

# Eleven Days in the Life of Dr. King

Hear Our Words!



<i>Grades</i>	4 & up
<i>Core Content Area</i>	Language arts, social studies
<i>Themes</i>	Historical eras, personal beliefs, fighting for a cause
<i>Materials</i>	Paper, pencil, Day Six Poem "Spoken, Out of Turn"

## Lesson Procedure

### 1.) **Conversation Between Past & Present Voices/Leaders**

Choose an historic leader who influenced our world politically, socially, environmentally, etc. Research that person to find out what they fought for, believed in and took action on to change our world for the better.

### 2.) **Write Two Letters**

Once you have researched your historic figure, write two letters. The first is in the voice of the historic person, from their perspective. In this letter, write what you think that person would say to you today about their issue.

Then write the second letter. Letter number 2 is what you would say to that historic person about where our world is now in regards to their issue.

### 3.) **Extension**

Turn your letters into poems to be read side by side, as in "*Spoken, Out of Turn*" from 11 Days in the Life of Dr. King. Here is a simple format for the side-by-side poems:

1. After writing your letters, re-read "Spoken, Out of Turn"
2. Break the first letter into individual sentences or phrases
3. Lay them out in a vertical format
4. Read through the letter
5. If certain points need to more emphasis, can you rewrite certain passages or repeat phrases to underscore an idea?
6. Break the second letter down in a similar process
7. Structure lines from both letter-poems in two side-by-side columns

Pair up with a classmate and perform the side-by-side poems in the style of "*Spoken, Out of Turn*"

# **Eleven Days in the Life of Dr. King**

## Day Six: Letter from a Birmingham Jail

– *Spoken, Out of Turn*



**TACOMA  
ARTS LIVE**

*(Both columns to be read in tandem)*

### **VOICE OF THE PAST**

Teachers  
Leaders  
of our future  
let me speak

I sit at my desk  
I want to be called  
But you can't see me

I have witnessed unfairness  
In your class

When whites bully Blacks  
I must resist the hate

I must stand up for what is right  
and speak out with all my might

End the bullying  
Hear me  
See me

We have so far to go  
I must speak for those  
who cannot speak  
for themselves

Don't ignore me  
Call on me

### **VOICE OF THE PRESENT**

Teachers  
Leaders  
of our future  
let me speak

Some days you see me  
And some days you don't.

We are rising.  
The sky is calling.  
Our mothers and fathers  
made sure we would rise

I must stand up for what is right  
and speak out for what is right

End the bullying  
Hear me  
See me

We have come so far

Finally I can speak for myself

Don't ignore me

I have so much to tell you

When Blacks

Are treated unfairly  
Speak up  
Speak up

Listen

Listen to us

I was sentenced to detention.

when whites bullied Blacks  
I could not speak out  
so I wrote  
this letter  
from a Birmingham jail

I will rise

I write this letter

We write this letter

So life will be better

Adults and teachers

I have something to tell you

Read my letter

So Blacks

Will be treated fairly

And others

As I was taught to do

Listen to me

Listen to us

You can learn from me  
Hear me out

Don't sentence me  
I am trying to tell you something

I am looking forward  
I am still your child  
Against all odds  
I have made it here

We are rising  
The sky is calling  
Our mothers and fathers made sure  
Of that.

I write this letter

We write this letter

Adults and teachers

I have something to tell you

Read my letter

And others  
Help us to rise  
And reach for the skies.