Martin Luther King’s Letter from Birmingham Jail
Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first edition of +Acumen’s “Readings that Matter.” If you’re reading this it means you raised your hand, stood up and nominated yourself to lead a discussion of Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail.”

Why We Read This Text
At Acumen we aim to be leaders with moral imagination—with the humility to see the world as it is and the audacity to imagine the world as it could be. We aspire to values-based leadership, holding ourselves to a moral compass grounded in the ideas of our Manifesto.

This reading is from a specific time and place in American history but contains lessons that are universally applicable today, in the US and across the world. We use this reading to teach us how to have conversations in and across communities, starting with deep listening, empathy and the courage to speak truth in service of a more just world. In this we are deeply inspired by this letter from one of the world’s great moral crusaders.

Indeed, few readings capture the essence of moral imagination like “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” written by Dr. King when he was 34 years old in 1963. He was imprisoned for coordinating marches and sit-ins in Birmingham, Alabama, a means of non-violent resistance as a call for civil rights.

While King sat in his jail cell an ally smuggled in a newspaper, which contained a public statement by eight white clergymen condemning Dr. King’s work and his activist fight against racism. Dr. King began his famous letter in the margins of the paper, with a borrowed pencil, and continued writing on other scraps of paper until he had completed the letter.

From a place of weakness and physical imprisonment, Dr. King authored one of the most widely read, elegiac and powerful calls for understanding and justice.

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”
Dr. King’s reflections in his “Letter” are as relevant today as they were more than 50 years ago. As the internet and mobile technologies connect us in ways unimaginable in 1963, we are also seeing individuals pulling back into familiar tribes and easy ideologies. Inequality is rising. We ask whether the center will hold.

If there is any testament to change, it is the work of Dr. King and so many others who fought and too often died so that others might live with dignity. They walked with strong shoulders on which all who want to effect change can stand. Our hope is for you to draw inspiration, wisdom, empathy and courage from the deep-rooted strength and imagination of Dr. King.

We thank you for your willingness to experiment and explore the ideas in this reading, and wish you the richness we ourselves find each time we re-examine this document.

Jacqueline Novogratz
Founder and CEO, Acumen
January 2015
Welcome to the first reading in our series on “Readings that Matter.” This series is adapted from a set of readings that Acumen’s Fellows and staff discuss on a regular basis as part of our leadership training and development. We have chosen to start with Martin Luther King’s most widely-read text, “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” because the themes are particularly relevant today.

"INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS A THREAT TO JUSTICE EVERYWHERE."

As the world becomes more interconnected, we experience a growing awareness of injustice. This is not only true in the United States but also across the world.

By systematically reading and discussing Martin Luther King’s "Letter from Birmingham Jail," you will explore his arguments, dissect his masterful use of rhetoric, and hopefully come to a better understanding of where you stand on the ideas he shares.

Group participation is not required but strongly encouraged. Instructions on how to recruit others to join you are included later in this guide.
Suggested steps to make the most out of this guide:

1. **Complete Your Prep Work (1 hour)**
   + Recruit friends, colleagues, or relatives to join you in the discussion. Even though individual participation is technically possible, we strongly encourage completing this guide with someone else.
   + Review background materials in this guide.
   + Read the “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (an audio version is also available).

2. **Meet & Discuss (2 hours)**
   Your group needs to choose a date/place (either in person or virtually) to conduct a meetup. This guide includes instructions for your meetup. Everyone in your group should have completed the ‘prep work’ prior to meeting in person. We suggest either conducting either one 2 hour meetup or two 1.5 hour meetups with your group. If you plan to work through this guide on your own, go through the discussion prompts as instructed.

3. **Synthesize and Submit (30 min)**
   Complete the assignment and survey. Even if you are working with a group, please complete the survey individually. To qualify for the Statement of Accomplishment, you must submit the survey. We value your responses to help us develop other Readings that Matter! Instructions on the other requirements will be described later in this guide.
1. RECRUIT OTHERS

After registering, you need to do the following:

1. Recruit others (if you are interested in taking this in a group).
2. Review the background info before the reading.
3. Read the “Letter from Birmingham Jail.”

