### Title of Lesson: Tracing the Idea of Civil Disobedience through Thoreau, Gandhi, and King

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<th>Grade Level/ Subject Areas:</th>
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<td>9-12, English, Social Studies, American Studies</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>At least two 50 minute lessons</td>
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**Goals/ Objectives of Lesson:**
- Students will trace the meaning of the term “civil disobedience” through history by studying the definitions by Thoreau, Gandhi, and King.
- Students will read and analyze the excerpts from Thoreau, Gandhi, and King.
- Students will demonstrate reading comprehension, analysis, and synthesis skills through one of the following: a skit, digital story, or paper.

**Lesson Abstract:**

This lesson is intended to serve as an introduction to the concept of civil disobedience. Students will begin the lesson with an introductory digital story that provides them with some basic background. After this introduction, students will read and analyze excerpts from the three founders of civil disobedience: Henry David Thoreau, Mahatma Gandhi, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Ultimately, students should be able to dissect the similarities and differences in the three theories of civil disobedience and identify how the writers affected each other’s ideas.

**Lesson Content:**

**Overview**

The basic concept of civil disobedience is as follows: if an individual feels that his government is not representing him or committing injustices or untruths, it is his right and even his patriotic duty to draw attention to these errors. If, after dialogue and negotiation with the conflicting group, the individual is still ignored, he could break the law for the purpose of drawing attention to his cause. Civil disobedience is the act of breaking the law for a cause. Although civil disobedience can be violent or nonviolent, many perceive civil disobedience to be strictly nonviolent. The writers who developed the idea – Henry David Thoreau and Mahatma Gandhi – both advocate for nonviolence over violence. This concept of nonviolent civil disobedience was later emulated by numerous individuals and groups, including civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and American protesters against the Vietnam War.

**Brief Information about Thoreau**

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), was an American writer and philosopher who lived in Massachusetts. He’s most famous for his work *Walden* (1852) about his experiences living in solitude for two years on Walden Pond. Thoreau was part of the school of transcendentalism, along with his colleague and friend Ralph Waldo Emerson. Merriam Webster defines transcendentalism as a “philosophy that asserts the primacy of the spiritual and transcendent over the material and empirical or a visionary idealism”. The transcendentalists were a facet under American Romanticism. American Romanticism was a movement out of reaction to 18th...
century rationalism and the conservative religious climate in America. Transcendentalists “celebrated the power of the human imagination to commune with the universe and transcend the limitations of the material world” (Encarta). They believed strongly that this sublime state was achieved by connecting with nature. Transcendentalists also valued simplicity, individuality, and nonconformity.

**Thoreau’s Civil Disobedience**
Thoreau wrote *Civil Disobedience*, also known as its original title, *Resistance to Civil Government*, in 1849. In 1846, Thoreau went to jail because he had not paid his poll tax out of resistance to the Mexican American War. In *Civil Disobedience*, Thoreau develops his rationale in resisting taxes and, more importantly, puts forth the idea of passive resistance, or civil disobedience. Notably, Thoreau and Emerson had read the *Bhagavad-Gita* and some of the sacred Hindu *Upanishads* (Fischer 38). The origins of civil disobedience are rooted in both American and Indian culture.

**Brief Info about Gandhi**
Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948), later known as Mahatma Gandhi, was an Indian writer, philosopher, and spiritual and political leader. Born in India, Gandhi was educated in England as a barrister and then accepted a job in South Africa. Upon his arrival in South Africa, Gandhi was astounded by the racism that he encountered on the train to Pretoria, the capital of Transvaal. He boarded the train with a first class ticket, but when the railway officials discovered that there was an Indian man riding in the first class section, they ordered him to go the third-class car. Gandhi refused, and he was thrown off of the train (Fischer 21). This experience was fundamental in shaping Gandhi’s ideas about passive resistance, which he expanded into his own philosophy entitled satyagraha. Gandhi was extremely well-read, and was particularly inspired by the teachings of Ruskin, Tolstoy, and Thoreau. Gandhi scholar Louis Fischer writes that in 1908, when Gandhi reflected on one of his own prison experiences, he wrote “I did not feel for a moment confined, and the walls seemed a great waste of stone and mortar.” Fischer further claims that Gandhi copied these words from Thoreau and that he studied the essay during one of his stays in jail (Fischer 38-39). Thoreau’s ideas clearly influenced Gandhi, and Gandhi went on to refine and develop the concept of civil disobedience to align with his own Hindu values and perspective.

