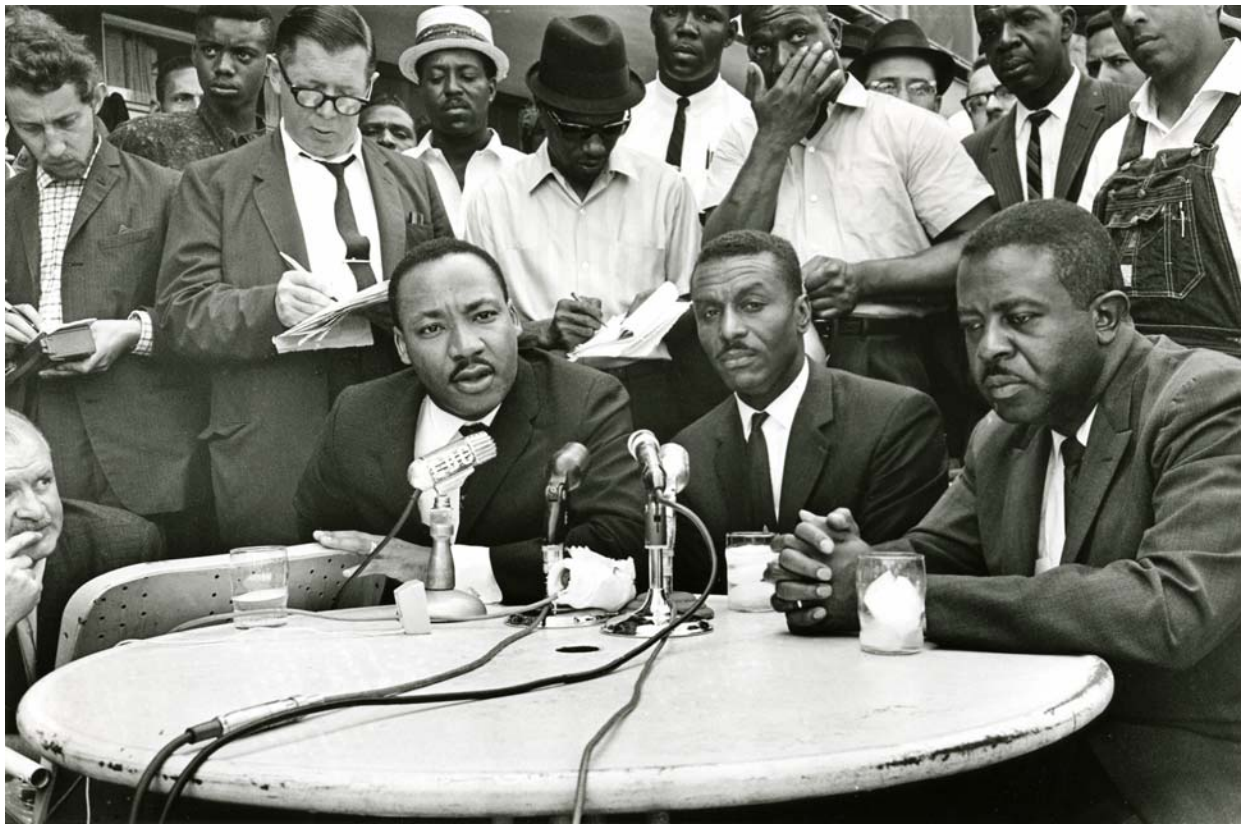


## **Letter From Birmingham Jail: Should they take the offer?**

**Directions: You will meet again in your original role play groups. Read the following from the King Encyclopedia about the pressure created in Birmingham from the nonviolent protests. Business leaders from Birmingham are willing to sit at the negotiating table. Write a list of four demands you expect the business leaders to accept.**

On 2 May 1963, over one thousand black children descended upon Birmingham. Close to nine hundred students were arrested, but a reserve army of close to twenty-five hundred demonstrated the following day. Bull Connor, who had up until this point "restrained" from violence against protesters, ordered firemen to use their hoses on the protesters and onlookers. As the youth fled from the power of the hoses, Connor directed officers and their dogs to pursue them. John Lewis noted the power of this incident: "we didn't fully comprehend at first what was happening. We were witnessing police violence and brutality Birmingham-style: unfortunately for Bull Connor, so was the rest of the world." As the clashes between nonviolent protesters and police made headlines across the country--with pictures of policemen bending over women with raised clubs, children marching up to the aggressive police dogs, and pressure hoses sweeping bodies into the streets--the movement reached a new level of visibility.

