

## 10.2.1

## Lesson 11

## Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze paragraphs 22–23 of “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” (from “You spoke of our activity in Birmingham as extreme” to “I was initially disappointed in being so categorized”), in which King continues his criticism of the white moderate’s lack of action to end injustice. Students analyze how King appeals to his addressees and uses rhetoric to advance his criticism.

Students demonstrate their learning in a Quick Write on the following prompt: How does King’s use of rhetoric advance his purpose in paragraphs 22–23? For homework, students annotate for every time they note the word *extremist*. Students also conduct a brief search into the people King mentions in paragraph 24.

## 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>
L.9-10.2.a	<p>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</p> <p>a. Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses.</p>

## Assessment

Assessment(s)
<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does King’s use of rhetoric advance his purpose in paragraphs 22–23?</li> </ul>
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify that King’s purpose is to criticize the white moderate for their lack of action.</li> <li>Identify examples of rhetoric in paragraphs 22–23 (e.g., the allusion “a more excellent way, of love and nonviolent protest” (par. 22); imagery, hyperbole, and pathos in “many streets of the South would be flowing with floods of blood” (par. 22); the allusion “the promised land of racial justice” (par. 23); parallel structure “[s]o let him march sometime; let him have his prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; understand why he must have sit-ins and freedom rides” (par. 23), etc.).</li> <li>Discuss how King uses these examples of rhetoric to advance his purpose in paragraphs 22–23 (e.g., King uses the allusion to draw attention to the fact that his addressees are not following this “more excellent way” (par. 22); this advances his criticism of his “fellow clergymen” and the white moderate by putting King on the moral high ground).</li> </ul>

## Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extremist (n.) – a person who believes in and supports ideas that are very far from what most people consider correct or reasonable</li> <li>complacency (n.) – a feeling of quiet pleasure or security, often while unaware of some potential danger</li> <li>repudiated (v.) – rejected with disapproval or condemnation</li> <li>ideologies (n.) – bodies of doctrine, myth, etc. with reference to some political or social plan along with the devices for putting them into operation</li> <li>Zeitgeist (n.) – the spirit of the time; general trend of thought or feeling characteristic of a particular period of time</li> <li>pilgrimages (n.) – journeys, especially long ones, made to some sacred place as an act of religious devotion</li> </ul>

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

- None.

## Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<b>Standards &amp; Text:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards: RI.9-10.6, W.9-10.9.b, L.9-10.2.a</li> <li>• Text: “Letter from Birmingham Jail” by Martin Luther King, Jr., paragraphs 22–23</li> </ul>	
<b>Learning Sequence:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda</li> <li>2. Homework Accountability</li> <li>3. Masterful Reading</li> <li>4. Reading and Discussion</li> <li>5. Quick Write</li> <li>6. Closing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 10%</li> <li>2. 10%</li> <li>3. 5%</li> <li>4. 55%</li> <li>5. 15%</li> <li>6. 5%</li> </ol>

## 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 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.
	<b>Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.</b>
	<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

**10%**

Begin by reviewing the agenda and assessed standard for this lesson: RI.9-10.6. Students analyze how King appeals to his addressees and uses rhetoric to advance his criticism. Students engage in evidence-based discussion and demonstrate their learning at the end of the lesson by completing a Quick Write.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Remind students of the work they did in 10.1 with standard: L.9-10.2.a. If necessary, reread the language of the standard (included in the Standards box at the beginning of this lesson). Explain to students that semicolons are also often used to connect phrases in a list.

- ① If students do not understand the terms *independent clause* or *conjunctive adverb*, consider defining the terms as “a clause that has a subject and a verb and can stand alone” and “an adverb that connects two clauses to show the relationship between them, such as *accordingly*, *however*, *next*, *now*, *otherwise*, etc.”

Ask pairs to skim paragraph 11 of “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” (from “We know through painful experience” to “our legitimate and unavoidable impatience”) and identify King’s use of semicolon.

- 💬 He uses semicolons to join phrases in a list.

Remind students that *parallel structure* is “using the same pattern of words to show that two or more ideas are equally important.” Ask students to discuss the following questions in their pairs.

### How does King’s use of semicolons relate to his use of parallel structure in paragraph 11?

- 💬 King uses semicolons to join phrases that all have parallel structure beginning “when you have seen/see/are” (par. 11).

### How does King use semicolons and parallel structure to advance his purpose in paragraph 11?

- 💬 The semicolons make all the dependent clauses into one long sentence, which emphasizes how overwhelming and long the horrific injustices and violations are. The parallel structure and repetition of “when you have seen/see/are” (par. 11) contributes to this emphasis.

