

## Discussion Circles

### Rules:

1. Participants may not express an opinion without first referencing the text.
2. No reference may be repeated.
3. Participants will take turns (you MAY NOT talk until it is your turn)
4. Participants will value the options of the other participants.
5. Participants will treat one another, as well as the subject matter at hand, with respect.

### Seminar Questions:

Question 1: After reading the excerpts from the Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, which argument or viewpoint do you find to be the most compelling? Why? (Everyone must answer this question- you DO NOT need to reference the text for this question): the order is to the left of the leader.

Question 2: In "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," King states that "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Do you agree with him? (Anyone may answer this question - you should reference the text before answering): The leader will recognize those who wish to answer this question.

Question 3: What are the special advantages of non-violent resistance, in Martin Luther King's view? Do you agree with him, why or why not? (Anyone may answer this question - you should reference the text before answering): The leader will recognize those who wish to answer his question.

Question 4: What is the basis of a successful revolution, according to Malcolm X? Do you agree with his interpretation about violence and revolution? Why or why not? (Anyone may answer this question - you should reference the text before answering): The leader will recognize those who wish to answer his question.

Question 5: Malcolm X was born in Omaha, yet does not see himself as an American. What sets him apart from those he perceives as Americans? Are there people today who might identify with his feelings? (Anyone may answer this question - you should reference the text before answering): The leader will recognize those who wish to answer his question.

Question 6: Can the use of violence ever be a justifiable means to achieve an end goal or bring about real change? Why or why not (provide examples from history or from today's current state of affairs)? (Anyone may answer this question - you should reference the text before answering): The leader will recognize those who wish to answer his question.

Question 7: In today's world, which strategy, non-violent or impassioned resistance, would be most effective in combating social injustice? (Everyone must answer this question- you do NOT need to reference the text for this question): the order is to the right of the leader.

**NOTE- in the first and last questions, if you wish to speak more than once – after the entire circle has spoken- then you may raise your hand, then the leader will recognize you and you may say additional comments.**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Preparation 20 pts</b>	<b>Relevant, instructive, and critical questions and answers  20 pts</b>	<b>No interrupti ons  20 pts</b>	<b>Active and engaged participati on and listening  20 pts</b>	<b>Referenced text and did not repeat a reference  20 pts</b>	<b>Total Score</b>
1						
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Name	Preparation	Relevant, instructive, and critical questions and answers	No interruptions	Active and engaged participation and listening	Referenced text and did not repeat a reference	Total Score
24						
25						
26						
27						
28						
29						
30						

Description of Discussion Circle Grading Criteria:

Preparation:

- Students come to class with documents read and questions pre answered. This could also mean that students have matched questions with documents, highlighted relevant sections of the reading to support their points of view, and made notes.

Relevant, instructive, and critical questions and answers:

- Students are not simply giving “yes” “no” or “maybe” as a response, but engaging in meaningful dialogue with their discussion circles.

No interruptions:

- Students remain respectful of classmates in their discussion circles, valuing their opinion and contributions to the discussion, even if this means they do not agree with all the points being made.

Active and engaged; participation and listening:

- Students are contributing when required, but also active when not speaking (i.e. not on cell phone, not listening to iPod...).

Referenced text and did not repeat a reference:

- Students are referencing the documents to support their argument; this could mean that students are thumbing through the documents to read selections. Once a student has answered a question initially, it is no longer necessary for them to continually reference the text before contributing to the discussion.