**Gandhi’s *Hind Swaraj* and theory/practice of Satyagraha (passive resistance)**
Gandhi’s idea of satyagraha is important in understanding nonviolent resistance. The idea of satyagraha falls under Gandhi’s larger philosophy of ahimsa, in other words, the practice of nonviolence in all aspects of life. Satyagraha literally translates to “truth force” or “grasping onto principles” (*Young India*, 11/5/19). The difference between civil disobedience and satyagraha is a process issue. Civil disobedience is one potential component of satyagraha, but satyagraha is bigger than just civil disobedience. To be a “satyagrahi” (one who engages in nonviolent resistance), one must develop a specific moral code. Gandhi felt that “those who want to become passive resisters...have to observe perfect chastity, adopt poverty, follow truth, and cultivate fearlessness” (*Hind Swaraj* 96). According to Gandhi scholar Mark Juergensmeyer, satyagraha encompassed a set of steps, loosely categorized as the following:

1. Negotiation/Dialogue of the differences in an attempt to resolve them
2. Mobilization of supporters and proper training
3. Demonstration of the issues to solidify support and present a truthful resolution
4. Non-cooperation, including boycotts, strikes, peaceful disruption, blockades, and sit ins
5. Creation of a parallel entity to replace the old opponent (Juergensmeyer 57)

To simplify this, Gandhi basically felt that you could not simply launch civil disobedience, but must first try other options like negotiation. Civil disobedience, or as Juergensmeyer describes it above, non-cooperation, should be a step only after leaders have communicated concerns to their opponents and tried to resolve these concerns in a reasonable way.

Gandhi practiced satyagraha many times and in various forms. He led marches, encouraged workers to make illegal homespun “khadi” (hand-spun cloth), and fasted in honor of social/political problems. Some of the most significant examples of Gandhi’s satyagraha include the Salt March and two fasts: the Calcutta Fast and his last fast. Gandhi’s Salt March was in protest of Britain’s monopoly on salt in India and the unfair tax on salt. Gandhi led a march of two-hundred and forty-one miles in twenty-four days across the Indian countryside to the beach so that he could make salt. He arrived at the beach with 12,000 supporters. Symbolically, this act demonstrated to Indians that they must continue to persevere in their quest for home rule. As a result of this march, the British viceroy agrees to meet with Gandhi as an equal and this begins the steps toward India’s independence in 1947 (A Force More Powerful).

Gandhi’s fasts were intended to be demonstrations to draw attention to serious political matters in India. India during 1946-47 was a climate of mass rioting and violence between Hindus and Muslims. Many newspapers called this conflict a civil war. After numerous attempts at negotiation, Gandhi felt that events were still escalating. On September 1, 1947, Gandhi announced that he was beginning a fast that he would break only when “sanity returns to Calcutta” (Gandhi in The Statesman, 9/2/47). The calm that moved over India as a result of Gandhi’s fasting is astounding. Gandhi was able to break the fast by September 4, when the rioting finally ceased (The Calcutta Fast). Gandhi’s last fast, which occurred in Delhi, was also related to the Hindu-Muslim conflict, but dealt with tensions about Muslim’s treatment of Hindus in Pakistan and the failure of the Indian government to grant Pakistan money previously promised to the country. Gandhi broke this fast when government officials agreed to negotiate and address the issue.

Gandhi’s theory and practice of satyagraha and civil disobedience directly affected numerous political officials throughout history, including Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Cesar Chavez, and Aung San Suu Kyi. His legacy continues to inspire many to choose the path of nonviolent resistance over violence and aggression.