Remind students to look for King’s use of semicolons and its impact in this lesson’s reading. Also, encourage students to look for opportunities to use semicolons in their own writing.

## Activity 2: Homework Accountability

**10%**

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they applied their 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.
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Instruct students to take out their written responses to the 10.2.1 Lesson 10 homework (What is King's purpose in paragraphs 22–25? Use evidence to support your response.) and share and discuss their answers in small groups.

- 💬 Students should identify that King's purpose in paragraphs 22–25 is to criticize the white moderate for their lack of action. Evidence to support this response may include:
  - King is "rather disappointed that fellow clergymen would see [his] nonviolent efforts as those of an extremist." He is disappointed, because he is "further convinced that if our white brothers dismiss as 'rabble-rousers' and 'outside agitators' those of us who are working through the channels of nonviolent direct action and refuse to support our nonviolent efforts," this will "lead inevitably to a frightening racial nightmare" (par. 22).
  - King asks his addressees to support African Americans in expressing their anger in nonviolent ways: "let him march sometime; let him have his prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; understand why he must have sit-ins and freedom rides" (par. 23).
  - King criticizes his addressees by asking: "will we be extremists for hate, or will we be extremists for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice, or will we be extremists for the cause of justice?" (par. 24). Because his addressees have accused him of being an extremist, with these questions he is showing that there is a good kind of extremist. Therefore, he is criticizing them for not being the good kind of extremist.
  - King expresses his disappointment with the white moderate by saying "[m]aybe I was too optimistic. Maybe I expected too much. I guess I should have realized that . . . still fewer have the vision to see that injustice must be rooted out by strong, persistent, and determined action" (par. 25).
  - King further criticizes his addressees by comparing them to "white brothers" who do take action to end injustice, saying they are "unlike many of their moderate brothers" (par. 25).

### Activity 3: Masterful Reading

**5%**

Have students listen to a Masterful Reading of paragraphs 22–23 of "Letter from Birmingham Jail." Instruct students to listen for how King appeals to his addressees.

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently.

## Activity 4: Reading and Discussion

55%

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

Instruct student pairs to reread paragraph 22, (from “You spoke of our activity in Birmingham as extreme” to “to a frightening racial nightmare”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definitions: *extremist* means “a person who believes in and supports ideas that are very far from what most people consider correct or reasonable”; *complacency* means “a feeling of quiet pleasure or security, often while unaware of some potential danger”; *repudiated* means “rejected with disapproval or condemnation”; *ideologies* means “bodies of doctrine, myth, etc., with reference to some political or social plan along with the devices for putting them into operation.”

- ▶ Students write the definitions of *extremist*, *complacency*, *repudiated*, and *ideologies* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

**In the second sentence of paragraph 22, why does King say he is disappointed? What is the impact of beginning his statement with the phrase “[a]t first?”**

☞ Student responses may include:

- King says he is “disappointed that fellow clergymen would see [his] nonviolent efforts as those of an extremist” (par. 22).
- By beginning this statement with “[a]t first” (par. 22), King indicates that later his thinking about being considered an extremist will develop.

**What does King’s statement that he “stand[s] in the middle of two opposing forces in the Negro community” suggest about his beliefs?**

☞ King’s statement shows that he believes he is not an extremist. His beliefs are between opposing, more extreme views on either side.

**What can you infer about “Elijah Muhammad’s Muslim movement” and “black nationalist ideologies?”**

☞ Student responses may include:

- Elijah Muhammad’s Muslim movement and black nationalist ideologies are dangerous, because they “come perilously close to advocating violence” (par. 22).
- The movement and ideologies are extreme and full of “bitterness and hatred,” because they “have concluded that the white man is an incurable devil” (par. 22). Whites would be afraid of the movement and ideologies.
- Elijah Muhammad’s Muslim movement and black nationalist ideologies attract African Americans full of “frustration and despair” who “seek solace and security” (par. 22).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

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Lead a whole-class discussion of the following question:

**In paragraph 22, what does King present instead of “the do-nothingism of the complacent or the hatred and despair of the black nationalist”?**

🗨️ King presents “a more excellent way, of love and nonviolent protest” (par. 22).

Explain to students that the phrase “a more excellent way” is an allusion. An allusion is an indirect reference, which can be a powerful form of rhetoric. Unlike with more overt references, the audience must draw conclusions and connections to interpret an allusion.