For each step, we have included relevant resources in this guide. Steps 2 and 3 should be completed individually and should take approximately 1 hour to complete.

1. Recruit Others

Interested in completing this guide with a group? We suggest starting with a group of people that you know. Who among your friends, co-workers, classmates or family members are likely to be interested in this experience with you?

Your group should consist of 3–8 people, since it will be difficult to coordinate schedules if you have too large a group.

Make sure that your group members also register individually to receive access to this guide (and be qualified for the Statement of Accomplishment later).

FAQs

How much time is required to complete this guide?
Your group should allocate 1 hour for individual preparation and 2 hours for the group meetup.

What do my group members need to do after they register?
Upon registration, they will gain access to this guide. Your group needs to coordinate a date and location (either virtual or in person) to hold a meetup (you’ll find further instructions later in this guide). Remind your group that everyone must complete their prep work before the group meetup.

What if I cannot recruit anyone and am using this guide on my own?
You can join the Community and proactively reach out to others who are open to hosting a meetup with you (either virtually or in person).

The reading touches upon some potentially controversial subjects. Therefore, it is important to follow the guide and spend time on introductions and setting group norms to get comfortable with each other in order to have a meaningful discussion.
Once you know who you are going to work with, please use the checklist below to figure out how you and your group will conduct a meetup together. Decide if you want to host a one 2 hour meetup or two 1.5 hour meetups to complete your work with this guide. If you plan to complete your work on your own, please skip this page and move on to the rest of the prep work.

**Pre-Meetup Checklist for Groups**

When is your group meeting? (date & time)

Are you meeting in person or online?

If you are meeting in person, where do you plan to have your group meetup?

If possible, it is recommended to conduct your discussion in a quiet, comfortable place like someone’s home or a cozy nook in a coffee shop or office. Avoid places like restaurants where you’ll be disrupted by a waiter or waitress often. This will affect the flow and depth of the conversation. Sit around a table or in a semi-circle so everyone in your group can see one another.

Grab a cushion, cup of tea or coffee, and maybe even some snacks—you’ll be in this space for awhile so make sure you and everyone else are comfortable!

If you are meeting online, how do you plan to connect to each other? Coordinate with your group to figure out what’ll be best.

Useful tools for virtual meetups:

  + Skype
  + Google Hangouts
  + appear.in

Make sure you are aware of what to bring on the day of your meetup, which should include: this guide, notes and reflections from the prep work, the Letter, something to keep time with, and pens.

Choose a facilitator. This person will be in charge of following the discussion guide to conduct your group meetup. He/she needs to review the “Tips for Effective Facilitation” document at the end of the guide.
2. Understand the Context

Before going through the reading, familiarize yourself with Martin Luther King Jr. and the time during which the “Letter from Birmingham Jail” was written.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was an instrumental leader of the African American Civil Rights Movement in the US in the 1950s and 1960s. As a Baptist minister, he drew from aspects of Christian thought and was also heavily influenced by the Satyagraha teachings of Mahatma Gandhi.

“Letter from Birmingham Jail” was written in 1963 from a solitary confinement jail cell in Birmingham, Alabama. The letter was written on scraps of paper and in the margins of a newspaper and gradually smuggled out by Dr. King’s lawyer. Birmingham was one of the most segregated cities in the South, winning it the nick name, Bombingham, due to a string of unsolved bombings of African American churches during the summer of 1963.

Dr. King was arrested on April 12, 1963 for leading a peaceful protest against racism and racial segregation on the grounds that he did not have a parade permit.

On that same day The Birmingham News published “A Call for Unity,” an open letter written by eight white clergymen in Birmingham, criticizing Dr. King and his supporters for being “outside agitators” (he is from Atlanta, Georgia), calling the protests “untimely,” and urging legal means to end discrimination. Dr. King wrote this missive in response to the clergymen.

Additional Research
Take 20 minutes to do your own brief internet research about what was happening in your local area during the early 1960s.

