (par. 36).

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students have difficulty answering this question, consider scaffolding their learning with the following sequence of questions:

What does King mean when he writes “the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek”?

💬 He means that desegregation is a good goal and that people working for desegregation should use good (nonviolent) methods to reach that goal.

How does King compare different ideas in the last two sentences of the paragraph?

💬 The phrases “it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends” is similar to the phrase “it is just as wrong, or even more, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends” (par. 36), but the meanings are opposite.

What does the phrase “it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends” mean?

💬 It is wrong to do something bad to achieve something good.

In what ways are these phrases similar?

💬 They have a similar structure; each phrase begins with how it is wrong to use certain means and each phrase ends with a description of an achievement. Both phrases talk about what is wrong about using particular means for particular ends.

In what ways are these phrases different?

- 💬 The meaning of the phrases is different. The first phrase means that it is wrong to do something bad for a good reason, and the second phrase means that it is wrong to do something good for a bad reason.

What is the purpose of King's last two sentences in paragraph 36?

- 💬 The last two sentences present a counterclaim to the clergymen's claim that King cites in the first two sentences. King explains that even if the police have been disciplined and nonviolent, they have still been wrong because they have been preserving an immoral end (segregation).
- ① If students have difficulty with this question, remind students that a claim is an author or speaker's main point about an issue in an argument and a counterclaim argues against this claim.

In what ways does King use rhetoric in this paragraph to further his purpose? Use examples to support your response.

- 💬 Student responses may include:
 - He uses concession by agreeing that the police have been disciplined in public: "It is true that [the police] have been rather disciplined in their public handling of the demonstrators" (par. 36). But King goes on to explain why this does not matter: They have been working to "preserve the evil system of segregation" (par. 36).
 - He uses a rhetorical question when he asks, "But for what purpose?" (par. 36).
 - He uses parallel structures and logos (appeal to reason): "the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek" and "it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends...it is just as wrong, or even more, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends" (par. 36).
-

Question Set 4:

Instruct students in group 4 to reread paragraphs 37 and answer the following questions.

What is King's purpose in paragraph 37, according to the first sentence?

- 💬 King wants to draw attention to the heroism of the demonstrators of Birmingham.

What is the impact of King's choice of the word *commended* in the first sentence of paragraph 37?

- 💬 Student responses may include:
 - The word *commended* recalls the clergymen's use of the word when they "warmly commended the Birmingham police force" (par. 35).

- The word *commended* draws a contrast between the behaviors of the demonstrators, who deserve to be commended, and the behavior of the police, who do not deserve to be commended.

How does King use repetition to advance his purpose in paragraph 37?

💬 Student responses may include:

- The second and last sentences begin with the phrase, “One day the South will” (par. 37) to emphasize that Southern values in the future will appreciate the heroism of the protesters. The repetition of “will” creates a sense of certainty about the future and the repetition of “the South” creates a sense of a unified South.
- The third, fourth, and fifth sentences all begin with the phrase, “They will be” (par. 37). By repeating the phrase King creates a sense that there are many people who will be considered heroes, not just one or two.

What word choices does King make in the last sentence of this paragraph to appeal to his particular audience?

💬 Student responses should include:

- He refers to the demonstrators as “disinherited children of God” (par. 37).
- He refers to the Judeo-Christian heritage he shares with the clergymen receiving his letter.

Question Set 5:

Instruct students in group 5 to reread paragraphs 38–39 and answer the following questions.

What is the effect of King’s explanation for writing a long letter?

💬 Student responses may include:

- It reminds the readers that King has been jailed for demonstrating and that he is suffering while they are in a more comfortable position.
- It reminds the addressees of their own references to time, and how they had suggested that King was acting too quickly. In this paragraph King makes it clear that he is not rushing; he has had much time to consider his actions and is confident that they are correct.

Why does King ask the clergymen to forgive him if he has said “anything in this letter that is an understatement of the truth”?

💬 He asks forgiveness because understating the truth might be “indicative of an unreasonable impatience” (par. 39).

Why does King ask God to forgive him if he has said “anything in this letter that is an overstatement of the truth”?

- He asks forgiveness because overstating the truth might suggest that he is “patient with anything less than brotherhood” (par. 39).

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students have difficulty answering this question, considering scaffolding their learning with the following sequence of questions:

For what does King ask forgiveness in the final paragraph?

- Student responses should include:
 - He asks forgiveness if anything in the letter is an understatement.
 - He asks forgiveness if anything in the letter is an overstatement of the truth.
 - He asks forgiveness for unreasonable impatience.
 - He asks forgiveness for patience with anything less than brotherhood.

How do *understatement* and *overstatement* differ in meaning from stating the truth?

- Student responses should include:
 - Understating the truth means not telling the whole truth.
 - Overstating the truth means exaggerating.

What connection does King draw between understating the truth and being impatient?

- King says that understating the truth might make him seem unreasonably impatient.

What connection does King draw between overstating the truth and being patient?

- King says that his exaggerating the truth might suggest he is patient with anything less than brotherhood.

From whom does King ask forgiveness?

- He asks forgiveness from the clergymen and from God.

What is the impact of asking the clergymen for forgiveness if he has understated the truth, but asking God for forgiveness if he has overstated the truth?

- Student responses may include:
 - It shows that King is apologizing to the clergymen if his “impatience” seemed “unreasonable” (par. 39), but he is much more apologizing to God if he was too patient in fighting for “brotherhood.”

- It reminds the addressees that King has criticized them for not fighting for “brotherhood” and that God is on King’s side.

Lead a brief share-out of group discussion, focusing especially on this final question and King’s use of understatement.

