

# Compare and contrast



Compare and Contrast Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, " Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter, " and staying silent is just what many civil rights activists, including Martin Luther King, Jr. avoided. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X are just two of the prominent leaders during the civil rights movement. Martin Luther King Jr. believed in nonviolent protesting, where Malcolm X believed in doing whatever it takes to accomplish a goal. Although these men both possess contrasting beliefs, together they sparked a social transition that would affect society for decades to come. The biggest difference in the two leaders comes with their leadership tactics. Martin Luther King, Jr. believed heavily in nonviolence. To achieve equality with nonviolence, he used sit-ins, marches, and protests. He traveled from city to city to spread his message of nonviolence because he felt " compelled to carry the gospel of freedom" (MLK). King felt that the answer to equality was intelligence and high morals. As blacks furthered their education they would gain rights, equality, and respect from whites (" Martin Luther King - Biography" 1). His nonviolent leadership tactics got many people across the country, and even the world interested in his beliefs. Although Malcolm X became more peaceful later on, his self-defense tactic was his original message. His motto, " By any means necessary! " meant that if believed necessary, violence was acceptable. His beliefs acted as the core for a civil rights activist group known as the Black Panthers. As time went on Malcolm X became more peaceful, yet he still stated that " I no longer subscribe to sweeping indictments of any one race, " (Malcolm X 302). Both Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X were very affective in the civil rights movement; they just held different beliefs in how to get equality.

Along with having very different tactics, both Martin Luther King, Jr. and <https://assignbuster.com/compare-and-contrast-compare-and-contrast-essay-samples-18/>

Malcolm X lived through strikingly different conditions as children. Martin Luther King, Jr. had a nice childhood. Born and raised in Kentucky, Martin Luther King, Jr. attended a segregated all-blacks school and experienced a minimum of racism (“ Martin Luther King - Biography” 1). His nonviolent childhood was the foundation in which he built his tranquil philosophy and beliefs. Malcolm X, born and raised in Nebraska, was the only black student in his class. Being the only black, Malcolm X experienced many more racism experiences first hand. At a young age, his dad died. He suspected white supremacists were the cause of his father’s death which led to his bitter outlook on whites (“ Malcolm X — Make It Plain” 1). The experiences Malcolm X had to overcome at such a young age act as one of the reasons why he believed in Black Supremacy. Malcolm X’s and Martin Luther King, Jr.’s childhoods served as a strong foundation of their beliefs of how whites and blacks should interact with each other. The purpose and audience of the Martin Luther King, Jr. letter differed from Malcolm’s which resulted in the difference of tone used. King’s purpose was to respectfully reply to a group of clergymen who criticized him for being “ unwise and untimely” (MLK). Throughout the entire letter, King stays respectful when he could have easily lashed out. In particular, he noted their “ genuine good will” and called their criticisms “ sincerely set forth” (MLK). He continued using the same, peaceful tone throughout the entire letter. King never strayed away from his belief of peace and thus, handled the situation maturely. Malcolm X’s intention of his essay was to serve as a warning to America. As a result, the overall tone of the article came across as a little harsh. While King ended his letter in a friendly manner, Malcolm X ended it with the bold statement, “ If white America doesn’t think the Afro-American, especially the upcoming

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generation, is capable of adopting the guerrilla tactics now being used by oppressed people elsewhere on this earth, she is making a drastic mistake. She is underestimating the force that can do her the most harm" (Malcolm X 306). Due to the differences between Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X's purposes for writing the articles, each article took on a different tone.

Throughout both writings, the two leaders used their tone to urge and imply that the longer blacks waited to get equality, the less likely it became. Martin Luther King, Jr. noticed that his dream was endangered. Time was running out and patience was running low. More and more people started to turn to violence as the answer. In his letter he wrote from Birmingham Jail, he calmly explains his impatience when he says, " There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair" (MLK). While Martin Luther King, Jr. calmly explains this, Malcolm X discusses it rather vengefully when he stated, " The 22 million Afro- Americans are not yet filled with hate or a desire for revenge, as the propaganda of the segregationists would have people believe" (Malcolm X 303). In their letters, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X both agree that time was running out for blacks to gain equality, but approached it differently. Martin Luther King, Jr. did not describe it as harshly as Malcolm X did. Both of the leaders knew that patience was running low; they just addressed it in different ways. During the civil rights movement, it was Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X that helped progress black equality. Even though their philosophies were quite contrasting, both of them were extremely influential leaders towards their beliefs. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X change the world and society to this day. The influence that

Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X held during the civil rights movement is <https://assignbuster.com/compare-and-contrast-compare-and-contrast-essay-samples-18/>

one of the greatest examples of leadership the world has ever seen, regardless of the contrasting styles they used to express their feelings and show their actions. Works Cited King, Martin Luther, Jr. " The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., Preaches Nonviolence from the Birmingham Jail (1963). " Print. Litwack, Leon F. " Fight The Power! " The Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement. " Journal Of Southern History 75. 1 (2009): 3-28. Academic Search Premier. Web. 1 May 2012. X, Malcolm. " Racism: The Cancer that is Destroying America. " Egyptian Gazette. 25 August 1964. Print. " Malcolm X — Make It Plain. " Pbs. org. Web. 3 May 2012. " Martin Luther King — Biography. " Nobelprize. org. Web. 3 May 2012.