



## Birmingham, Alabama

In the 1950s and '60s Birmingham received national and international attention as a center of the civil rights struggle for African-Americans. The city was given the derisive nickname *Bombingham* because of a string of racially motivated bombings that took place during this time. A watershed in the civil rights movement occurred in 1963 when Martin Luther King, Jr., imprisoned for having taken part in a nonviolent protest, wrote the now famous [Letter from Birmingham Jail](#), a defining treatise in his cause against segregation.

"We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given up by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct action campaign that was well timed in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." We must come to see...that "justice too long delay is justice denied."

—Martin Luther King, Jr. Letter From Birmingham Jail

3. Read the information above and the quote by Martin Luther King Jr. Explain what King meant in his quote when he said: This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." We must come to see...that "justice too long delay is justice denied."

National television carried vivid pictures of police setting snarling dogs on unarmed demonstrators and washing small children across streets with the powerful impact of fire hoses. President Kennedy sent 3000 troops to restore peace. On June 11th, 1963, in Jackson Mississippi, Medgar Evers the field secretary for the NAACP, was murdered. The murder and the events in Alabama forced President Kennedy to make a decision. Appearing on national television, Kennedy spoke of the "moral issue" facing the nation: *"The heart of the question is whether all Americans are to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities, whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated. If an American, because his skin is dark, cannot... enjoy the full and free life which all of us want, then who among us would be content to have the color of his skin changed and stand in his place?"*

4. Read the information and the quote above. In addition watch the video (4min. 30 sec.) at the following [link](http://www.powermediaplus.com/player.asp?mediaID=24672&segmentID=140534) <http://www.powermediaplus.com/player.asp?mediaID=24672&segmentID=140534>. Username is **samoset** and Password is **brooklyn**. Evaluate the effect of the newly important mass media of television on the success of the civil rights movement. Do you believe that King's ideas and protests could have been just as successful without television.