

## Teacher's notes

## Nelson Mandela

by Coleen Degnan-Veness



## SUMMARY

**I**n February 1990, the world's media gathered outside Victor Verster Prison in South Africa to see a man released after 10,000 days in prison. This was no ordinary man, and this was the end of a long campaign to secure his release.

The biography of Nelson Mandela reads like a morality tale. Here is a man who is subjected by a racist society to years of imprisonment, for most of the time in degrading and humiliating conditions, who emerges a quarter of a century later to become president of his country and Nobel Peace Prize winner.

Nelson Mandela came slowly to political activism. He grew up as a reasonably privileged child and was not exposed to the racial discrimination which was becoming institutionalized in his country until he was at university at the age of 24. But once he recognized the injustices, he could not remain silent and he was expelled from the University of Fort Hare in 1940 for taking part in a student demonstration. He did not give up on his university degree, however, eventually completing the course by correspondence in 1942. He went on to become the first black student at the University of Witwatersrand, where he studied law, although he never completed the course.

He joined the African National Congress (ANC) which was fighting for self-determination for a multi-racial society. But when the National Party (NP) came to power in South Africa in 1948, it introduced a policy of forced separation of races, which became known around the world as apartheid. By 1952 the ANC was encouraging protesters to refuse to obey laws which aimed at segregating the races in everyday life. However, Mandela urged the protesters not to use violence, even if violence was used against them.

Mandela did not just protest on the streets. With his friend, Oliver Tambo, he opened a law practice in Johannesburg, and continued to work there through his five-year long treason trial which the authorities staged as the ANC became more militant in the face of harsher and harsher racist laws.

Mandela was acquitted but he realized his life had changed. He went underground and even accepted the need for violent protests, after an act of political repression which reverberated around the world. In March 1960, the South African police massacred 69 blacks in Sharpeville.

On the social front, there were changes too. In 1957 he divorced his first wife, Evelyn Mase and one year later married a social worker, who became internationally famous as Winnie Mandela.

The military arm of the ANC, the Umkhonto we Sizwe or Spear of the Nation was formed and Mandela, as commander-in-chief, went to Algeria for military training. On his return to South Africa, he was arrested in August 1962 and sentenced to five years in prison and then, following the arrest of ANC colleagues at Rivonia, he was tried again, for treason and conspiracy and sentenced to life imprisonment in June 1964.

He spent 18 years on the infamous Robben Island but, despite a harsh regime and periods of solitary confinement, he never lost touch with the outside world. His autobiography was written at this time, and smuggled out, to be published later under the title *Long Walk to Freedom*. Mandela was moved to Pollsmoor Prison near Cape Town where conditions improved somewhat and finally to Victor Vester prison. By now, Mandela had become the icon for resistance to apartheid and finally, bowing to international and domestic pressure, the South African government lifted the ban on the ANC and released Mandela in February 1990.

The happy ending for Mandela politically was not matched by marital happiness. He and Winnie were divorced after allegations regarding a kidnapping and murder involving Winnie's bodyguards, but Mandela found peace again with Graca Machel, the daughter of the former President of Mozambique.

Meanwhile, Mandela and the President of South Africa, de Klerk, had won the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to resolve the conflict between races, and in 1994, Mandela became the new President.

## BACKGROUND AND THEMES

The racism that Nelson Mandela faced was a not a new phenomenon in South Africa. Half a century before Mandela's struggle began, that other famous political activist turned national leader, Mohandas Karamchand (Mahatma) Gandhi, was fighting racism in the same country, often with similar methods to those used by the young Mandela. Gandhi, newly arrived in Durban from India in 1893, saw and opposed the discrimination against Indians. Gandhi spent twenty years in the country, developing his doctrine of passive resistance, and by 1914 he had wrung some concessions for Indians out of the white colonial South African government.

The racism that Mandela fought against, however, had been refined into a particularly virulent, institutional form. It had even acquired a specific name – apartheid – from

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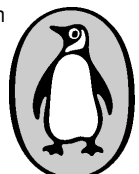
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the Afrikaans word meaning "separateness". The National Party introduced the policy as part of their campaign in the 1948 elections, and, following their election victory, it became law for nearly 50 years.

The apartheid laws divided people into four categories, according to racial group. The groups were Whites, Bantus or black Africans, Coloureds or people of mixed descent and Asians, principally Indians and Pakistanis. The laws covered all aspects of daily life, including acceptable living areas, occupations and education for each category. They also institutionalized the segregation of public transport and places of entertainment. Finally, they disenfranchised all except the whites from participation in national government.

After the introduction of apartheid, the laws became more and more restrictive and the opposition to apartheid led to harsh repression which effectively made South Africa a police state.

