

United States History II Benchmark Writing Prompt
January 2012
Department of History and Social Sciences



Based on the documents below, as well as your knowledge of this period in history, provide a complete, concise, and accurate response to the prompt that follows:

Document 1

I am convinced that for practical as well as moral reasons, nonviolence offers the only road to freedom for my people. In violent warfare, one must be prepared to face ruthlessly the fact that there will be casualties by the thousands....The hard cold facts of racial life in the world today indicated that the hope of the people of color in the world may well rest on the American Negro and his ability to reform the structures of racist imperialism from within and thereby turn the technology and wealth of the West to the task of liberating the world from want....Our record of achievement through nonviolent action is already remarkable. The dramatic social changes which have been made across the South are unmatched in the annals of history. Montgomery, Albany, Birmingham and Selena have paved the way for untold progress. Even more remarkable is the fact that this progress occurred with a minimum of human sacrifice and loss of life.

Martin Luther King, Jr. (1966)

Document 2

"Concerning nonviolence, it is criminal to teach a man not to defend himself when he is the constant victim of brutal attacks. It is legal and lawful to own a shotgun or a rifle. We believe in obeying the law...The time has come for the American Negro to fight back in self-defense whenever and wherever he is being unjustly and unlawfully attacked."

"If you're not ready to die for it, put the word 'freedom' out of your vocabulary."

"I believe that there will ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those that do the oppressing. I believe that there will be a clash between those who want freedom, justice and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the systems of exploitation."

"Dr. King wants the same thing I want. Freedom."

Quotes from Malcom X

(WRITING PROMPT ON REVERSE SIDE)

Based on these primary source documents and other informational texts, and your knowledge of this period of history, compare and contrast the philosophies of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. Based on what you know about the two men and their philosophies, whose philosophy do you think was more effective in making progress toward the goal of racial equality in the United States? Be sure to support your answer with information from the documents provided.