Paths to Freedom

Compare civil rights goals, methods, and organizations

SS24.US2.10c "Compare and contrast the actions and philosophies of key civil rights leaders and organizations, including Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the two shared goals named in the final paragraph. Circle one action or principle that distinguished each leader, so you can compare their approaches.

Different Paths, Shared Demands

1. On a Birmingham street in 1963, police used dogs and fire hoses against Black demonstrators. Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) organized nonviolent campaigns against segregation. Marchers accepted the risk of arrest rather than strike back. King argued that disciplined protest could expose injustice, change public opinion, and push federal officials to act. He also believed in integration, a society in which people of different races shared public life as equals. The Birmingham campaign helped build pressure for the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed segregation in public accommodations.

2. Malcolm X also challenged the denial of Black freedom, but he rejected King's insistence on nonviolence. As a minister and national spokesperson for the Nation of Islam, he criticized integration as a goal that depended on white acceptance and urged Black communities to build their own institutions. After leaving the Nation of Islam in 1964, he founded the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU). It sought political and economic power for Black Americans and aimed to bring U.S. racism before an international audience as a human rights issue. Malcolm X defended self-defense against attacks, not unprovoked violence.

3. King and Malcolm X both opposed racial discrimination and sought greater political power for Black Americans, yet they differed over methods and the future they envisioned. King and the SCLC used nonviolent direct action to press for integration and changes in U.S. law. Malcolm X and the OAAU emphasized Black self-determination and international pressure, while defending the right to self-defense. Their positions were not frozen: after a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1964, Malcolm X spoke more openly about working with people across racial lines. Their approaches reveal how leaders could share urgent goals without agreeing on the path forward.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What political goal did King and Malcolm X share, and how did each try to advance it?

2. How did King's goal of integration differ from the approach Malcolm X urged while he was in the Nation of Islam?

3. How did King and Malcolm X differ in their views of responding to attacks?

4. How did the SCLC and the OAAU differ in where they directed pressure against racism?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

In one paragraph of 80 to 110 words, imagine a city whose hiring rules exclude qualified Black applicants. Propose one response informed by King and the SCLC and another informed by Malcolm X and the OAAU, then explain a goal the responses share and an important difference between them.

ANSWER KEY

Paths to Freedom

GRADE 11 · SS24.US2.10c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the two shared goals named in the final paragraph. Circle one action or principle that distinguished each leader, so you can compare their approaches. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What political goal did King and Malcolm X share, and how did each try to advance it?	**Both sought greater political power for Black Americans. King used nonviolent campaigns to push U.S. officials to act; Malcolm X promoted Black-led institutions and international pressure.**
2	How did King's goal of integration differ from the approach Malcolm X urged while he was in the Nation of Islam?	**King sought shared public life across racial lines. Malcolm X criticized integration as dependent on white acceptance and urged Black communities to build their own institutions.**
3	How did King and Malcolm X differ in their views of responding to attacks?	**King called for disciplined nonviolence, even when marchers faced attacks. Malcolm X defended the right to self-defense, not unprovoked violence.**
4	How did the SCLC and the OAAU differ in where they directed pressure against racism?	**The SCLC used direct action to push for changes in U.S. law. The OAAU sought to raise U.S. racism before an international audience as a human rights issue.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In this imagined city, both groups would seek fair access to jobs and greater power for Black residents. Inspired by King and the SCLC, organizers could hold disciplined, nonviolent demonstrations and ask federal officials to investigate discriminatory hiring. Inspired by Malcolm X and the OAAU, residents could build a Black-led job network and publicize the city's practices as a human rights issue beyond the United States. The first response focuses on changing rules through protest and U.S. law; the second stresses community control and international pressure.

Accept other passage-supported comparisons that distinguish nonviolent direct action from self-determination, self-defense, or international pressure. For Part 3, the proposed actions should be plausible applications, not claims that either leader addressed this imagined city's hiring rules.