**Connection to Martin Luther King, Jr.**

The ideas of Thoreau and Gandhi shaped the philosophy and strategies behind many subsequent political movements. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was well-versed in both Thoreau and Gandhi’s teachings, and the concepts of civil disobedience and satyagraha were instrumental in shaping King’s leadership of the 1950s and 1960s American Civil Rights Movement. Dr. Martin Luther King (1929-1968) was an African American minister and leader of the Civil Rights Movement.
When King was studying theology at Morehouse College, Crozer Theological Seminary, and Boston University, he studied Gandhi’s writings. Later in his life, King went to India to learn more about Gandhi’s teachings. The Reverend James Lawson, another Civil Rights leader who worked with King, also spent time studying Gandhi’s satyagraha in India.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. worked with other Civil Rights leaders to develop strategic plans to raise consciousness in the fight for equal rights for white and black Americans. King was elected as the president of the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), which organized the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycotts. These boycotts escalated the Supreme Court, who ruled in 1956 that the city’s busses were desegregated.

From 1960 to 1962 King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) renewed their direct action against segregation at the voting booth, at schools, at lunch counters, and at bus stations. King also threw his organization’s support behind other groups fighting the same battles. There were black college students, who would later organize as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), staging sit-ins at segregated lunch counters in Nashville, Montgomery, and Atlanta. There were Freedom Rides initiated by the Council on Racial Equality (CORE) to challenge segregation in interstate bus transportation. These efforts contributed to the eventual desegregation of stores, busses, and bus stations. ("Martin Luther King, Jr.")

In the spring of 1963 in Birmingham, Alabama, King and the SCLC were invited by local black leaders to help them organize a protest to end segregation in downtown stores, to achieve equal opportunity in employment, and to establish a biracial commission to promote further desegregation. In order to attract attention to their demands and to put pressure on local businesses, the protesters employed the march. Birmingham police moved against the first march with clubs and attack dogs and the state court issued an injunction barring further protests. When King defied the court order, he was arrested and placed in solitary confinement. During his incarceration, criticism by local white clergymen of the movement and King's actions prompted him to write his famous "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." ("Martin Luther King, Jr.")

Note: There are brief summaries explaining each excerpt on the “Excerpt Answer Sheet”

Massachusetts English Content Standards for Grades 9-12:
- 8.30 – Identify and interpret themes and give supporting evidence from a text.
- 9.7 – Relate a literary work to the seminal ideas of its time.
- 11.5 – Apply knowledge of the concept that the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on life, and provide support from the text for the identified themes.
- 23.15 – Craft sentences in a way that support the underlying logic of the ideas.

Guiding Questions:
- What does Thoreau define as civil disobedience?
- What does Gandhi define as civil disobedience?
- What does King define as civil disobedience?
• How are Thoreau’s teachings evident in Gandhi’s concept of satyagraha?
• How is Gandhi’s satyagraha different from Thoreau’s civil disobedience?
• How does King emulate Gandhi’s concept of satyagraha? In what ways is he different?
• How does civil disobedience relate to society today?

Materials Needed:
• LCD projector
• Computer that has Windows Movie or a compatible program
• Download Excerpt handout (and answer sheet)

Lesson Context:
This lesson is intended to be a first step in a larger unit on civil disobedience. This lesson will provide an introduction to the concept of civil disobedience, and how it varies in the eyes of different scholars and activists.

Teaching Activities:

1. Teacher will show the digital story “Civil Disobedience” to introduce students to the idea of civil disobedience.

2. Thoreau, Gandhi, and King’s ideas on civil disobedience have been excerpted into short, manageable segments. Teachers need to facilitate reading comprehension, analysis, and discussion of these excerpts. This will be accomplished by one or more of the following tasks:
   o Break students into small groups and ask them to read each excerpt together. Encourage them to look up vocabulary and help them with words that they do not know. Ask students to discuss the meaning behind each excerpt. After this discussion, they will write a summary of each excerpt’s meaning and significance.
   o Students will read the excerpts individually and will summarize each excerpt’s main idea in their notebooks. Encourage them to look up vocabulary to help them with words that they do not know.
   o The teacher will read each excerpt with students and discuss the meanings of each excerpt as a large class.