- What other significant events were happening at this time in U.S. history? In your country? In the world?
- If you learned about Martin Luther King Jr. in school, what do you recall from those classes?
3. Read and Reflect

Read the “Letter from Birmingham Jail” and note things that are of interest to you; things you don’t agree with or things that you don’t understand. Look up any references that Dr. King makes that are unfamiliar to you.

Prefer Audio? You can access a recorded version by a group reading the letter, organized by Willie Jackson (42 min).

Reflect

In her introduction to this guide, Acumen’s CEO, Jacqueline Novogratz, mentioned that this letter “contains lessons that are universally applicable today across the world....it allows us to reflect on how to have conversations in and across communities, starting with deep listening, empathy and the courage to speak truth in service of a more just world.” What does this mean to you? Below are several things to reflect and take notes on.

What are some current topics that you care about that relate to this letter?

What part of his letter was particularly enlightening to you? Why?

Why do you think it is important that you and your peers revisit this letter today?

Now you are all set to meet with your group!
ENGAGE
WITH OTHERS

Below are some optional activities for you to become more immersed in the guide’s community and material:

Learn What Others are Saying about the Letter
Now that you’ve read the letter yourself, learn from existing commentary. For example, you can read Maria Popova’s great piece “Martin Luther King on the Two Types of Laws and the Four Steps to Successful Nonviolent Resistance.”

Connect with Others Using this Guide
Want to show which city/country you are using this guide from or meet others who are also using this guide? Join our Community—say hello, introduce yourself and share why you decided to explore this topic.

Share Your Experience on Social Media
Active on Twitter/Instagram/Facebook or Google+? Share your initial takeaways from the reading or favorite quotes. Use #AcumenReads #MLK and see what others have posted.

Sample tweet: “Justice too long delayed is justice denied —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.” Just started my work with @plusacumen #AcumenReads #MLK
Suggested Meeting Agenda

It’s meetup time! Pages 12–22 include a discussion guide for your group meetup. It provides questions and prompts to facilitate productive conversation.

We believe that a powerful way to experience the remarkable range of Dr. King’s rhetoric is to slow down and explore the different ways in which he argues and builds his case—layer by layer. Therefore, the guide is designed to allow you and your group to discuss the letter point-by-point. It follows the same format we use when discussing this reading with our Acumen fellows and staff. However, don’t feel tied to it when the discussion starts flowing.

This guide is meant to be comprehensive but not exhaustive. This is one model of discussing this letter but there are and could be many others.

Using this guide on your own?
Go through the discussion section on your own and take notes on your responses to the discussion prompts suggested there. Check out the Submissions Board to share your responses. Read others’ submissions and comment on them. Then, work on your Assignment (pg. 23) using those reflections.

Suggested Agenda
We have suggested an agenda for your group discussion. Feel free to amend it to suit your needs. Use pg. 12–22 during your meetup.

1. Welcome & Introductions (10 min)

2. Group Norms (10 min)

3. Discussion (120 min or two 90-min sessions)
   If this session is two hours long, the group can choose which sub sections they want to spend more time on.
   A. Context
   B. The Alabama Clergymen
   C. Dr. King’s Opening
   D. Creative Tension
   E. Breaking the Law
   F. The White Moderate
   G. Extremists for Love
   H. The White Church & Disturbers of the Peace
   I. Bull Connors’s Police

4. Wrap Up (10 min)
1. Welcome and Introductions (10 min)
Here are some talking points and an icebreaker to kick-off your discussion.

A. Welcome
Facilitator: Welcome your group to Readings that Matter and briefly share why we read this text.

We read this text for two reasons:
+ To understand what we can learn from Martin Luther King, Jr.’s leadership
+ Discuss the ideas around social justice he shares and how they relate to our world today

Also inform your group that you’ll be following a fairly structured format to discuss the reading.

B. Getting to Know Each Other
Before diving into the discussion, we suggest an ice breaker and norms setting activity.
Facilitator: Start by introducing yourself and why this is important to you. Why did you want to lead a discussion of Martin Luther King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail”? Use this exercise to get to know your group members and why each of you are here.