Also explain to students that this phrase alludes to a passage in the New Testament of the Bible in which the Apostle Paul speaks of having the true love of mankind as “a more excellent way” than having even the best gifts.

Instruct students to do a Turn-and-Talk to discuss the following questions.

**What is the impact of this allusion to “a more excellent way”?**

🗨️ Student responses may include:

- This is a passage from the Bible that his “fellow clergymen” are likely to recognize, so King appeals to their shared ethics or religious beliefs.
- By using the same words, King likens himself to the Apostle Paul, putting him on the moral high ground above his “fellow clergymen.”
- King’s “fellow clergymen” are wrong for opposing this “more excellent way.”

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle with this question, consider reminding them of their work with “moral high ground” in 10.2.1 Lesson 7. Also, consider asking the following question for additional scaffolding:

**How does this allusion relate to the “moral high ground” King established in previous paragraphs?**

🗨️ King uses this allusion to once again set himself and his actions on a higher moral ground than his addressees.

① Consider drawing students’ attention to their work with L.9-10.2.a as they analyze the use of semicolons.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses and instruct students to use their Rhetorical Impact Tracking Tool to record the rhetoric discussed.

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Instruct student pairs to answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

**In the following statement in paragraph 22, what connection does King draw? “I’m grateful to God that, through the Negro church, the dimension of nonviolence entered our struggle.”**

- King says that the “Negro church” is responsible for introducing nonviolent efforts into the struggle for desegregation (par. 22). By giving thanks to God, King draws a direct connection between God and nonviolent action.

**What is the impact of placing the allusion to “a more excellent way” with this statement?**

- Because King claims in the statement that nonviolent action comes through God, King puts the allusion to Paul’s words with this bold statement to defend to his claim.

**How does King use the allusion and statement together to appeal to his “fellow clergymen”?**

- Because King’s “fellow clergymen” are religious and would respect Paul, God, and the church, King appeals to their ethics and shows that he shares the same ethics as they have.

**What image does King create to contrast the “more excellent way”?**

- King says that if the church had not introduced “the dimension of nonviolence,” then “many streets of the South would be flowing with floods of blood” (par. 22).

**What does King mean by “the streets would be flowing with floods of blood” (paragraph 22)?**

- King means that there would be violent protests as opposed to nonviolent protests.

**What is the impact of this imagery?**

- King uses this exaggerated, disturbing imagery to emphasize the contrast between his nonviolent efforts and the extremists of the black nationalist ideologies in order to appeal to his addressees’ emotions.

Explain to students that this image is an example of a rhetorical device called hyperbole. Define hyperbole as “obvious and intentional exaggeration.” This image is exaggerated and disturbing, so it appeals to King’s addressees’ emotions of fear. This appeal to emotions is called *pathos*.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses and instruct students to use their Rhetorical Impact Tracking Tool to record the rhetoric discussed.

Instruct student pairs to reread paragraph 23, (from “Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever” to “I must admit that I was initially disappointed in being so categorized”) and answer the following question before sharing out with the class.



Provide students with the following definition: *Zeitgeist* means “the spirit of the time; general trend of thought or feeling characteristic of a particular period of time.”

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

**In paragraph 23, what are African Americans moving towards “with a sense of cosmic urgency?”**

- 💬 African Americans are moving toward “the promised land of racial justice” (par. 23).

Explain to students that this is another example of an allusion. Here the allusion is to the land that the Hebrew God is said to have promised to the Israelites.

Instruct students to do a Turn-and-Talk to discuss the following questions in pairs.

**What is the impact of this allusion to the “promised land”?**

- 💬 The allusion shows King’s addressees that African Americans will gain “racial justice” by God’s promise. King’s “fellow clergymen” likely understand and take God’s promises seriously. By suggesting that “racial justice” is God’s promise, King appeals to his addressees’ ethics and understanding of God and the Bible (par. 23).

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle with these questions, consider asking the following questions:

**What is the “promised land” for African Americans according to King?**

- 💬 “Racial justice” is the “promised land” (par. 23) for African Americans.

**According to King’s allusion, who has promised African Americans their “land of racial justice”?**

- 💬 God has promised African Americans their “land of racial justice” (par. 23).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses and instruct students to use their Rhetorical Impact Tracking Tool to record the rhetoric discussed.

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Provide students with the following definition: *pilgrimages* means “journeys, especially long ones, made to some sacred place as an act of religious devotion.”