Activity 5: Small Group Discussion

25%

Instruct students to review the notes and annotations they made in their small group discussions before returning to their home groups of five students, each of whom has read a different section. Instruct students to review, in their home groups, the impact of rhetorical devices they noticed in their reading.

Instruct students to add to their Rhetorical Impact Tracking Tool to track and analyze King’s use of rhetoric discussed in paragraphs 37–39 throughout this discussion.

- ▶ Students work in small groups to identify and record how King uses rhetoric.

① Consider reminding students that this is an opportunity to work with standard SL.9-10.1.a-e.

Activity 6: Quick Write

10%

Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt, reminding students to establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone:

How does King’s use of rhetoric in the final five paragraphs advance the purpose of the letter as a whole?

Instruct students to look at their notes, annotations, and the Rhetorical Impact Tracking tool 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.

- ▶ Students listen and read the Quick Write prompt.

① Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.

Transition students to the independent Quick Write.

- ▶ Students independently answer the prompt, using evidence from the text.

💬 See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.

Activity 7: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to use the Author's Purpose Homework Tool to further explore King's purpose and rhetoric in paragraph 37 (from "I wish you had commended the Negro demonstrators" to "the most sacred values in our Judeo-Christian heritage"). Instruct students to use this lesson's vocabulary, if possible, in their written responses.

Also for homework, instruct students to continue 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

Use the Author's Purpose Homework Tool to explore King's purpose and rhetoric in paragraph 37 (from "I wish you had commended the Negro demonstrators" to "the most sacred values in our Judeo-Christian heritage").

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:	
--------------	--	---------------	--	--------------	--

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”
--------------	-------------------------------

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
Pathos (Appeal to Emotion)	<p>“if you would observe their ugly and inhuman treatment of Negroes here in the city jail; if you would watch them push and curse old Negro women and young Negro girls; if you would see them slap and kick old Negro men and young boys; if you would observe them...refusing to give us food because we wanted to sing our grace together” (par. 35)</p> <p>“They will be the James Merediths, courageously and with a majestic sense of purpose facing jeering and hostile mobs and the agonizing loneliness that characterizes the life of the pioneer. They will be old, oppressed, battered Negro women” (par. 37)</p>	<p>The vivid description of the police force’s treatment of the protesters supports King’s criticism of the clergymen for praising the police.</p> <p>King’s descriptions of the “real heroes” of the South emphasize the fearlessness of the protesters.</p>
Repetition	<p>“I don’t believe you would have...I don’t believe you would...if you would...if you would...if you would” (par. 35)</p>	<p>By repeating the word “would” King contrasts what the clergymen <i>would</i> do if they were better informed with what they actually <i>did</i> do (praise the police).</p>

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
	<p>“One day the South will recognize its real heroes...One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God” (par. 37)</p> <p>“They will be the James Merediths...They will be old, oppressed, battered Negro women...They will be young high school and college students” (par. 37)</p>	<p>By repeating “One day the South will” (par. 37) King calls on the pride of his Southern listeners.</p> <p>By repeating “They will be” (par. 37) King creates the sense that there are many people who are heroic.</p>
Ethos (appeal to character)	“I don’t believe you would have so warmly commended the police force if you had seen” (par. 35)	King begins his criticism of the clergymen for wrongly praising the police by assuring them that he knows they are good people or “men of genuine good will” (par. 1) who would not have praised the police if they had known the facts.
Understatement: the deliberate expression of an idea as less important than it really is in order to create a desired effect, such as irony, emphasis, or politeness	“I’m sorry that I can’t join you in your praise for the police department.” (par. 35)	After the vivid description King provided it is clear that he is not sorry that he is not joining in the “praise for the police department” (par. 35); in fact, the clergymen should be sorry that they did praise the police. This use of understatement to create irony points out the clergymen’s ignorance of the facts.
Contrast	“You warmly commended the Birmingham police force for keeping “order” and “preventing violence.” I don’t believe you would have so warmly commended the police force if you had seen its angry violent dogs...biting...nonviolent Negroes...if you would observe their ugly and inhuman treatment...if you would watch them push and curse...slap and kick” (par. 35)	The behavior of the police force is very different than the kind of behavior one would expect based on the praise the clergymen gave it for keeping “order” and “preventing violence” (par. 35). The contrast between the clergymen’s words and the police force’s behavior emphasizes the clergyman’s lack of knowledge about the facts of the case.
Parallel Structure	“the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek. So I have tried to make it clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or even more, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends” (par. 36)	Parallel structure allows King to compare the behavior and goals of the police to the behavior and goals of the protestors in order to show that the protestors are the more moral people.

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
	"If I have said anything in this letter that is an understatement of the truth and is indicative of an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything in this letter that is an overstatement of the truth and is indicative of my having a patience that makes me patient with anything less than brotherhood, I ask God to forgive me." (par. 39)	King uses parallel structure here to show that understating the truth and appearing slightly impatient is not as serious as overstating his patience and appearing to be satisfied with "anything less than brotherhood" (par. 39).
Concession	"It is true that they have been rather disciplined" (par. 36)	King admits that the police have been "rather disciplined" in order to make the larger point that their discipline preserves "the evil system of segregation" (par. 36).
Rhetorical Question	"But for what purpose?" (par. 36)	King answers the question for the clergymen by saying that the only reason the police force is being disciplined is to "preserve the evil system of segregation" (par. 36), so their discipline is not praise-worthy.
Logos (appeal to reason)	"I have consistently preached that nonviolence demands that the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek. So I have tried to make it clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or even more, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends." (par. 36)	King uses logic here to show that his methods (nonviolence) are a result of the ideas he preaches: "it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends" (par. 36). He extends this logic to explain why it is wrong to use moral means (discipline) for immoral ends (preserving segregation).