3. After students have read and discussed each excerpt, they should start to compare and contrast the different notions of civil disobedience. Students will approach this task in some of the following ways:
   o Students will make a Venn diagram on Civil Disobedience. In each circle, they will write the ideas that are specific to each author. In the areas that overlap, students will list ideas that the authors share.
   o Students will respond to a writing prompt like the one below:
     ▪ What ideas do Thoreau, Gandhi, and King share about civil disobedience? How are they different in their theories?
o Students will create a graphic organizer (for instance, three columns with the headings of “Gandhi”, “Thoreau”, and “King”) to compare and contrast ideas about civil disobedience.

o Students will create a drawing called “the road of civil disobedience” in which they chronologically illustrate the changes civil disobedience undergoes over time.

o Students will complete a jigsaw activity, working with the excerpts as their material. A jigsaw is an interactive activity in which students are placed in three groups – 1 for Thoreau, Gandhi, and King. All the Thoreau students will discuss only Thoreau, all the Gandhi students will discuss only Gandhi, etc. After a period of time, students will switch groups so that there are now groups of 3 with a Thoreau, Gandhi, and King representative for each new group. The students then teach each other the content they learned in their original groups. A way to make this even more in depth is to assign each group only 1 Thoreau quote to discuss, instead of 3 in one session.

o Students will embark on a carousel walk. For this activity, the teacher writes some broad questions about the content on sheets of big paper and posts them all over the room. Students then circulate around the room, adding insights to the questions posted and responses to the comments of other students.

Note: Activities 1 and 2 above should take a minimum of a class and a half, and will as long as four or more classes. This time frame really depends on how in-depth the teacher chooses to go with the lessons.

4. After reading the excerpts, analyzing their meaning, and synthesizing the ideas of Thoreau, Gandhi, and King, students should demonstrate their knowledge to the teacher. Students will be assessed through some of the following activities:

   - A skit, digital story, or a writing assignment.

Note: For more information on these activities, see the section below.

**Assessment/ Evaluation:**

All of the following assessments are adequate forms of assessment, and it is up to the teacher to decide what fits best.

1. Students will create a skit demonstrating their understanding of the content. Students will also brainstorm a fun fictional setting where these men would hypothetically be meeting. They will use the characters of Thoreau, Gandhi, and King and create a dialogue that the men would have with each other.

2. If the technology is available, students will use I-Movie or Windows Movie Maker to create a digital story about the content.

3. Students will write an in-class essay or overnight paper on how the definition of civil disobedience, according to Thoreau, Gandhi, and King. Students should use the excerpts...
as supporting evidence.

Although the assessment format vary, teachers should evaluate students on three basic issues:

1. How well did the student understand the content and context of the excerpts of each author?
2. Was the student able to make connections between the different concepts of civil disobedience? What was the depth of these concepts?
3. Does the student demonstrate a clear understanding of the idea of civil disobedience and the variations within the theories of Thoreau, Gandhi, and King?

**Extension Activities/ Enrichment:**

- Students will conduct research on historical acts of civil disobedience and compare it to the theories they have read to determine if the act is more like Thoreau, Gandhi, or King’s conception of civil disobedience.
- Students will pick a writer and read his works in more depth.
- Students will write about a law that they disagree with and create an alternative to the law.

**Bibliography:**


**Letter from a Birmingham Jail.** www.stanford.edu/group/king/frequentdocs/birmingham.pdf


**Resistance to Civil Government.** [www.transcendentalists.com/civil_disobedience.htm](http://www.transcendentalists.com/civil_disobedience.htm)
Excerpts from Thoreau’s *Civil Disobedience* and Gandhi’s *Hind Swaraj/Constructive Programme/Autobiography*, and King’s *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*

**Thoreau**

from *Civil Disobedience*

**Excerpt 1**

…It is not a man's duty, as a matter of course, to devote himself to the eradication of any, even to most enormous, wrong; he may still properly have other concerns to engage him; but it is his duty, at least, to wash his hands of it, and, if he gives it no thought longer, not to give it practically his support.

