

# AP Government Required Foundational Document Study Sheet

Document	Summary/Main Ideas	Important Quotes/Clause/Parts
<p><b>Declaration of Independence</b> – July 4, 1776 by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Congress (mostly Thomas Jefferson)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Letter written to <b>formally declare the 13 colonies independent from Britain</b></li> <li>● Provides <b>philosophical justification for the break</b> from Great Britain</li> <li>● Is a declaration of <b>natural rights</b> – stated <b>government’s main job was to protect these rights; if it doesn’t change or overthrow it</b></li> <li>● Establishes a <b>foundation for popular sovereignty</b> - "consent of the governed"</li> <li>● Is a <b>list of grievances</b> against King George III and Parliament</li> <li>● Declares the <b>sovereignty [powers] of the new independent United States</b></li> </ul>	<p>“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that <b>all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights</b>, that among these are <b>Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness</b>. — That to secure these rights, <b>Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed</b>, — That <b>whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government ...</b> Prudence, indeed, will dictate that <b>Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes</b>; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. <b>But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.</b> — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; <b>and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government ...</b></p> <p>... For <b>imposing Taxes on us without our Consent ...</b></p> <p>For <b>depriving us in many cases, of the benefit of Trial by Jury</b></p> <p>... In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: <b>Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people ...</b></p> <p><b>We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America ... declare, That these united Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States</b>, that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, <b>and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved ...”</b></p>
<p><b>Articles of Confederation</b> – March 1, 1781 by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Congress and ratified by the 13 states</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Established a government (confederation) for the new, independent states – America’s first constitution</b></li> <li>● <b>States maintained their sovereignty – state legislatures had most of the power (no unity)</b></li> <li>● Created a <b>unicameral Congress</b> made up of delegates from the states - <b>could not raise an army or tax</b> without the consent of 9 of 13 states – made the federal government weak and ineffective</li> <li>● Could not regulate commerce and led to <b>economic turmoil</b></li> </ul>	<p>“The Stile of this confederacy shall be "The United States of America ... <b>Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence</b>, and every Power, Jurisdiction and right, which is not by this confederation expressly delegated to the United States, in Congress assembled.</p> <p>The said states hereby severally enter into a firm <b>league of friendship</b> with each other, for their <b>common defence</b>, the security of their Liberties, and <b>their mutual and general welfare, binding themselves to assist each other</b>, against all force offered to, or attacks made upon them, or any of them, on account of religion, sovereignty, trade, or any other pretence whatever.</p> <p>... The united states in congress assembled shall never engage in a war, nor grant letters of marque and reprisal in time of peace, nor enter into any treaties or alliances, nor coin money, nor regulate the value thereof, <b>nor ascertain the sums and expences necessary for the defence and welfare of the united states, or any of them, nor emit bills, nor borrow money on the credit of the united states, nor appropriate money, nor agree upon the number of vessels of war, to be built or purchased, or the number of land or sea forces to be raised, nor appoint a commander in chief of the army or navy, unless nine states assent to the same ...”</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Had <b>no real executive</b> to enforce acts of Congress or <b>federal court</b> to settle disputes</li> <li>● <b>Shay’s Rebellion exposed the severe weaknesses</b></li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>U.S. Constitution</u></b> – September 13, 1788 by the Constitutional Convention delegates and ratified by 11 of 13 states</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Formal governing document that <b>replaced the Articles of Confederation</b> and addressed its many weaknesses</li> <li>● <b>Lays out the structure and powers of the federal government</b> – which was to be a <b>constitutional federal republic</b>.</li> <li>● <b>Gave the federal government significantly more power</b>, including the <b>creation of a federal executive (POTUS)</b> and <b>judiciary (SCOTUS)</b></li> <li>● Created a <b>bicameral legislature</b> (due to the <b>Great Compromise</b>)</li> <li>● Also established <b>limits to the abuse of power</b> through the <b>principles of popular sovereignty, limited government, separation of powers, checks and balances, judicial review, and federalism</b></li> <li>● <b>Anti-Federalists were reluctant to ratify</b> for fear of the loss of state sovereignty and too much concentration of power – <b>their fears were calmed by the Federalist Papers and the agreement to include a Bill of Rights</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Preamble</b> – Established popular sovereignty – <b>“We the People ...”