From the mid-1970s onwards, however, a new attitude began to take hold, and gradually black trade unions gained the right to organize and membership of parliament was extended to Coloureds and Asians. These improvements in conditions may have been the result of international pressure and economic sanctions. But there is no question that Mandela's existence and his continued imprisonment fuelled the fires of opposition, and he was the catalyst for change.

## Communicative activities

The following teacher-led activities cover the same sections of text as the exercises at the back of the Reader and supplement those exercises. For supplementary exercises covering shorter sections of the book, see the photocopyable Student's Activities pages of this Factsheet. These are primarily for use with class readers but, with the exception of the discussion and pair/groupwork activities, can also be used by students working alone in a self-access centre.

## ACTIVITIES BEFORE READING THE BOOK

Put students into groups and ask each group to come up with a list of five things that they know about Nelson Mandela. Elicit the lists from each group and compile a composite list of at least ten 'facts'. Do not confirm or correct anything at this stage. Keep the list and refer to it after the students have read each section to see if the 'fact' has been confirmed or challenged in that section.

## ACTIVITIES AFTER READING A SECTION

## South Africa 1652–1884 – Chapter 4

- Put students into groups. Ask them to look through the boxes at the top of each chapter and to select just 5 dates/facts from all the boxes which they would put in a very short biography of Mandela.
- Elicit the lists from each group and decide which list is the best.
- Put students into pairs to role play a conversation before the Sharpeville massacre between Nelson Mandela and

a young ANC activist who believes in violence. Mandela explains why he does not believe in violence.

- Put students into pairs to role play a conversation between the activist and Nelson Mandela after the Sharpeville massacre. Mandela has changed his mind. Why? What is he going to do now?

## Chapters 5–7

- Repeat Communicative activities 1 and 2 from the previous section, using the boxes at the start of the final three chapters this time.
- Put students into pairs to role play the first meeting between Nelson Mandela and de Klerk. What did they talk about?

## ACTIVITIES AFTER READING THE BOOK

- Put students into pairs. Ask them to look again at the map opposite page 1 and to try to remember what happened to Mandela in each of the places.
- Elicit ideas from the pairs for each place.
- Ask students to scan the book to find each place and check what happened there.

## Glossary

It will be useful for your students to know the following new words. They are practised in the 'Before You Read' sections of exercises at the back of the book. (Definitions are based on those in the Longman Active Study Dictionary.)

## South Africa 1652–1884 – Chapter 4

- arrest** (v) if a police officer arrests someone, he or she takes them away because they are believed to be guilty of a crime
- authorities** (n) the people who make decisions for a country or area
- ban** (v) to officially say that something must not be done
- chief** (n) the leader of a tribe
- freedom** (n) the right to live your life the way you want to
- government** (n) the group of people who govern a country or state
- land** (n) not the sea
- law** (n) the system of rules that people in a country or place must obey
- lead** (v) to be in charge of something
- organize** (v) to plan or arrange to do something
- pass** (n) an official document that shows you are allowed to be somewhere or do something
- politics** (n) ideas and activities that are concerned with how a country or area is governed and who has power
- president** (n) the official leader of a country that does not have a king or queen
- prison** (n) a building where criminals are kept as a punishment
- protest** (v) to do something to show publicly that you think something is wrong or unfair
- treason** (n) the crime of doing something that could cause great harm to your country or government, especially by helping its enemies
- trial** (n) legal process in which a court of law decides whether or not someone is guilty of a crime
- tribe** (n) a group of people who have the same race, language and customs and who live together in the same area
- violence** (n) when people use force to attack other people and try to hurt or kill them
- warder** (n) a prison guard



## Student's activities

### Photocopiable

Students can do these exercises alone or with one or more other students. Pair/group-only activities are marked.

### Activities before reading the book

- 1 Who or what do these words in the Introduction (page iv) refer to? Work in pairs. Find your words then test your partner.

#### Student A

Rolihlahla  
Xhosa  
Chief Jongintaba  
27

#### Student B

Mvezo  
Henry  
Johannesburg  
27 April 1994

- 2 Match each date (a-h) with one piece of information (i-viii) from the first Chapter page v)
- (a) 1652
  - (b) 1795
  - (c) 1803-1815
  - (d) 1815
  - (e) 1899-1902
  - (f) 1910
  - (g) 1948
  - (h) 1994
  - (i) The ANC won the fight against apartheid.
  - (ii) The Boers went to the Cape in this year.
  - (iii) The British arrived in the Cape.
  - (iv) The British got the Cape.
  - (v) The British made one country with an Afrikaner president.
  - (vi) The way of life in South Africa was called 'apartheid'.
  - (vii) There was fighting between the British and Boers.
  - (viii) There was fighting in Europe.

