

Letter from birmingham jail by martin luther king, jr. assignment

[History](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

“ Letter from Birmingham Jail” Reading Response Martin Luther King, Jr. A civil rights activist that fought for the rights of African Americans in 1963. King organized various non-violent demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama that resulted in his arrest. While in jail, King received a letter from eight Alabama clergymen explaining their concern and opposition to King and his non-violent actions. This letter occasioned his reply and caused King to write a persuasive letter “ Letter from Birmingham Jail,” justifying his actions and presence in Birmingham.

Although King’s reply was addressed to the Alabama clergymen, its target audience was the white people. King understood that if he gained support from the white American, the civil rights movement would reach its goals much faster. In his letter King effectively manipulates language and tone to strengthen his argument against the complaints of the clergymen and successfully address the white people. Throughout the essay, King uses several powerful tones to complement his strong opinion. Martin Luther King’s opening paragraph demonstrates irony and sarcasm.

It is sarcastic because he is writing in a jail cell, which is not recommendable especially if you want to represent a group of people. In the other hand, he is trying to answer to some clergymen who clearly aren’t agreed with King’s ideas. Another funny, sarcastic part says, “ If I sought to answer all the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would have little time for anything other than such correspondence in the course of the day. ” Shown by this passage, one can see the sarcasm Martin Luther King Jr. Adds in the letter.

He does not have secretaries helping him with his correspondence at the moment and all he can do is answer. He states that he will try to answer as best possible because he feels they are generally men of good will (657). In the letter from Birmingham jail King also uses an urgent but non-aggressive tone. It benefits King to present the argument in an ethical non-blaming manner. When writing his letter, King considered his target audience. If he had written in an attacking, aggressive manner the purpose of his letter would have been lost.

The clergyman and white people would feel attacked and not want to support King's cause. The use of persuasive language and not placing blame on any one group of people increases the effectiveness of King's argument. My understanding of the letter has remained the same. Didn't realize that the tone would change as much as it would but could connect with why it did. King felt anger, sympathy and compassion for the clergymen and his people that he has to lead. Why King responded to the clergymen while in jail? Was it a tactic of him?