</b> and makes a statement of the basic functions of government</p> <p><b>Article I</b> – Lays out the structure (<b>bicameral, i.e. House of Representatives and Senate</b>), qualifications, methods of election, and powers (including unique powers of each chamber, i.e. HOR and revenue or Senate and “advice and consent” or confirmation) of the <b>legislature (Congress)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Section 8 – Enumerated powers</b> of Congress such as declaring war, levying taxes, and coining money <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clause 3 – <b>“To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States”</b> – was used to expand federal power and raise issues dealing with federalism</li> <li>○ Clause 18 – <b>“To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers”</b> – established <b>implied powers</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Article II</b> – Lays out the qualifications, method of election (<b>Electoral College</b>), succession (to the VP), methods of removal (<b>impeachment</b>), and powers/responsibilities (<b>Commander in Chief</b>, etc.) of the <b>executive (POTUS)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>[POTUS] shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed”</b> – implies authority for executive orders</li> </ul> <p><b>Article III</b> – Lays out the structure (<b>one Supreme Court and inferior courts as Congress sees fit</b> – district/circuit), tenure (good behavior, i.e. life), and powers/jurisdiction (<b>original v. appellate</b>) of the <b>judicial branch (federal courts)</b></p> <p><b>Article IV</b> – Clarifies <b>states’ obligations to one another</b>/relations (“<b>Full Faith and Credit</b>” clause, “<b>Privileges and Immunities</b>” clause, extradition, etc.)</p> <p><b>Article V</b> – Sets <b>procedure for amending the Constitution</b> (requires action from the <b>federal government – usually 2/3 Congress – to propose</b> and action from the <b>states – usually ¾ of state legislatures – to ratify</b>)</p> <p><b>Article VI</b> – Deals with debts, oaths, and <b>national supremacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Supremacy Clause</b> – <b>“This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land ...”</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Article VII</b> – Explained process for <b>ratification (needed 9 of 13 states)</b></p> <p><b>Bill of Rights – First 10 Amendments</b> that deal with <b>fundamental civil liberties and states’ rights (10<sup>th</sup> Amendment set up reserved powers for the states)</b></p> <p><b>Amendments</b> – Dealt with various issues over history, including important <b>civil rights issues such as slavery and suffrage</b> and the proper function of government</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>14<sup>th</sup> Amendment</b> – allowed for the <b>incorporation</b> of liberties to the states (<b>Due Process Clause</b>) and provided foreequal protection under the law (<b>Equal Protection Clause</b>)</li> </ul> <p>“... The first question that presents itself on the subject is, whether a confederated government be the best for the United States or not? Or in other words, whether the thirteen United States should be reduced to one great republic, governed by one legislature, and under the direction of one executive and judicial; or whether they should continue thirteen confederated republics, under the direction and control of a supreme federal head for certain defined national purposes only?</p> <p>... This government is to possess absolute and uncontrollable power, legislative, executive and judicial, with respect to every object to which it extends ...It appears from these articles that there is no need of any intervention of the state governments, between the Congress and the people, to execute any one power vested in the general government, and that the constitution and laws of every state are nullified and declared void, so far as they are or shall be inconsistent with this constitution, or the laws made in pursuance of it, or with treaties made under the authority of the United States. .... It has authority to make laws which will affect the lives, the liberty, and property of every man in the United States ...</p> <p>... The territory of the United States is of vast extent; it now contains near three millions of souls, and is capable of containing much more than ten times that number. Is it practicable for a country, so large and so numerous as they will soon become, to elect a representation, that will speak their sentiments, without their becoming so numerous as to be incapable of transacting public business? It certainly is not ...</p> <p>... The laws cannot be executed in a republic, of an extent equal to that of the United States, with promptitude ...</p> <p>... In a republic of such vast extent as the United-States, the legislature cannot attend to the various concerns and wants of its different parts ...</p> <p>In so extensive a republic, the great officers of government would soon become above the control of the people, and abuse their power to the purpose of aggrandizing themselves, and oppressing them ...</p> <p>... These are some of the reasons by which it appears that a free republic cannot long subsist over a country of the great extent of these states. If then this new constitution is calculated to consolidate the thirteen states into one, as it evidently is, it ought not to be adopted ...”</p>
