**READ ALOUD:**  NAME: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Read the text below ALOUD with a partner. Read the document segment by segment. After each segment note, what you thought as you read the text, what the author was trying to convey, and what the segment was about. Underline and note words/phrases you find significant/interesting.

**Simon Bolivar’s Jamaica Letter** NOTES:

***Background:*** This document was written to an English gentleman, most likely the Governor of Jamaica at the time. It is in response to a request that Simon Bolivar expound his views on the independence movement in Venezuela and the form of government under which the country should operate. It is interesting, largely because Bolivar would soon be attempting to implement these ideas in actuality. It must be remembered that at this stage of his career that Bolivar was in some dispair over his exile. He had made several attempts to liberated Venezuela and Columbia, and had been thwarted each time, not only by Spain, but by elements within the colonies themselves. He longs for free republican government and a free economy, but sees this as impractical in the short term, at least until the people are taught to use and to honor the vital institutions that govern society.

***Excerpts***

Success will crown our efforts, because the destiny of America has been irrevocably decided; the tie that bound her to Spain has been severed. Only a concept maintained that tie and kept the parts of that immense monarchy together. That which formerly bound them now divides them.

As a result there was born principle of affinity that seemed eternal, notwithstanding the misbehavior of our rulers, which weakened that sympathy, or, rather, that bond enforced by the domination of their rule. At present the contrary attitude persists: we are threatened with the fear of death, dishonor, and every harm; there is nothing we have not suffered at the hands of that unnatural stepmother-Spain.

The role of the inhabitants of the American hemisphere has for centuries been purely passive. Politically they were nonexistent. We are still in a position lower than slavery, and therefore it is more difficult for us to rise to the enjoyment of freedom…

States are slaves because of either the nature or the misuse of their constitutions; a people is therefore enslaved when the government, by its nature or its vices, infringes on and usurps the rights of the citizen or subject.

Under absolutism there are no recognized limits to the exercise of governmental powers. The will of the great sultan, khan, bey, and other despotic rulers is the supreme law, carried out more or less arbitrarily by the lesser pashas, khans, and satraps of Turkey and Persia, who have an organized system of oppression in which inferiors participate according to the authority vested in them.

We have been harassed by a conduct which has not only deprived us of our rights but has kept us in a sort of permanent infancy with regard to public affairs.

It is harder, Montesquieu has written, to release a nation from servitude than to enslave a free nation. This truth is proven by the annals of all times, which reveal that most free nations have been put under the yoke, but very few enslaved nations have recovered their liberty.