

Critical Thinking Skills Activity 18**Problems and Solutions****LEARNING THE SKILL**

Before you can solve a problem, you have to think about all of the *alternatives*. These are the possible choices of actions you could take to solve the problem.

Use the following guidelines to help you identify alternatives:

- Identify the problem you are trying to solve.
- Review the facts. Then list all of the possible actions you can think of to solve the problem.
- Examine how others have solved the same problem.
- Make a list of new actions you find for solving the problem.
- Decide on the best course of action to solve your problem.
- Look for information to check the accuracy of your judgment or decision. Examine information that both supports and contradicts your conclusion.

PRACTICING THE SKILL

DIRECTIONS: Read the excerpt below about Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Then answer the questions that follow on a separate sheet of paper.

In the mid-1960s, as the writings and teachings of Malcolm spread throughout the streets of Harlem, Watts, and the South Side of Chicago, more and more African American people began to see nonviolence as an option, not a moral imperative, and integration, the ideal to which King was so dedicated, as impractical or even destructive. The assimilation of the black race into white society might represent the purest form of democratic idealism, yet it was on another level deeply unsatisfying, even threatening, for an assimilated black person was, in essence, no longer black and certainly not white. If King had dedicated his life to making black Americans more a part of America and the ideals to which the nation was dedicated, then Malcolm, put simply, wanted black Americans to feel more black and embrace their African heritage. Viewed his way, the great American melting pot was a sinister image, a cauldron brewing a form of cultural genocide [destruction]. . . . Preaching separation of the races, [Malcolm] urged Americans to adopt the vernacular [common, everyday] usage of "black" to denote African Americans . . . knowing all along that even the word "black" would declare itself as opposite to and incompatible with "white."

1. What problems or concerns did some African Americans in the 1960s begin to have with the idea of integration?
2. What alternatives did Malcolm X provide to African Americans?
3. How might the civil rights movement of the 1950s and early 1960s have differed had it been based on Malcolm X's ideas of separating from white society rather than on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, ideas of assimilating with whites? Explain your answer.