

Name: _____

Letters from a Birmingham Jail Excerpt Activity

Background:

Martin Luther King Jr. made a conscious decision to get arrested in Birmingham, Ala., on April 12, 1963. After lawmakers issued an injunction against protests in an attempt to quell [King's campaign against segregation](#), King and his fellow civil rights activists continued to challenge the status quo, knowing that they would end up in jail.

Placed in solitary confinement away from his colleagues and followers, King would end up penning a nearly 7,000-word open letter to white clergy who had joined together to criticize his campaign. The missive, now known as "[Letter From Birmingham Jail](#)," was released to the public 50 years ago on April 16, 1963. A half a century later, the powerfully written letter serves as a reminder of how far we've come as a nation and how much further we still need to go -- both at home and abroad. Here are 10 of the most moving passages.

<http://www.theroot.com/multimedia/10-powerful-passages-mlks-letter>

Directions:

Carefully read, and in some cases re-read the selections from Letters from A Birmingham Jail. Choose THREE excerpts. For EACH excerpt, explain in detail the background