<p><b>Brutus No. 1</b> (Anti-Federalist) October 18, 1787 by Robert Yates (<i>Brutus</i>) –</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expressed fears that the new federal government would be able to threaten state sovereignty and abuse its powers</li> <li>● Argued that the federal constitution (especially the Supremacy Clause) made state constitutions irrelevant or subordinate</li> <li>● Argued that the U.S. was too large in size and too diverse to be reduced to a single federal government – thought there was no way that it could accurately represent the will of the people or act swiftly enough</li> </ul>	<p>“Among the numerous advantages promised by a well constructed Union, none deserves to be more accurately developed than its tendency to break and control the violence of faction. The friend of popular governments never finds himself so much alarmed for their character and fate, as when he contemplates their propensity to this dangerous vice ... that the public good is disregarded in the conflicts of rival parties, and that measures are too often decided, not according to the rules of justice and the rights of the minor party, but by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority.</p> <p>... There are two methods of curing the mischiefs of faction: the one, by removing its causes; the other, by controlling its effects.</p>
<p><b>Federalist No. 10</b> – November 22, 1787 by James Madison (<i>Publius</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The main point of Federalist 10 is that a strong federal government can protect liberty (the rights of the people) because it guards against the dangers of control by a narrow interest. Madison also called it "faction."</li> <li>● Argued that factions (political parties/interest groups) were dangerous to a democratic government</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Majority factions would/could vote away the rights of the minority</b></li> <li>● Posited that it is <b>impossible to remove the causes of factions</b>, i.e. liberty and</li> </ul>	
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	<p>diversity, <b>so their effects must be controlled</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Argued that a <b>direct democracy was particularly prone to the violence of factions</b>, i.e. tyranny of the majority, <b>but that a <u>republic</u> could control them</b> – offering a protection for minorities</li> <li>● Lays out the argument (countering the claims of Brutus No. 1) <b>that a large republic would work better than a small one</b> – there would be more worthy candidates to choose from and less likelihood of any one faction dominating</li> </ul>	<p>There are ... <b>two methods of removing the causes of faction</b>: the one, by <b>destroying the liberty which is essential to its existence</b>; the other, by <b>giving to every citizen the same opinions, the same passions, and the same interests ...</b></p> <p>The inference to which we are brought is <b>that the causes of faction cannot be removed, and that relief is only to be sought in the means of controlling its effects.</b></p> <p>From this view of the subject <b>it may be concluded that a pure democracy</b>, by which I mean a society consisting of a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person, <b>can admit of no cure for the mischiefs of faction. A common passion or interest will, in almost every case, be felt by a majority of the whole ... and there is nothing to check the inducements to sacrifice the weaker party ...</b></p> <p><b>A republic</b>, by which I mean a government in which the scheme of representation takes place, opens a different prospect, and <b>promises the cure for which we are seeking ...</b></p> <p>... In the next place, as <b>each representative will be chosen by a greater number of citizens in the large than in the small republic, it will be more difficult for unworthy candidates to practice with success the vicious arts by which elections are too often carried;</b> and the suffrages of the <b>people being more free, will be more likely to centre in men who possess the most attractive merit and the most diffusive and established characters ...</b></p> <p>... <b>Hence, it clearly appears, that the same advantage which a republic has over a democracy, in controlling the effects of faction, is enjoyed by a large over a small republic,--is enjoyed by the Union over the States composing it. ... Here, again, the extent of the Union gives it the most palpable advantage ...</b></p> <p>... <b>The influence of factious leaders may kindle a flame within their particular States, but will be unable to spread a general conflagration through the other States."</b></p>
