We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God-given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jet-like speed toward gaining political independence, but we still creep at horse-and-buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, “Wait.” But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick, and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue-twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can’t go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year-old son who is asking, “Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?”; when you take a cross-country drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading “white” and “Colored”; when you first name becomes “nigger,” your middle name becomes “Boy” (however old you are) and your last name becomes “John,” and your wife and mother are never given the respected title “Mrs.”; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of “nobodiness”—then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable patience.
With great skill, King uses an abundance of rhetorical devices that have the potential to overwhelm the audience effectively.

**CONTRAST (antithesis)**
1. King employs antithesis in the second sentence. Outline the pairs of contrasts.
   a. Places: ______________ and ______________
   b. Moves like _____________________________ (first place) and _________________ (second place)
   c. Gains ___________________________ (first place) and ___________________________ (second place)

2. In a sentence, explain King’s rhetorical purpose in employing these antithetical places and ideas.

3. Find another example of antithesis in this paragraph. In a sentence, analyze the rhetorical effect.

**METAPHOR**
4. The antithesis in the second sentence contains two metaphors. Identify them and explain their effect in the sentence.

5. The passage contains other metaphors in addition to the two already mentioned.
   a. Identify as many metaphors as possible
   b. Find a pattern in the types of metaphors King uses.
   c. In a well-developed paragraph, connect the pattern you see to King’s rhetorical purpose.

**ANAPHORA**
Anaphora is repeating a sequence of words at the beginnings of neighboring clauses, thereby lending them emphasis. The fourth sentence not only contains over 300 words but also develops the most powerful emotional argument in the paragraph. The force of the paragraph depends on King’s use of several rhetorical techniques, but the anaphora propels a driving rhythm that is particularly effective.

6. Identify similar wording repeated at the beginning of the clauses. Analyze the rhetorical effect of repeating this phrase nine times.
ALLITERATION

Martin Luther King is a master as using sound devices to add emphasis and detail. For instance, beginning in line 3, King writes “but we still creep at horse-and-buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee…” The repetition of the hard “c” sound accentuates the slow pace of reforms to gain even the smallest right. Both “creep” and “cup of coffee” are humble things, contrasted with Asia and Africa, which move like jets to gain something much grander than a cup of coffee—“political independence.” King uses the repetition of consonant sounds to reinforce the idea of struggling for basic rights, rights any one should take for granted.

7. Find at least four more examples of alliteration in the passage. Write the words or phrases in which alliteration is used; then write a sentence or two that explains the effect of the alliteration.
   a. Alliteration ____________________________________________________________
      Effect ____________________________________________________________
   b. Alliteration ____________________________________________________________
      Effect ____________________________________________________________
   c. Alliteration ____________________________________________________________
      Effect ____________________________________________________________
   d. Alliteration ____________________________________________________________
      Effect ____________________________________________________________

IMAGERY

This passage floods readers with imagery designed to evoke the pity, compassion, and empathy of King’s critics.

8. Identify the types of imagery listed below & write a sentence that explains the emotional effect of each one.
   a. Sight

   b. Sound

   c. Touch

FORMATIVE ESSAY PROMPT: Write a five-paragraph essay explaining how King uses rhetorical strategies and devices to influence his audience.