My name is:
___________________________________________

I heard about this guide from:
___________________________________________

Currently, I:
[What do you do? Are you a student?]
___________________________________________

I am here today because:
___________________________________________

I look forward to learning more about:
___________________________________________
2. GROUP NORMS

2. Group Norms (10 min)
We recommend that your group takes a moment to set a few group norms for how you want to conduct yourselves during the discussion. We have suggested a few norms below (Source: edchange.org). The facilitator can invite his/her group to individually review this list and ask if anyone would like to make additions.

Example:
+ Listen actively -- respect others when they are talking.
+ Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing (“I” instead of “they,” “we,” and “you”).
+ Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions, but refrain from personal attacks -- focus on ideas.
+ Participate to the fullest of your ability -- community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
+ Instead of invalidating somebody else’s story with your own spin on his or her experience, share your own story and experience.
+ The goal is not to agree, but rather to gain a deeper understanding.
+ Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses -- they can be as disrespectful as words.

FACILITATOR’S NOTES
+ Is there anything your group would change?
3. Group Discussion (120 min or two 90-min sessions)

Discussion Agenda
This section will include suggested questions to pose to the group for discussion. The first question of each section is usually very specific to the text and the questions become more broad as you move through the list.

A. Context
Before diving into the “Letter,” let’s first discuss the context in which it was written.

If you are working on this guide on your own, go through all the discussion prompts suggested on the following pages and see pg. 23 for further instructions on assignment submission.

+ How much did you know about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., American history in the early 1960’s, what was going on in Birmingham, Alabama then prior to now?
+ What else was going on in the world at this time?
+ Was there anything new that you had learned during the prep work that you would like to share with the group to provide context?

FACILITATOR NOTES
This section will include a summary of important points that you may want to listen for or point out during the discussion.

+ Dr. King was an instrumental leader of the African-American Civil Rights Movement in the US in the 1950s and 1960s.
+ A Baptist minister, he drew from aspects of Christian thought, and was also heavily influenced by the Satyagraha teachings of Mahatma Gandhi.
+ This “Letter” was written in response to a letter from eight Alabama clergymen. He wrote it in 1963 from a city jail, where he was imprisoned for leading a non-violent protest against racial discrimination.
+ Birmingham was one of the most segregated cities in the South, and there were unsolved bombings of black churches.
+ Also during this time: Vietnam War, U.S. President Kennedy assassinated, Kenya gained independence from Britain, beginning of Beatlemania.
3. GROUP DISCUSSION

B. The Alabama Clergyman

Relevant Text:

+ pg. 257 from line 6 “We expressed understanding...” until line 18 “unwise and untimely.”

Discuss:

+ Why do you think the clergymen made this letter public?
+ What effect does calling someone an outsider have?
+ Do you see any connection between what you read here with things that you care about in today’s world? If so, what are those connections?

FACILITATOR NOTES

+ The document begins with a public statement from eight Alabama clergymen
+ See pg. 257-258
+ In their letter, the eight clergymen argue that:

1. Dr. King’s protests are badly timed and unwise. The protestors should wait. They (the clergy) are working on the issue. Be patient. This isn’t the time for your extreme measures.

2. Dr. King is an “outsider” – i.e. Who are you to tell us what to do? You don’t understand our situation, we have it under control

3. Their language is very alienating, creating an us vs. them mentality.
C. Dr. King’s Opening

Relevant Text:

+ pg. 258 first paragraph from “My dear Fellow Clergymen...” till “patient and reasonable terms.”
+ pg. 258 line 30: “I have the honor...” until line 39 “we were invited here.”
+ pg. 258 line 41: “I am in Birmingham” until p. 259 line 5 “beyond my particular home”
+ pg. 259 line 9: “Injustice anywhere...” until line 14 “never be considered an outsider anywhere in this country”

Discuss:

+ What leadership technique does Dr. King use in his opening?
+ Do you agree that there’s no such thing as an outsider?
+ How does Dr. King’s campaign approach compare with approaches you’ve participated in or seen in the news recently?