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

Instruct student pairs to answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

**How does King use semicolons and parallel structure in the sentence beginning “So let him march sometime” to support his purpose in paragraph 23?**

- King makes a list of examples of the nonviolent ways that African Americans can “get out” their “many pent up resentments and latent frustrations” (par. 23). King uses parallel structure to emphasize to the white moderate that they should support these actions, because these forms of nonviolence are better than a “frightening racial nightmare” (par. 22).

① **Differentiation consideration:** If students struggle to make this connection, consider scaffolding with the following questions:

**How does King use semicolons in the sentence beginning “So let him march sometime”?**

- King uses semicolons to connect independent clauses, making a list of nonviolent actions.

**How does this sentence relate to the preceding sentences in paragraph 23?**

- King says that “[t]he Negro has many pent up resentments and latent frustrations” that “[h]e must get out” (par. 23), so King uses the semicolons to make a list of the nonviolent ways that African Americans can express pent up resentments.

**What is the impact of the image “prayer pilgrimages to the city hall”?**

- In paragraph 23, King uses the word *pilgrimages*, a word with religious meaning, to describe journeys to city hall, which is not a sacred place. By creating an image of religious people going to a religious place, King elevates demonstrations at city hall to the level of “acts of religious devotion.”

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses and instruct students to use their Rhetorical Impact Tracking Tool to record the rhetoric discussed.

## Activity 5: Quick Write

15%

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

**How does King’s use of rhetoric advance his purpose in paragraphs 22–23?**

Instruct students to look at their annotations to find evidence. Instruct students to use this lesson’s vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses and use concrete details. 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 reread paragraphs 24–25 and star every time they see the word *extremist(s)*.

Remind students that annotating helps them keep track of evidence they use later in the End-of-Unit and Performance Assessments.

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

Also for homework, instruct students to conduct a brief search into the following people King mentions in paragraph 24 and write a few sentences about each: Jesus, Amos, the Apostle Paul, Martin Luther, and John Bunyan. Ask students to use this lesson's vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses.

- ① Encourage students to utilize media and print resources at school, home, and/or public libraries to facilitate their searches.

- ▶ Students follow along.

## Homework

Reread paragraphs 24–25 and star every time you see the word *extremist(s)*.

Conduct a brief search into the following people King mentions in paragraph 24 and write a few sentences on each, using this lesson's vocabulary wherever possible: Jesus, Amos, the Apostle Paul, Martin Luther, and John Bunyan.

## Model Rhetorical Impact Tracking Tool

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Class:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
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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.

<b>Text:</b>	“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
Allusion: an indirect reference	“a more excellent way” (par. 22)	King uses the allusion to draw attention to the fact that his addressees are not following this “more excellent way” (par. 22). This advances his criticism of his “fellow clergymen” and the white moderate by putting King on the moral high ground.
Ethos (appeal to ethics)	“I’m grateful to God that, through the Negro church, the dimension of nonviolence entered our struggle” (par. 22)	By giving thanks to God, King draws a direct connection between God and nonviolent action. Because King’s “fellow clergymen” are religious and would respect the church, King appeals to their ethics and shows that he shares the same ethics as they have. This advances his criticism of the white moderate for not taking action to support nonviolence.

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
Imagery and hyperbole: obvious and intentional exaggeration; <b>pathos</b> : appeal to emotion	“many streets of the South would be flowing with floods of blood” (par. 22)	King uses this disturbing imagery and hyperbole to emphasize the contrast between his nonviolent efforts and the extremists of the black nationalist ideologies in order to appeal to his addressees’ emotions. This advances his criticism of the white moderate for not taking action to support nonviolence.
Allusion	“the promised land of racial justice” (par. 23)	The allusion shows King’s addressees that African Americans will gain “racial justice” by God’s promise. King’s “fellow clergymen” likely understand and take God’s promises seriously. By suggesting that “racial justice” is God’s promise, King appeals to his addressees’ ethics, thus emphasizing his criticism of their lack of action to support reaching “the promised land of racial justice” (par. 23).
Parallel structure	“So let him march sometime; let him have his prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; understand why he must have sit-ins and freedom rides” (par. 23)	King uses parallel structure to emphasize to the white moderate that they should support these actions, because these forms of nonviolence are preferable to a “frightening racial nightmare” (par. 22). By listing actions the white moderate refuses to support, King advances his criticism of the white moderate’s lack of action.
Imagery	“prayer pilgrimages to the city hall” (par. 23)	By using the word <i>pilgrimages</i> , a word with a religious meaning, to describe journeys to city hall, which is not a sacred place, King elevates demonstrations at city hall to the level of “acts of religious devotion.” This puts King on the moral high ground, advancing his criticism of the white moderate’s lack of action.