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<p><b>Federalist No. 51</b> – February 6, 1788 by James Madison (<i>Publius</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explains how <b>separation of powers</b> and <b>checks and balances</b> will keep the federal government under control and <b>prevent the abuse of power</b></li> <li>● Argues that each branch will have an incentive to make sure the others do not become tyrannical (“ambition must be made to counteract ambition,” i.e. checks and balances)</li> <li>● Admits that <b>the legislative branch</b> in the new federal government <b>is the most powerful, but explains how bicameralism is a further protection against abuse of power</b></li> <li>● Also discusses how <b>the veto will keep the legislative branch under control</b></li> </ul>	<p>“To what expedient, then, shall we finally resort, for <b>maintaining in practice the necessary partition of power among the several departments</b>, as laid down in the Constitution? The only answer that can be given is, that as all these exterior provisions are found to be inadequate, the defect must be supplied, <b>by so contriving the interior structure of the government as that its several constituent parts may, by their mutual relations, be the means of keeping each other in their proper places ...</b></p> <p>... In order to lay a due foundation <b>for that separate and distinct exercise of the different powers of government, which to a certain extent is admitted on all hands to be essential to the preservation of liberty, it is evident that each department should have a will of its own; and consequently should be so constituted that the members of each should have as little agency as possible in the appointment of the members of the others ...</b> But the great security against a gradual concentration of the several powers in the same department, consists in <b>giving to those who administer each department the necessary constitutional means and personal motives to resist encroachments of the others.</b> The provision for defense must in this, as in all other cases, be made commensurate to the danger of attack. <b>Ambition must be made to counteract ambition.</b> The interest of the man must be connected with the constitutional rights of the place ... But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern</p>
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		<p>men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. <b>In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.</b></p> <p>... <b>In republican government, the legislative authority necessarily predominates. The remedy for this inconveniency is to divide the legislature into different branches;</b> and to render them, by different modes of election and different principles of action, as little connected with each other as the nature of their common functions and their common dependence on the society will admit ...</p> <p>... As the weight of the legislative authority requires that it should be thus divided, <b>the weakness of the executive may require, on the other hand, and that it should be fortified ... An absolute negative [veto] on the legislature appears, at first view, to be the natural defense with which the executive magistrate should be armed ...</b>”</p>
<p><b>Federalist No. 70</b> – March 15, 1788 by Alexander Hamilton (<i>Publius</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Argues for a <b>single, energetic executive</b>, i.e. the <b>POTUS</b>, who can act swiftly to defend the nation, respond to crisis, and administer the law</li> <li>Points out that having <b>multiple executives</b> might protect against the abuse of power by an individual, but <b>would lead to inaction, conflict, and division – energy, or the ability to act decisively/quickly, was vital for the executive</b></li> </ul>	<p>“There is an idea, which is not without its advocates, that a vigorous Executive is inconsistent with the genius of republican government ... <b>Energy in the Executive is a leading character in the definition of good government. It is essential to the protection of the community against foreign attacks; it is not less essential to the steady administration of the laws;</b> to the protection of property against those irregular and high-handed combinations which sometimes interrupt the ordinary course of justice; to the security of liberty against the enterprises and assaults of ambition, of faction, and of anarchy.</p> <p>... There can be no need, however, to multiply arguments or examples on this head. <b>A feeble Executive implies a feeble execution of the government.</b> A feeble execution is but another phrase for a bad execution; and a government ill executed, whatever it may be in theory, must be, in practice, a bad government.</p> <p>... <b>The ingredients which constitute energy in the Executive are, first, unity; secondly, duration; thirdly, an adequate provision for its support; fourthly, competent powers ...</b></p> <p>... Those politicians and statesmen who have been the most celebrated for the soundness of their principles and for the justice of their views, <b>have declared in favor of a single Executive</b> and a numerous legislature ... That unity is conducive to energy will not be disputed. <b>Decision, activity, secrecy, and despatch will generally characterize the proceedings of one man in a much more eminent degree than the proceedings of any greater number; and in proportion as the number is increased, these qualities will be diminished.</b></p> <p>... <b>Wherever two or more persons are engaged in any common enterprise or pursuit, there is always danger of difference of opinion</b> ... And what is still worse, <b>they might split the community into the most violent and irreconcilable factions,</b> adhering differently to the different individuals who composed the magistracy.</p> <p>... I will only add that, prior to the appearance of the Constitution, <b>I rarely met with an intelligent man from any of the States, who did not admit, as the result of experience, that the UNITY of the executive of this State was one of the best of the distinguishing features of our constitution.</b>”</p>