FACILITATOR NOTES

+ Dr. King opens his letter masterfully:

1. He addresses them as “My dear Fellow Clergymen” to highlight their sameness rather than differences. He’s saying we are all men of the cloth from the same Judeo-Christian background.
2. He uses language from their letter (e.g. unwise and untimely) to start from their perspective, not his.
3. Then Dr. King gives three reasons why he is not an “outsider”
   1. He was invited as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which is a national organization.
   2. He uses a reference from the Bible and appeals to their higher purpose as clergymen by comparing himself to the apostle Paul, who was called to carry the gospel of freedom beyond his own place of birth.
   3. And he makes a moral argument: “I am in Birmingham because injustice is here...Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere...”
3. GROUP DISCUSSION

D. Creative Tension

Relevant Text:

+ pg. 260 line 31: “Nonviolent direct action seeks” to “could no longer ignore it.”
+ pg. 260 line 38: “Just as Socrates” to “understanding and brotherhood” on p.261
+ pg. 261 line 28: “For years now” until line 33 “justice too long delayed is justice denied.”
+ pg. 261 line 36: “I guess” until p. 262 line 25 “our legitimate and unavoidable

Discuss:

+ What does Dr. King say about the role of nonviolent direct action?
+ How does Dr. King feel this tension? How does he use it? (Hint: pg. 261 lines 20 – 21)
+ What does Dr. King say to those who say “wait?” What role does time play?
+ Can you think of other examples (current or local) where time is a tool for those in power?

FACILITATOR NOTES

+ Dr. King counters the clergymen’s criticism that it’s inappropriate to get his point across with public demonstrations.
+ He argues, the “white power structure of this city left the Negro community with no alternative” because of the ceaseless violence, continued racist practices of local businesses, and politicians’ unwillingness to negotiate.
+ Dr. King believes that the role of nonviolent direct action is to force people into negotiation. He and his group meant to dramatize racism to make sure the community at large could no longer ignore it They sought to establish nonviolent creative tension which Dr. King says is necessary for any progress to be made.
+ Dr. King also steps out of talking to the clergymen as clergymen and connects with them as fathers, husbands, and brothers.
+ He writes with generosity and empathy. He really tried to put himself in the shoes of the clergymen and explain what life is really like for him and his community.
3. Group Discussion

E. Breaking the Law

Relevant Text:

+ pg. 262 line 36: “A just law” until p.263 line 7 “morally wrong and sinful.”
+ pg. 262 line 12 “An unjust law” until line 19 “unhampered right to vote.”

Discuss:

+ What is your view on Dr. King’s statement about just and unjust laws?
+ Dr. King states that ‘no law can be considered democratically structured when a minority has no part in enacting or creating the law’ – can you think of any incidents in today’s world where this also holds true? What is the problem in that situation? What do you think is the right thing to do if you were to change the situation?

FACILITATOR NOTES

+ Dr. King argues it is our moral obligation to disobey unjust laws.
+ Dr. King defends his law breaking as a moral act, based on the concept that there are just laws and unjust laws endowed and passed down to us by our creator.
+ Dr. King’s litmus test for the difference is whether a law ‘uplifts’ or ‘degrades human personality.’ He weighs the difference between the violation of a law that requires a parade permit and the violation of U.S. constitutional rights guaranteed by the First Amendment.
+ He says that no law can be considered democratically structured when a minority has no part in enacting or creating the law due to discriminatory voting rights and practices.
+ He reminds them that civil disobedience of this kind is not new as illustrated by the early Christians and Socrates.
3. GROUP DISCUSSION

F. The White Moderate

Relevant Text:

+ pg. 264 line 18: “First I must confess” until line 28 “a more convenient season.”
+ pg. 265 line 28: “We must come to see” until line 34 “time is always rip to do right.”

Discuss:

+ Who are “white moderates”? What are the characteristics of this group?
+ Do we ever play the role of “white moderates”? (no matter your race or nationality)
+ What role do “white moderates” play in today’s conflicts? (Can you think of any relevant examples from your local context?)

