



Name _____ Date _____

MALCOLM X

PART I: What's in a Name?

Malcolm X had three different names over the course of his life: **Malcolm Little**, **Malcolm X** and **el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz**. Read each quotation below, and circle the name Malcolm went by at the point in life he held that belief or the point in life he is referring to.

1. "I learned early that crying out in protest could accomplish things. My older brothers and sister had started to school when, sometimes, they would come in and ask for a buttered biscuit or something and my mother, impatiently, would tell them no. But I would cry out and make a fuss until I got what I wanted. I remember well how my mother asked me why I couldn't be a nice boy like Wilfred; but I would think to myself that Wilfred, for being so nice and quiet, often stayed hungry." (*The Autobiography of Malcolm X*)

Malcolm Little

Malcolm X

el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz

2. "It's just like when you've got some coffee that's too black, which means it's too strong. What you do? You integrate it with cream; you make it weak. If you pour too much cream in, you won't even know you ever had coffee. It used to be hot, it becomes cool. It used to be strong, it becomes weak. It used to wake you up, now it'll put you to sleep. This is what they did with the march on Washington. They joined it. They didn't integrate it; they infiltrated it. They joined it, became a part of it, took it over. And as they took it over, it lost its militancy. They ceased to be angry." ("Message to the Grassroots")

Malcolm Little

Malcolm X

el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz

3. "This was my first lesson about gambling: if you see somebody winning all the time, he isn't gambling, he's cheating. Later on in life, if I were continuously losing in any gambling situation, I would watch very closely." (*The Autobiography of Malcolm X*)

Malcolm Little

Malcolm X

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4. "I remember one night at Muzdalifa with nothing but the sky overhead I lay awake amid sleeping Muslim brothers and I learned that pilgrims from every land — every color, and class, and rank; high officials and the beggar alike — all snored in the same language." (*The Autobiography of Malcolm X*)

Malcolm Little

Malcolm X

el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz

5. "If violence is wrong in America, violence is wrong abroad. If it's wrong to be violent defending black women and black children and black babies and black men, then it's wrong for America to draft us and make us violent abroad in defense of her. And if it is right for America to draft us, and teach us how to be violent in defense of her, then it is right for you and me to do whatever is necessary to defend our own people right here in this country." ("Message to the Grassroots")

Malcolm Little

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1. What is Malcolm X advocating for in this excerpt from “The Black Revolution”?

Answers will vary, but may include: *Malcolm X stresses economic and social self-reliance within the black community and the urgent need for full voting rights/civil rights for black Americans.*

2. What is Martin Luther King Jr. advocating for in this excerpt from “I Have a Dream”?

Answers will vary, but may include: *MLK stresses the urgent need for full civil rights and equality for black Americans as well as the importance of economic opportunity for black Americans and inclusiveness across American society.*

3. How do these speeches differ in tone? How does each speaker establish that tone?

Answers will vary, but may include: *Malcolm X takes a matter of fact and serious tone, while MLK’s approach is more emotional and grandiose. Their tone is established through their introductory remarks. Malcolm X is sarcastic and pointed, while MLK is hopeful. MLK’s speech has a natural rhythm, while Malcolm X’s is precise and clinical.*

4. How do these speeches differ in language? Provide specific examples of word choice or quotations to support your argument.

Answers will vary, but may include: *Malcolm X uses direct language, while MLK uses more figurative language and imagery. Malcolm X’s word choice is academic and calculated, while MLK evokes emotion using the language of a preacher or storyteller.*



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5. Are there any similarities between these two speeches?

Answers will vary, but may include: Both Malcolm X and MLK are advocating for economic opportunity within the black community. They focus on the urgency of the situation and potential negative reactions if these problems are not addressed soon. They also utilize repetition to drive home their points.

6. Based on these excerpts, what can you infer about each speaker's personality?

Answers will vary, but may include: Malcolm X is more direct and sarcastic, while Martin Luther King Jr. is more idealistic and hopeful.

7. How is each speech successful? Which do you believe is more effective?

Answers will vary.