**Excerpt 2**

If the injustice is part of the necessary friction of the machine of government, let it go, let it go: perchance it will wear smooth--certainly the machine will wear out. If the injustice has a spring, or a pulley, or a rope, or a crank, exclusively for itself, then perhaps you may consider whether the remedy will not be worse than the evil; but if it is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then I say, break the law. Let your life be a counter-friction to stop the machine. What I have to do is to see, at any rate, that I do not lend myself to the wrong which I condemn.

**Excerpt 3**

I have paid no poll tax for six years. I was put into a jail once on this account, for one night; and, as I stood considering the walls of solid stone, two or three feet thick, the door of wood and iron, a foot thick, and the iron grating which strained the light, I could not help being struck with the foolishness of that institution which treated my as if I were mere flesh and blood and bones, to be locked up. I wondered that it should have concluded at length that this was the best use it could put me to, and had never thought to avail itself of my services in some way. I saw that, if there was a wall of stone between me and my townsmen, there was a still more difficult one to climb or break through before they could get to be as free as I was. I did nor for a moment feel confined, and the walls seemed a great waste of stone and mortar. I felt as if I alone of all my townsmen had paid my tax.

**Gandhi**

**Excerpt 4**

From *Hind Swaraj*

Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering, it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force. For instance, the Government of the day has passed a law which is applicable to me. I do not like it. If by using violence I, force the Government to repeal the law, I am employing what
may be termed body force. If I do not obey the law and accept the penalty for its breach, I use soul-force. It involves sacrifice of self.

**Excerpt 5**

from *Gandhi: An Autobiography*

A Satyagrahi obeys the laws of society intelligently and of his own free will, because he considers it to be his sacred duty to do so. It is only when a person has thus obeyed the laws of society scrupulously that he is in a position to judge as to which particular rules are good and just and which unjust and iniquitous. Only then does the right accrue to him of the civil disobedience of certain laws in well-defined circumstances. My error lay in my failure to observe this necessary limitation. I had called on the people to launch upon civil disobedience before they had thus qualified themselves for it, and this mistake seemed to me of Himalayan magnitude…I realized that before a people could be fit for offering civil disobedience, they should thoroughly understand its deeper implications. That being so, before re-starting civil disobedience on a mass scale, it would be necessary to create a band of well-tried, pure-hearted volunteers who thoroughly understood the strict conditions of Satyagraha. They could explain these to the people…

**Excerpt 6**

From *Constructive Programme*

…When Civil Disobedience is itself devised for the attainment of Independence, previous preparation is necessary, and it has to be backed by the visible and conscious effort of those who are engaged in the battle. Civil Disobedience is thus a stimulation for the fighters and a challenge to the opponent. It should be clear to the reader that Civil Disobedience in terms of Independence without the co-operation of the millions by way of constructive effort is mere bravado and worse than useless.

**King**

from *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*

**Excerpt 7**

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self-purification; and direct action. We have gone through all these steps in Birmingham. There can be no gainsaying the fact that racial injustice engulfs this community.

**Excerpt 8**

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. 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. 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, but there is a type of
constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. …we must we see the need for
nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark
depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood. The
purpose of our direct-action program is to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will
inevitably open the door to negotiation. I therefore concur with you in your call for negotiation.
Too long has our beloved Southland been bogged down in a tragic effort to live in monologue
rather than dialogue.

Excerpt 9

I hope you are able to ace the distinction I am trying to point out. In no sense do I advocate
evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. 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.
Thoreau

Excerpt 1

…It is not a man's duty, as a matter of course, to devote himself to the eradication of any, even to most enormous, wrong; he may still properly have other concerns to engage him; but it is his duty, at least, to wash his hands of it, and, if he gives it no thought longer, not to give it practically his support.

This quote discusses the idea of a man who has encountered an unjust law. Thoreau argues that although it is not the obligation of individuals to fight against unjust causes, it is their duty to at least not cooperate or support the injustice. This concept ties into a bigger idea of the role of non-cooperation in civil disobedience. Some of the most successful acts of civil disobedience throughout history were simply non-cooperation, for instance, the Civil Rights Bus Boycotts were the driving force behind desegregation on busses.