FACILITATOR NOTES

+ In this section, Dr. King confesses profound disappointment towards specific groups of Americans that he calls out by political stance and race.
+ The first group being the “white moderate” who he thought he could count on, but who is more concerned with order rather than justice.
+ Again he brings up the theme of time and the idea of how well it is used by those of “ill will” and those of “good will.”
3. GROUP DISCUSSION

G. Extremists for Love

Relevant Text:

+ pg. 266 line 37: “But I have tried” until p.267 line 17 “

Discuss:

+ Recall what Dr. King says about extremists. Who are the “extremists” today? Who decides?
+ Do you think an extremist for love can use violence?

FACILITATOR NOTES

+ In this section Dr. King redefines the label of “extremist.”
+ In the paragraphs leading up to this section, Dr. King takes a critical look at two opposing forces in the Negro community - the complacent and the radicals.
+ He divides the complacent into two groups: those that have been beaten down by racism and poverty and “drained of self-respect and a sense of somebodiness,” and those akin to the white moderate.
+ On the flip side, he argues that the real extremists are the members of the various black nationalist groups.
+ Note the language Dr. King uses. By describing these groups’ “bitterness and hatred,” promotion of violence, and racism against whites, Dr. King recasts the “extremists” and places himself in the middle of black America, not the extreme.
3. Group Discussion

H. The White Church and Disturbers of the Peace

Relevant Text:

+ pg. 268 line 15: “I had the strange feeling” until line 17 “the support of the white church.”
+ pg. 269 line 15: “Yes I love...how could I do otherwise?”
+ pg. 270 line 20: “But even if the church...I have no despair about the future” and line 33: “We will win our freedom” to the end “in our echoing demand.”

Discuss:

+ What emotions does he elicit in this section?(Hint: Shame, betrayal, love, hope)
+ Why is this important? What is the impact of these emotions?

Facilitator Notes

+ Dr. King is disappointment with the Church for not taking more leadership on issues of civil rights and social justice.
+ Here Dr. King points out that at one time in history the Church took a stronger leadership stance toward social mores when it was the “thermostat” and “not merely a thermometer.”
+ The early Christians were “the disturbers of the peace” and “outside agitators” that weren’t afraid to condemn unjust practices such as “infanticide and gladiatorial contest.”
+ Unlike the contemporary Church that is “often weak” and “the arch supporter of the status quo.”
+ Despite being a pastor, Dr. King vows to carry on with his cause of justice with or without the Church putting his faith in the U.S. Declaration of Independence.
I. Bull Connor’s Police

Relevant Text:

+ pg. 271 line 18: “T.S. Eliot has said...for the wrong reason.”
+ pg. 271 line 39: “Never before” through the end of the piece “scintillating beauty...Yours for the cause

Discuss:

+ If you strive for a moral end are the means to get to that end relevant?
+ Can you think of examples in your own life where there is tension between the means and the ends?
+ Seeing how Dr. King ends the letter, what is on your mind now? What, as a reader of his letter, could/should you do going forward?

FACILITATOR NOTES

+ Dr. King challenges the clergymen’s praise for the Birmingham police.
+ Before closing Dr. King leaves us with some of the most bitter images of the piece. He describes police brutality, pushing and cursing old women and girls, and refusing food to singing prisoners to make a point about ends and means.
+ Dr. King then moves on to close where he began, emphasizing their connection as clergymen and humans.
+ He uses their language “having a patience that makes me patient” but spins it to support his case.
+ He uses irony and reminds the clergy men of their place in the universe. The clergymen can forgive sins committed against them but only God can forgive the sins’ of others.
+ Dr. King ends with hope, purpose and a genuine invitation to continue the dialogue.
4. DISCUSSION
WRAP UP

4. Wrap Up (10 min)
Congratulations! You’ve given yourself the time and space to study the inner-workings of Dr. King’s mental process.

As some of you might know already, the “Letter” was not accepted for publication in the paper that printed the clergymen’s letter, “A Call for Unity”. In fact, King’s letter was not widely distributed until years after the Birmingham protests. But it is now, and has long been, an opportunity for readers like yourselves around the world to continue to experience and learn from the leadership and rhetorical artistry of this legendary figure.