**Federalist No. 78** – June 14, 1788 by Alexander Hamilton (*Publius*)

- Argued for **the importance of federal judges/justices to have lifetime terms** so that they could be **insulated from politics and the pressures of public opinion** (no need to be reappointed/reelected)
- Pointed out that **the judiciary was the least threatening of the branches** as it could not control the army (“sword) or budget (“purse”) and **relied on the executive to enforce its decisions**
- The independence of the courts would allow them to **put the Constitution first, as the law of the land, and check the constitutionality of the actions of the legislative and executive branches – first argument for judicial review**

“We proceed now to an examination of the judiciary department of the proposed government ... **In unfolding the defects of the existing Confederation, the utility and necessity of a federal judicature have been clearly pointed out** ... the only questions which have been raised being relative to **the manner of constituting it, and to its extent** ...

According to the plan of the convention, **all judges who may be appointed by the United States are to hold their offices DURING GOOD BEHAVIOR; which is conformable to the most approved of the State constitutions** and among the rest, to that of this State ... **The standard of good behavior for the continuance in office of the judicial magistracy, is certainly one of the most valuable of the modern improvements in the practice of government. In a monarchy it is an excellent barrier to the despotism of the prince; in a republic it is a no less excellent barrier to the encroachments and oppressions of the representative body. And it is the best expedient which can be devised in any government, to secure a steady, upright, and impartial administration of the laws.**

**... in a government in which they are separated from each other, the judiciary, from the nature of its functions, will always be the least dangerous to the political rights of the Constitution; because it will be least in a capacity to annoy or injure them. The Executive not only dispenses the honors, but holds the sword of the community. The legislature not only commands the purse, but prescribes the rules by which the duties and rights of every citizen are to be regulated. The judiciary, on the contrary, has no influence over either the sword or the purse; no direction either of the strength or of the wealth of the society; and can take no active resolution whatever. It may truly be said to have neither FORCE nor WILL, but merely judgment; and must ultimately depend upon the aid of the executive arm even for the efficacy of its judgments.**

... that as, from the natural feebleness of the judiciary, it is in continual jeopardy of being overpowered, awed, or influenced by its co-ordinate branches; and that as **nothing can contribute so much to its firmness and independence as permanency in office**, this quality may therefore be justly regarded as **an indispensable ingredient in its constitution**, and, in a great measure, as **the citadel of the public justice and the public security.**

**The complete independence of the courts of justice is peculiarly essential in a limited Constitution** ... Limitations of this kind can be preserved in practice no other way than through the medium of **courts of justice, whose duty it must be to declare all acts contrary to the manifest tenor of the Constitution void.** Without this, all the reservations of particular rights or privileges would amount to nothing.

... It is far more rational to suppose, that the courts were designed to be an intermediate body between the people and the legislature, in order, among other things, to keep the latter within the limits assigned to their authority. **The interpretation of the laws is the proper and peculiar province of the courts. A constitution is, in fact, and must be regarded by the judges, as a fundamental law**

...

