

Title of Lesson: *Birmingham, 1963: Spring Jubilation Part I*
(Suggested grade level: 11)

This lesson was created as a part of the Alabama History Education Initiative, funded by a generous grant from the Malone Family Foundation in 2009.

Author Information: Bonnie Shanks, Alabama History Education Initiative Consultant
Rebecca Gregory, Alabama History Education Initiative Consultant
Alabama Department of Archives and History

Background Information:

Background information for teacher:

An excellent resource for teachers is *But for Birmingham* by Glenn T. Eskew, Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.

Read the "[Letter from a Birmingham Jail.](#)" Determine the number of groups which will be used to study this document and divide the letter into the same number of parts, e.g. for five groups, divide the letter into five approximately equal parts. If King's letter is too long for a complete analysis, choose excerpts from the letter which will give students an understanding of his position on the Birmingham protests.

Overview of lesson: This lesson is the first in a four-part series on the struggle for civil rights in Birmingham in 1963. This lesson begins with the failed attempt in Albany, Georgia, to integrate public facilities and ends with Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail." Students will view a *PowerPoint* on events in Birmingham in the spring of 1963 and will analyze Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "[Letter from a Birmingham Jail.](#)"

Content Standards

[Alabama Course of Study: Social Studies](#) (Bulletin 2004, No. 18)
Eleventh Grade: Standard 12,(p.79)

[National Standards for History, 1996](#)

Standards in History for Grades 5-12 (p. 121)

Era 9, Standard 4 – The struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties

4A – The student understands the "Second Reconstruction" and its advancement of civil rights.

[Curriculum Standards for Social Studies](#), (Bulletin 111, 2010)

Standard 5 – Individuals, Groups, and Institutions (p. 139)

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.

[National Standards for Civics and Government](#), (1994)

Standard II – What are the foundations of the American political system? (p. 99)

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about issues concerning the disparities between American ideals and realities.

Primary Learning Objective(s):

The student will be able to:

- Identify the conditions in Birmingham which led to Project C.
- Determine the factors which led to choosing the leaders of Project C.
- Describe the strategy used by leaders and participants in carrying out Project C.

- Analyze the [“Letter from a Birmingham Jail”](#) written by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Time allotted: 50 minutes

Materials and Equipment:

- *PowerPoint*: [“Birmingham, 1963, Spring Jubilation”](#) (Part I)
- Copies of the [“Letter from a Birmingham Jail.”](#) This document is available on multiple internet Web sites.
- Copies of Questions for Group Discussion (attached)
- Rubric for photo essay (attached)
- The attached *Tearing Down Barriers* worksheet is provided for use with all four lessons on Birmingham in 1963. However, it can also be used if only one of the lessons is taught.

Technological Resources:

- Computer with internet access
- *PowerPoint* (v. '97-2003) - If you have a newer version, [a viewer](#) (free) can be downloaded from the internet.
- Digital projector

Background/Preparation:

- The students should have an understanding of:
 - Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments
 - Jim Crow
 - *Plessy v Ferguson*
 - *Brown v Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas*
 - Montgomery bus boycott
 - Little Rock school integration
 - Freedom Riders

Procedures/Activities:

Engagement/Motivation Activity:

The teacher will say, “In 1963, Birmingham, Alabama, had the reputation of being the most segregated city in the United States. Given what we have already learned about attempts to integrate public facilities in other places, what methods might the African American population of Birmingham employ to bring an end to segregation in such a city?” Allow students time to respond; then ask “Who would be a logical choice to lead this effort?”

Step 1	Show slides one and two of “Birmingham, 1963, Spring Jubilation.” Ask the students, “What can you predict from the title of the second slide?”
Step 2	Show slides three through six. Ask the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Even though the Albany Movement was considered a failure, why did Shuttlesworth invite King to lead the Birmingham campaign?” • What was Shuttlesworth’s goal in Birmingham? • Why would the goal of the Birmingham campaign be more limited than

	<p>the Albany Movement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the name of the campaign, and what did “C” stand for?
Step 3	Show slide seven and ask, “What prior experiences of Bevel and Walker would add strength to Project C?”
Step 4	Show slide eight. Discuss the concepts of “nonviolence” and “civil disobedience” in attempting to bring about change. Discuss the basis of these concepts in the writings of the transcendentalist Thoreau and the actions of Gandhi in India.
Step 5	Show slide nine. Ask, “Why were churches and ministers important to the civil rights movement?”
Step 6	<p>Show slides ten and eleven. Ask the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What is the difference between being a ‘moderate’ and being an ‘arch segregationist’?” • “What would be the role of a commissioner of public safety in city government?” <p>Tell the students that as police commissioner, Conner ordered the use of police dogs. Give students time to read the deposition made by Leroy Allen which is shown on slide eleven. Lead a class discussion on the tactics used by the Birmingham police and on the consequences for Leroy Allen.</p>
Step 7	<p>Show slides twelve through fourteen. Ask the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Why did the leaders of Project C plan for King to be arrested?” • “Why did they choose Good Friday?” • “What prompted King’s letter?” <p>Leave slide fourteen projected during step 8.</p>
Step 8	<p>Read paragraphs one and two of the “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” to the students. Divide the students into groups. Pass out group copies of the letter and the Questions for Group Discussion. Define the concepts of “justice,” “transformation,” and “reconciliation.” Allow time for group discussion. In order to guide the group discussion, write the following column headings on the board: “Justice,” “Transformation,” and “Reconciliation.” As students discuss the document, write their responses under the appropriate heading.</p>

