

English 11 Honors
Summer Assignment
Due the first day of school

Guided RRJ for “Letter from Birmingham Jail”

Reader response journals are intended to get you to slow down and understand *how* you’re learning as you read (metacognition). In an effort to get you to write more focused RRJs that react to argument, style, technique, and language *as well as* ideas (which students often struggle with), we are requesting that you complete a RRJ for this piece using this guide.

In your notebook (or typed up), please answer/do the following, and **clearly label** them so we know you have completed the steps.

1. Make a bulleted list of things you know about Martin Luther King, Jr. and anything related to the context of this piece.
2. **Read the background information to the text.** If you’ve been skipping this for your essays—*don’t!* It’s a bad habit, and it’s *crucial* to understand context in order to understand purpose.
3. Now that you’ve read the background information, make a list of things you *just learned* about Martin Luther King, Jr.
4. What is the *form* of this passage? Why might this matter?
5. What can you assume its *purpose* is? Why?
6. Who can you assume the *audience* is? What can you assume about them?
7. Now the fun part. After each 3 or 4 paragraphs, you need to *stop reading* and record the following. (You’ll have a lot of “stops”; this is a lengthy passage. Aim to have at least 10.)
 - What about his *ideas/subject matter* have you noticed (especially that have developed or changed)?
 - What seems to be his primary argument here? How does he develop/support it?
 - Note *at least* one word from each three or four paragraphs that seems to make a difference in what he is saying. What is the word, and why does it matter? (This is called *diction*.)
 - Note his sentence length and syntax. Say something about it. What effect does it have? What’s he doing?
 - Note at least one **rhetorical device** he uses in the passage and explain its significance.
 - Write the words and the definitions that you don’t know. (It is imperative you look up words you don’t know.)
8. Now that you’ve finished, how do you think *form*, *audience*, and *purpose* influenced the content and style of this piece?
9. *Now* you can say if you liked it or not, but the effectiveness of King’s writing is more important than your opinion. Sorry.

10 times!

THIS IS HOW YOU SHOULD READ. This is how you should read for any reading assignment in this class. Reading this way helps you to be successful on quizzes, on AP tests, in college, in life. Soon, it will become instinctual. Reading this way will make you a better reader, which will make you a better thinker and a better writer.