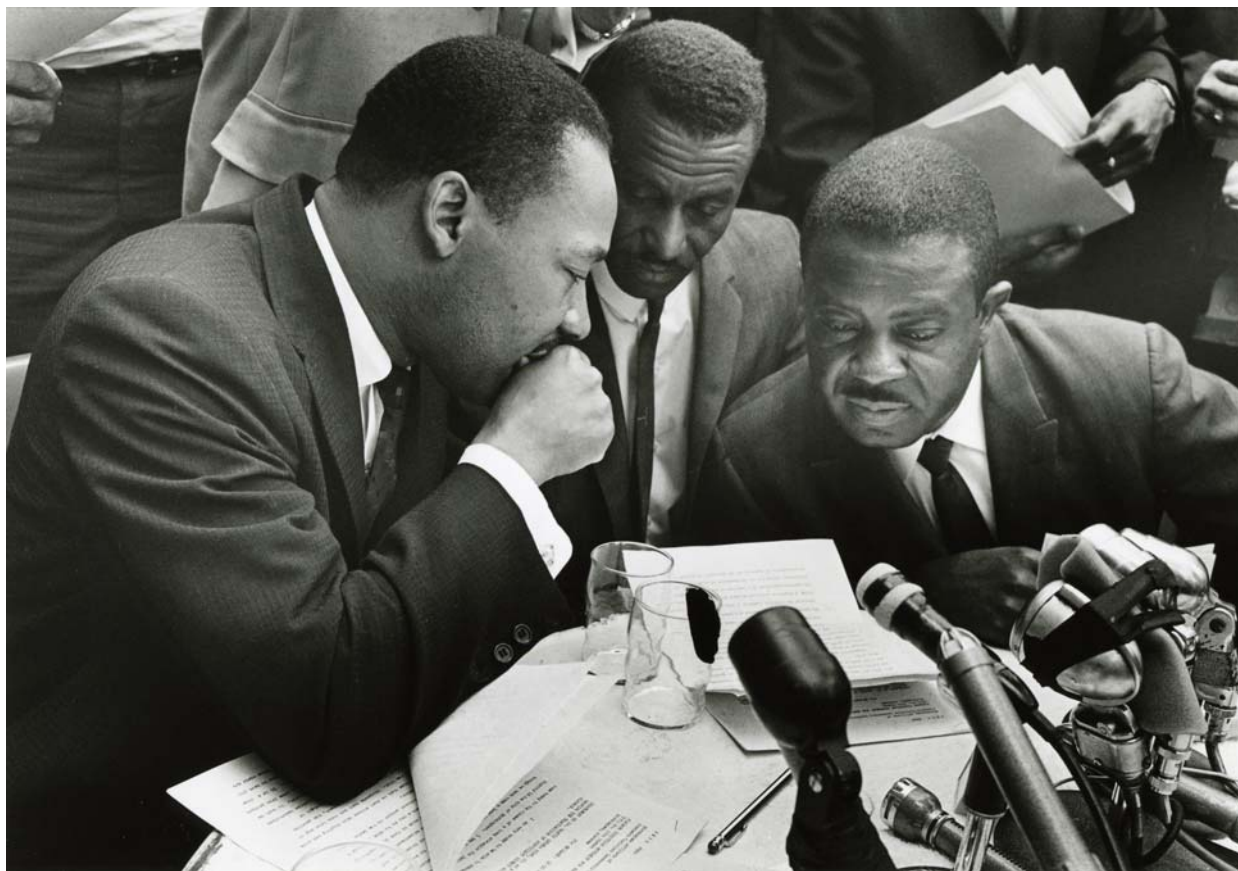
**Examine the photos below and read the description by the AP reporter. King, Shuttlesworth and Abernathy review an offer by the Birmingham Senior Citizens Council representing the business community. They are offering the following; desegregation of public accommodations, a committee to ensure nondiscriminatory hiring practices, release of jailed protestors and public communications between black and white leaders to prevent further demonstrations. Discuss with your partners whether you should accept the offer.**



*gups.*  
*5-63*

(BMS) BIRMINGHAM, Ala., May 8--ANNOUNCE TRUCE--  
Negro integration leaders tell a news conference  
in Birmingham, Ala. today they are suspending  
racial demonstrations. Rev. Martin Luther King,  
left, said a settlement is near. Center is Rev.  
Fred Shuttlesworth and right is Rev. Ralph  
Abernathy. (AP Wirephoto) (JL41415stf) See AP  
Wire Story 1963

**WIREFHOTOED** *BM-8* *5-8-63*



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(BMS) BIRMINGHAM, Ala., May 10--BIG THREE IN HUDDLE--  
The "Big Three" of the Alabama racial movement get  
their heads together in Birmingham today just before  
releasing a statement that accord had been reached  
on their grievances. Left to right: Revs. Martin  
Luther King Jr., Fred Shuttlesworth and Ralph  
Abernathy. (AP Wirephoto) (JL61450stf) See AP Wire  
Story 1963

WIREFHOTOED BMS 5-10-63

**When you are finished continue reading the passage below from the King Encyclopedia.**

At the same time, SCLC leaders were advised that the white business structure was weakening under the adverse publicity, the pressure of the boycott and the unexpected fall-off of white business. While the pressure on Birmingham's business community was increasing, some business owners were still reluctant to negotiate with SCLC leadership. However, with national pressure on the White House mounting, the administration intervened. President Kennedy sent Burke Marshall, his chief civil rights assistant, to facilitate negotiations between the SCLC and representatives of Birmingham's business community. On Friday, 10 May, an agreement between the Senior Citizens Council and SCLC leadership was announced. It contained pledges for the desegregation of public accommodations, a committee to ensure nondiscriminatory hiring practices in Birmingham, cooperation in releasing jailed protesters, and public communications between black and white leaders to prevent further demonstrations.

**Resources:**

**King Encyclopedia**

[http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/about\\_king/encyclopedia/](http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/about_king/encyclopedia/)