Assessment Strategies:

- Suggested essay questions for unit test:
 - “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.” Explain what Martin Luther King, Jr. meant by this quote from the [“Letter from a Birmingham Jail”](#) as it relates to Birmingham in 1963. What does this quote mean to you as a citizen of the United States?
 - What was the strategy of Project C? Give examples of how the strategy was executed, and describe the response to these actions taken by the Birmingham police.
- Have students choose a favorite quote from the [“Letter from a Birmingham Jail”](#) and create a photo essay illustrating the quote. Students may be interested in taking their own photographs or in using

pictures from the internet or old magazines. The photo essay could be created using [Photo Story](#) or *PowerPoint*. Assess the photo essay with the attached rubric.

- Grade the *Tearing Down Barriers* worksheet for accuracy.

Extension:

Have students research the participants in Project C.

Remediation:

- Give students hard copies of the *PowerPoint*.

Accommodation:

- Give extended time on assignments and tests.
- Give a list of vocabulary words along with their definitions from the “Letter from Birmingham Jail.”

Modification:

- Review Individualized Education Plans, 504 Plans, and Gifted or ELL Plans for instructional and assessment accommodations or modifications.
- Provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate comprehension and mastery of appropriate learning objectives.

Tearing Down Barriers Worksheet

Student Name _____

As you watch each *PowerPoint*, analyze the events being described as to whether or not the event was instrumental in tearing down barriers to equality for African Americans. Examine the outcome of each event in terms of these categories: economic barriers, social barriers, political barriers, and educational barriers. Fill in the table below with your analysis. Remember that some events may have impacted more than one category and defend your analysis with facts.

PowerPoint – Lessons 1 and PowerPoint – Lesson 2, Spring 1963

Event	Barrier(s)	Impact
Albany Movement		
Project C Adult protests		
“Letter from Birmingham Jail”		
Project C Children’s March		
Use of dogs and fire hoses by “Bull” Conner		
President Kennedy’s Intervention in Birmingham		

PowerPoint – Lesson 3, Summer 1963

Event	Barrier(s)	Impact
Assassination of Medgar Evers		
Integration of the University of Alabama		
March on Washington		
“I Have a Dream” speech		

PowerPoint – Lesson 4, Fall 1963

Event	Barrier(s)	Impact
Bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church		
Death of Johnny Robinson		
Death of Virgil Ware		
Assassination of John F. Kennedy		
Civil Rights Act of 1964		

Tearing Down Barriers Analysis Worksheet

As you study the events in Alabama and specifically in Birmingham in 1963, examine each event that is presented in the *PowerPoint* to determine how the event impacted the struggle to remove barriers for African Americans.

Economic barriers

Political barriers

Educational barriers

Social barriers

Questions for Group Discussion “Letter from Birmingham Jail”

What action prompted Martin Luther King, Jr., to write the letter?

Why did he address the letter to the clergy?

What references to the Bible did he make in the letter?

Why do you think he used Biblical references?

Which justification for the demonstrations in Birmingham is the most powerful to you? Different members of the group may have differing opinions about the most powerful justification given.

As you read the excerpt from the letter, determine if Dr. King is writing about justice, transformation or reconciliation. Make a notation on the paragraph to indicate your choice and be able to defend your selection in the class discussion.

“Letter from Birmingham Jail” Photo Essay

Student Name _____

Directions:

1. Choose a quote from the “Letter from Birmingham Jail” which has the most meaning to you.
2. Create a photo essay using a minimum of six photos which will illustrate the quote.
3. You may use your own photos, pictures from the internet, or illustrations from magazines.
4. You may present your essay on a poster or use Photo Story or *PowerPoint*.
5. Be sure to include the quote on the essay.
6. Write a paragraph stating the reason why you chose this quote.

Rubric:

Categories	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point	Score
Number of Photos	Photo essay contains six or more photos to illustrate the quote.	Photo essay contains five photos to illustrate the quote.	Photo essay contains four photos to illustrate the quote.	Photo essay contains fewer than four photos to illustrate the quote.	
Title	The quote from the “Letter from Birmingham Jail” is featured prominently on the essay and the essay attributes the quote to Martin Luther King.	The quote from the “Letter from Birmingham Jail” is featured prominently on the essay but no attribution is given.	The quote from the “Letter from Birmingham Jail” is not easily found on the essay.	The photo essay does not include a quote from the “Letter from Birmingham Jail.”	
Appropriateness of the Photos	All of the photos illustrate the selected quote and provide a sequential illustration of the quote.	Most of the photos illustrate the selected quote and provide a sequential illustration of the quote.	Few of the photos illustrate the selected quote and they do not provide a sequential illustration of the quote.	The photos shown have little or no relation to the selected quote.	
Creativity	The photo essay provides a unique and creative comment on the selected quote.	The photo essay provides a somewhat creative comment on the selected quote.	The photos selected present a trite illustration of the quote.	The arrangement of the photos is an illogical illustration of the quote.	
Paragraph	The paragraph clearly states the reasons why the quote was chosen.	The paragraph states the reasons why the quote was chosen.	The reason for selecting the quote is not obvious in the paragraph.	No reason is given for the selection of the quote.	

Total Score _____