**Discussion Circles – Suggested Responses**

## Seminar Questions:

Question 1: After reading the excerpts from the Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. which argument or viewpoint do you find to be the most compelling? Why? (Everyone must answer this question- you DO NOT need to reference the text for this question): the order is to the left of the leader. **Possible:** *MLK: He is promoting peaceful protests using economic means like boycotts. He supports non-aggressive responses in a physical sense, but aggressive responses in a spiritual sense. The purpose is to win over the other side by ending violence. His organizations attack the system and not individuals, and promote a philosophy of love. Like prophets, they go from place to place spreading the word of Justice for all people. This is the most compelling argument because it cools down the violence. Others will support this effort because it does not involve death and violence. It does win people over. Malcolm X: Will not turn the other cheek. Does not seek violence, but if rights are denied, or violence is inflicted on him or his people, they will fight back. Wants to eliminate injustice and is not worried if that means fighting or dying. Believes if you are going to die for your cause, do not die alone. Malcolm X is convincing because African Americans have taken horrible treatment. He is fed up and wants change now. His reasoning about fighting back is convincing because who wants to sit still while people turn dogs and water hoses on you or dump food on your head.*

Question 2: In "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," King states that "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Do you agree with him? (Anyone may answer this question - you should reference the text before answering): The leader will recognize those who wish to answer this question. **Possible:** *Yes because I agree with MLK's comments in document 5 that we are all tied together. Whatever affects one person directly affects everyone indirectly. While I might not be a victim of prejudice today, if I do not stand up and stop it, then who will protect me when I become the minority? As humans we must speak out against injustice to prevent it from spreading.*

Question 3: What are the special advantages of non-violent resistance, in Martin Luther King's view? Do you agree with him, why or why not? (Anyone may answer this question - you should reference the text before answering): The leader will recognize those who wish to answer his question. **Possible:** *In document 2 MLK talks about winning the friendship and understanding of the opponent. Non-violent resistance allows the movement to show that their aim is not to defeat whites and not to humiliate them but to end violence and find reconciliation with the white community. The use of boycotts and other demonstrations are a means to awaken the shame within the oppressor and bring about change.*

Question 4: What is the basis of a successful revolution, according to Malcolm X? Do you agree with his interpretation about violence and revolution? Why or why not? (Anyone may answer this question - you should reference the text before answering): The leader will recognize those who wish to answer his question. **Possible:** *In document 4, Malcolm X responds that turning the other cheek is NOT the basis of a successful revolution. This means that the basis is fighting back, and fighting for what you believe even if this leads to more violence. I do not agree because I believe that this will cause violence to escalate and while people will get hurt or die, their attitudes about race will not change. Unless attitudes change, social justice will not happen.*

Questions 5: Malcolm X was born in Omaha, yet does not see himself as an American. What sets him apart from those he perceives as Americans? Are there people today who might identify with his feelings?(Anyone may answer this question - you should reference the text before answering): The leader will recognize those who wish to answer his question. **Possible:** *Malcolm X is upset because although he was born in America, he does not receive the rights the Constitution guarantees for Americans. In document 3, he uses the explanation of having a plate in front of you does not make the location a diner if you cannot have any food. Being born in America does not make you an American if you are not protected by the Constitution or do not have the right to vote. New immigrants gain these rights without new legislation. He questions why there must be new laws enacted for African Americans to gain the rights of the Constitution. For this reason, he does not see himself as an American.*

Question 6: Can the use of violence ever be a justifiable means to achieve an end goal or bring about real change? Why or why not (provide examples from history or from today's current state of affairs)? (Anyone may answer this question - you should reference the text before answering): The leader will recognize those who wish to answer his question. **Possible:** *Students may take either side. Their response should include references to the documents. If they decide that violence is justifiable, they should cite examples from Malcolm X documents (3, 4 & 6). If the student says violence cannot be justified, students should support their argument from MLK documents (1,2 &5).*

Question 7: In today's world, which strategy, non-violent or impassioned resistance, would be most effective in combating social injustice? (Everyone must answer this question- you do not need to reference the text for this question): the order is to the right of the leader. **Possible:** Students can draw from several present day examples. They may refer to the Tea Party as non-violent resistance, the Occupy Wall Street movement, etc. For violent resistance, they may refer to domestic acts of terror such as the Oklahoma bombing, or the officer in California who protested being fired by using violence against others. (Make sure that students understand that these are different from Malcolm X in that African Americans faced years of prejudice and discrimination and not a one-time offence. Also, some of these events are very extreme).