

Name _____

Date _____

The Evolution of Malcolm X - Answer Key

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. Malcolm X's parents, Earle and Louise Little, were active members of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), a Black ****nationalist**** organization. Founded by Marcus Garvey in 1914, the UNIA advocated for separation as the solution to White-perpetrated ****racism**** and ****brutality****. Separation is the idea that Black Americans should have their own economic and governmental institutions, apart from White Americans. In the effort to achieve this, the UNIA supported Black enterprise and economic development. Garvey was a ****controversial**** figure, and the UNIA dealt with several internal conflicts. Still, Garvey left a powerful ****legacy****, and his ideas influenced later Black nationalist movements. Years after Earle Little's death, Malcolm X advocated for separation in his work with the Nation of Islam.

Based on this passage, with which statement would Marcus Garvey most likely have agreed?

- A. All Americans should have the same government and economic institutions.
- B. Black and White people will eventually learn to co-exist.
- C. Black-perpetuated brutality is just as pervasive as White-perpetuated brutality.



D.

Racism is not likely to go away any time soon.

The text states, "Founded by Marcus Garvey in 1914, the UNIA advocated for separation as the solution to White-perpetrated racism and brutality." From this, we can infer that Garvey viewed racism as likely to continue into the foreseeable future.

2. While in prison, Malcolm X felt unable to adequately convey his thoughts in letters to friends, family, and Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad. “I not only wasn’t articulate, I wasn’t even functional,” he recalled in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Fueled by his frustration, X **embarked** on a journey of intense self-education. Because his lack of vocabulary knowledge rendered most books incomprehensible to him, he turned first to the dictionary. He copied out the words and their definitions in longhand, learning each unfamiliar term as he went. As his vocabulary **evolved**, he was able to comprehend books of increasing complexity. X then began spending most of his free time reading. By the time he left prison, he was highly self-educated. “Many who today hear me somewhere in person, or on television, or those who read something I’ve said, will think I went to school far beyond the eighth grade,” he recounted in his autobiography. “This impression is due entirely to my prison studies.”

Based on this passage, what inference can you make about the cause of Malcolm X’s initial trouble with vocabulary?

A. He was overly frustrated.



B.

He left school after 8th grade.

The text states that towards the beginning of his prison term, “lack of vocabulary knowledge rendered most books incomprehensible to” Malcolm X. It also says that X wrote, “Many who today hear me ... think I went to school far beyond the eighth grade.” From this, we can infer that X left school after 8th grade and that the lack of schooling hampered his vocabulary.

C. He spent most of his free time reading.

D. He studied the dictionary instead of reading books.

3. In 1931, a silk merchant named Wallace D. Fard established a new religious group—the Nation of Islam (NOI). When Fard mysteriously vanished a few years later, one of his followers, Elijah Muhammad, took over. Muhammad moved the NOI headquarters from Detroit to **urban** Chicago, where he remained leader of the organization for decades. Like Fard, Elijah Muhammad’s belief system varied significantly from that of traditional Islam. It also incorporated Black nationalism. As such, he emphasized separation, self-defense, Black economic self-sufficiency and enterprise, and pride in African **heritage**. Malcolm X began working with the NOI in 1952. An ingenious and charismatic speaker, X quickly rose to prominence as the voice of the NOI. He used his platform to share Elijah Muhammad’s teachings with a wider audience than ever before. With X as national spokesperson, NOI grew dramatically, establishing mosques, schools, stores, and restaurants. X also created a newspaper for the NOI called **Muhammad Speaks.**

Based on this passage, what did X most likely view as his true purpose at NOI?

- A. To move NOI in a more moderate direction B. To return NOI to Fard, its original leader
C. To amplify Muhammad and his ideas D. To usurp Muhammad’s leadership role



C.

To amplify Muhammad and his ideas

*The text states that X “used his platform to share Elijah Muhammad’s teachings with a wider audience than ever before.” It also states that X “created a newspaper for the NOI called *Muhammad Speaks.*” From these statements, we can infer that X’s intent was to amplify Muhammad and his ideas.*

4. Malcolm X and civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr. were contemporaries, but their approaches differed radically. While King preached civil rights, nonviolence, tolerance, and integration, X focused on self-reliance, self-defense and separatism. In fact, X publicly derided King, once saying, “The white man pays Reverend Martin Luther King ... so that Reverend Martin Luther King can continue to teach the Negroes to be defenseless.” However, as X became disillusioned with Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam, his attitude toward King and the civil rights movement softened. In March of 1964, shortly before he made his **pilgrimage** to Mecca, X and King both came to the US Capitol to support the passage of the Civil Rights Act. The two leaders ran into each other—the first and only time that they met face to face—and chatted briefly. According to the **The Washington Post,** X told King, “I’m throwing myself into the heart of the civil rights struggle.”

Which most accurately characterizes X’s change in attitude toward Martin Luther King, Jr.?

- A. Animosity to apathy B. Hatred to fawning
C. Respect to contempt D. Scorn to openness



D.

Scorn to openness

According to the text, X “publicly derided King,” but later “his attitude toward King and the civil rights movement softened.” The text also explains that when the two leaders met in 1964, X expressed support for the civil rights struggle.