Excerpt 2

If the injustice is part of the necessary friction of the machine of government, let it go, let it go: perchance it will wear smooth—certainly the machine will wear out. If the injustice has a spring, or a pulley, or a rope, or a crank, exclusively for itself, then perhaps you may consider whether the remedy will not be worse than the evil; but if it is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then I say, break the law. Let your life be a counter-friction to stop the machine. What I have to do is to see, at any rate, that I do not lend myself to the wrong which I condemn.

Here Thoreau argues beyond non-cooperation, stating that if the law is unjust, break it. He urges people to be the voice of reason, or the “counter friction” to the government or “machine” that is unjust.

Excerpt 3

I have paid no poll tax for six years. I was put into a jail once on this account, for one night; and, as I stood considering the walls of solid stone, two or three feet thick, the door of wood and iron, a foot thick, and the iron grating which strained the light, I could not help being struck with the foolishness of that institution which treated me as if I were mere flesh and blood and bones, to be locked up. I wondered that it should have concluded at length that this was the best use it could put me to, and had never thought to avail itself of my services in some way. I saw that, if there was a wall of stone between me and my townsmen, there was a still more difficult one to climb or break through before they could get to be as free as I was. I did not for a moment feel confined, and the walls seemed a great waste of stone and mortar. I felt as if I alone of all my townsmen had paid my tax.
Here Thoreau discusses his act of civil disobedience – his night alone in jail for tax resistance. Notable, Gandhi wrote some of these words during his own imprisonment.

Gandhi

Excerpt 4
Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering, it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force. For instance, the Government of the day has passed a law which is applicable to me. I do not like it. If by using violence I force the Government to repeal the law, I am employing what may be termed body force. If I do not obey the law and accept the penalty for its breach, I use soul-force. It involves sacrifice of self.

This discusses the role of personal suffering in satyagraha and soul-force vs. body force

Excerpt 5
from Gandhi: An Autobiography

A Satyagrahi obeys the laws of society intelligently and of his own free will, because he considers it to be his sacred duty to do so. It is only when a person has thus obeyed the laws of society scrupulously that he is in a position to judge as to which particular rules are good and just and which unjust and iniquitous. Only then does the right accrue to him of the civil disobedience of certain laws in well-defined circumstances. My error lay in my failure to observe this necessary limitation. I had called on the people to launch upon civil disobedience before they had thus qualified themselves for it, and this mistake seemed to me of Himalayan magnitude…I realized that before a people could be fit for offering civil disobedience, they should thoroughly understand its deeper implications. That being so, before re-starting civil disobedience on a mass scale, it would be necessary to create a band of well-tried, pure-hearted volunteers who thoroughly understood the strict conditions of Satyagraha. They could explain these to the people...

Excerpt 6
From Constructive Programme

…When Civil Disobedience is itself devised for the attainment of Independence, previous preparation is necessary, and it has to be backed by the visible and conscious effort of those who are engaged in the battle. Civil Disobedience is thus a stimulation for the fighters and a challenge to the opponent. It should be clear to the reader that Civil Disobedience in terms of Independence without the co-operation of the millions by way of constructive effort is mere bravado and worse than useless.

This discusses how, in Civil Disobedience, strategy, and solidarity has to be guaranteed. Many people need to be involved in Civil Disobedience.
King

Excerpt 7
In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self-purification; and direct action. We have gone through all these steps in Birmingham. There can be no gainsaying the fact that racial injustice engulfs this community.

Steps to civil disobedience – direct action is the last step after other attempts have been made.

Excerpt 8
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. 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. 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, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. …we must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood. The purpose of our direct-action program is to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation. I therefore concur with you in your call for negotiation. Too long has our beloved Southland been bogged down in a tragic effort to live in monologue rather than dialogue.

The point of direct action is to create a situation that is so dramatic and grabs so much attention that negotiation happens as a result. This direct action wouldn’t have to happen if negotiation had been successful, but this is a last step in nonviolent conflict resolution.

Excerpt 9
I hope you are able to ace the distinction I am trying to point out. In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. 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.

Civil disobedience is not reckless excuses for disobeying the law – it is the patriotic duty of Americans to make the law better – and he who breaks the law willingly and lovingly does so for a cause with the openness to accept the punishment.