... If, then, the courts of justice are to be considered as the bulwarks of a limited Constitution against legislative encroachments, this consideration will afford **a strong argument for the permanent tenure of judicial offices, since nothing will contribute so much**

<p><b>Letter from Birmingham Jail –</b>  April 16, 1963  by Martin Luther King Jr.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Eloquent</b> letter explaining his, and his colleagues,' actions (that had landed him in jail) and laying out their philosophical justification</li> <li>● Argued for <b>nonviolent direct action to bring attention to injustice and demand change in society</b> (relief from oppression)</li> <li>● Countered the claim that the problem should only be solved by those who it affected locally – there was a <b>shared fate</b></li> <li>● <b>Exposed the great injustices in Birmingham</b> and other parts of <b>the Deep South suffered by African-Americans</b></li> <li>● Argued that it was <b>impossible to wait any longer</b> and that those not suffering did not feel the same urgency</li> <li>● Discussed <b>America's failure to live up to its ideals</b></li> <li>● Calls for <b>civil disobedience of immoral and unjust laws</b></li> <li>● Countered the claim that civil rights protesters were agitating, <b>they were merely pointing out tensions that already existed (uncomfortable truths)</b></li> <li>● Owns extremism in support of a noble cause, such as fulfilling the promise of America (so long as it fits the tenets of nonviolence)</li> </ul>	<p><b>as this to that independent spirit in the judges which must be essential to the faithful performance of so arduous a duty.”</b></p> <p>“While confined here in the Birmingham city jail, I came across your recent statement calling my present activities “unwise and untimely.” Seldom do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas ... But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and that your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I want to try to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms.</p> <p>... Several months ago the affiliate here in Birmingham asked us to be on call to engage in a <b>nonviolent direct action program</b> if such were deemed necessary. We readily consented, and when the hour came we lived up to our promise. <b>So I, along with several members of my staff, am here because I was invited here. I am here because I have organizational ties here.</b></p> <p><b>But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here</b> ...</p> <p>Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. <b>Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny ...</b></p> <p>... It is unfortunate that demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city's white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative.</p> <p><b>In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self purification; and direct action.</b> We have gone through all these steps in Birmingham ... <b>Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States.</b> Its ugly record of brutality is widely known. Negroes have experienced grossly unjust treatment in the courts. There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any other city in the nation. These are the hard, brutal facts of the case. On the basis of these conditions, Negro leaders sought to negotiate with the city fathers. But the latter consistently refused to engage in good faith negotiation."</p> <p>... You may well ask: “Why direct action? Why sit ins, marches and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?” You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. <b>Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue.</b> It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. My citing the creation of tension as part of the work of the nonviolent resister may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word “tension.” I have earnestly opposed violent tension, <b>but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth ...</b></p> <p>My friends, I must say to you that we have not made a single gain in civil rights without determined legal and nonviolent pressure. <b>Lamentably, it is an historical fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily.</b> Individuals may see the moral light and voluntarily give up their unjust posture; but, as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups tend to be more immoral than individuals.</p> <p><b>We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the</b></p>
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**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**

...

**We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God given rights.**

**Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation** to say, “Wait.” But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six year old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television ... when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger," your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs."; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of “nobodiness”-- then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait.

There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair ...

... One may well ask: “How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?” **The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws ...**

... One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. **I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.**

**We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive.** We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, **injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured.**

... **And now this approach is being termed extremist.** But though I was initially disappointed at being categorized as an extremist, as I continued to think about the matter I gradually gained a measure of satisfaction from the label. Was not Jesus an extremist for love ... And Abraham Lincoln: “This nation cannot survive half slave and half free.” And Thomas Jefferson: “We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal . . .”

**So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be.** Will we be extremists for hate or for

		<p>love? <b>Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice?</b></p> <p>... <b>We will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham and all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom.</b> Abused and scorned though we may be, our destiny is tied up with America's destiny ...</p> <p>... <b>One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters, they were in reality standing up for what is best in the American dream</b> and for the most sacred values in our Judaeo Christian heritage, thereby <b>bringing our nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.</b>"</p>
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