Ahas
At Acumen, before we close the discussion we like to share ahas. This can be a key takeaway, new perspective, memorable comment, question or parting thought.

Individually, take 1–2 minutes to reflect on your groups’ discussion overall and write it down. If you’re struggling to come up with an aha, here are a few questions to help:

+ What was your favorite quote?
+ If you were to tell your friend about this experience tomorrow, what would you tell them?

Then as a group, share what you wrote down with the group. Feel free to share them online: @plusacumen #AcumenReads #MLK

Lastly, review the instruction on this guide’s assignment on the following page together.

To Get Credit
+ Everyone in your group is required to complete this online participation survey, which will include submission of your assignment (see instructions on the next page).
+ Afterwards, we’ll deliver your Statement of Accomplishment to the email address you used for registration.
+ Your completion of the survey is an important means for us to learn about you and listen to your suggestions for how we could improve our future instructional design. We do read every survey we receive, and we appreciate your input.
5. Assignment and Survey Participation

The last steps are to create a tangible output that visualizes your work from the discussion and upload it online to share with others. If you are working on this guide in a group and would like to create one shared output, that is fine too.

Option 1 (groups only)
1. Take a photo of your group.
2. Write a blurb explaining your group’s favorite discussion topic(s).
3. Upload here with: #AcumenReads #MLK @plusacumen

Option 2 (group or individual)
1. Select one (or more) favorite quote(s) from the letter.
2. Create a photo collage or a mind map or any other creative output to illustrate how the quote relates to various topics covered in your discussions.
3. Upload here with: #AcumenReads #MLK @plusacumen

You may use your own photos, pictures from the internet, text, illustrations from magazines, your own drawings, etc. as long as you credit your sources.

Option 3 (group or individual)
1. Create something original and photograph it.
3. Upload here with: #AcumenReads #MLK @plusacumen

Where to Submit
Once you upload your output to our Submissions Board, you can also share your assignment on social media such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

Then what?
Once you’ve made the post, obtain a URL for your post and include it in your responses to the Participation Survey.

How do I obtain a URL for my post?
Depending on which platform you are using, see below:
+ How to find Links to an individual Tweet
+ How to Get Instagram Post URL (your account must be public)
+ How to Get Facebook Post URL (your post must public)

Congratulations!
You’ve completed everything that is required for this guide. You can review what other participants have submitted here.
# Tips for Effective Facilitation

Your role as a facilitator is not to be an expert, but to help enable the conversation and move it along.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Ineffective response</th>
<th>Effective response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everyone has different perspectives</td>
<td>Try to get the group to arrive at one common understanding by the end</td>
<td>Differences in understanding are good. Try to draw out the distinctiveness of others’ arguments and ideas with caring and humility. If you find yourself being confused or skeptical, those are precisely the point to stop and discuss. Ask: “Can you say more about that?” “What do you mean by XXX?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent arguments</td>
<td>Call them out</td>
<td>Let the group know its ok to change and construct new understandings as you go along. That is a key sign of intellectual growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>Filling the silence just to fill the gap</td>
<td>Be comfortable with silence. Sometimes people need time to process before speaking up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly vocal member dominates discussion</td>
<td>Trying to control this person – “excuse me, do you mind if I let someone else take a turn?”</td>
<td>If one person is over-participating everyone else is under-participating, so focus your efforts on the under-participators and encourage them to participate more. Ask: “How do the rest of you feel about this?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimal participation by members who don’t feel involved/interested in the particular topic</td>
<td>Ignore it, and act as though silence means consent.</td>
<td>Look for an opportunity to have a discussion on “What’s important to me about this topic? This gives everyone a chance to consider their own stake in the outcome of the discussion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Someone becomes strident and repetitive</td>
<td>Talk behind the person’s back. Confront the person during the break, and then be surprised when you see their anxiety go through the roof when you resume.</td>
<td>People repeat themselves because they don’t feel heard. Summarize the person’s point of view until s/he feels understood. People just want to feel heard, not necessarily that everyone must agree with them.</td>
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