### Activities while reading the book

#### South Africa 1652-1994 - Chapter 4

- 1 Complete these sentences from Chapter 1 (to not only a Xhosa page 2). Use a word from the box in each space.

African boy brother father ideas man men  
mother school sisters teacher tribes wife wives

- (a) Nelson Mandela was a happy ... .
- (b) He lived with his mother and ... in Qunu.

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- (c) His ... lived with them one week a month.
  - (d) His father had three other ... .
  - (e) When his father died, his ... took him to the home of Chief Jongintaba.
  - (f) The chief's son, Justice, was a good ... to him.
  - (g) When Nelson was 16, he went to ... .
  - (h) On his sixteenth birthday, he became a ... .
  - (i) Chief Meligqli spoke about the life of black ... in South Africa.
  - (j) Nelson met a ... from the Sotho tribe in Healdtown.
  - (k) His ... was from the Xhosa tribe.
  - (l) At that time in South Africa, people from different ... didn't marry.
  - (m) But Nelson's ... started changing.
  - (n) He started being an ... , not only a Xhosa.
- 2 Who, in the second part of Chapter 1 ...?
- (a) went to university at Fort Hare.
  - (b) protested for better food.
  - (c) wanted Nelson to be one of their leaders.
  - (d) did not like the protest.
  - (e) told Nelson to go home and change his ideas.
  - (f) talked to Chief Jongintaba about the problem.
  - (g) was very angry.
  - (h) did not want to marry.
  - (i) got a job with some lawyers in Johannesburg.
  - (j) visited Nelson in 1941 and died in 1942.
  - (k) told Nelson about the ANC.
  - (l) protested because the bus company wanted people to pay more money for bus tickets.
  - (m) was the only black student at Witwatersrand University from 1943-9
- 3 Work in pairs.
- (a) Read the box at the start of Chapter 2.
  - (b) Read the chapter and add more important dates to the box.

Example:

1950 The government made more apartheid laws.

- (c) Add more facts to some of the points in the box.

Example:

1944 Mandela marries Evelyn Mase

They met at the home of his friend Walter Sisulu.

- 4 Are these sentences from Chapter 3 true or false?

- (a) The treason trial lasted nine months.
- (b) Winnie was 16 when Nelson married her.

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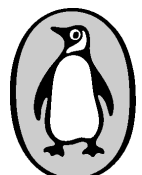
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- (c) The authorities moved the trial from Johannesburg to Pretoria to help the ANC.
- (d) There were nearly 100 people on trial.
- (e) The ANC and the PAC included, black, Indian, coloured and white people.
- (f) The police in Sharpeville killed two people in 1960.
- (g) During the trial, Nelson Mandela could still work in his law office.
- (h) Oliver Tambo was not put in prison by the government.
- (i) At the end of the trial, Nelson went to prison for treason.
- 5 Match each adjective with a noun to make phrases from Chapter 4.

(a) dangerous	(i) clothes
(b) long	(ii) hair
(c) black	(iii) lawyers
(d) new	(iv) life
(e) important	(v) meeting
(f) tribal	(vi) organization
(g) short	(vii) pimpnel
(h) political	(viii) prisoners
(i) government	(ix) trousers

- 6 Work in pairs.  
Tell the story of Chapter 4. Use the phrases from Exercise 5.

### Chapters 5-7

- 1 Find 12 words in the Wordsearch connected with life on Robben Island..

You can read .

P	O	L	I	T	I	C	A	L
R	R	G	A	R	D	E	N	E
O		I			B	D	W	T
T	V		S	O	O	A	A	T
E	I			O	L		R	E
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T	I			S		E	E	S
	T	R	O	U	S	E	R	S
	R	E	D	C	R	O	S	S

- 2 Work in pairs. Talk about life on Robben Island at the beginning and later. Use words from Exercise 1.
- 3 Match the questions (a-i) and answers (i-ix) about the information in Chapter 6.
- (a) How was life difficult for Mandela in Pollsmoor Prison?

- (b) How was life for Mandela better in Pollsmoor Prison?
- (c) What did President Botha want the ANC to do in 1985?
- (d) What did Mandela want the government to do in 1985?
- (e) What happened to Mandela in 1988?
- (f) How was life better for Mandela in Victor Verster Prison?
- (g) When did President de Klerk free Walter Sisulu and six other political prisoners.
- (h) Why didn't Mandela want to go to Johannesburg in 1990?
- (i) When did he leave prison?
- (i) He didn't have his friends with him and his room was small and wet.
- (ii) He had a nice large house, he had visitors and new clothes.
- (iii) He wanted them to stop using violence with black people.
- (iv) He wanted them to stop using violence.
- (v) He wanted to walk out of Victor Verster Prison.
- (vi) It was easier for Winnie to visit him and he could take her in his arms.
- (vii) On February 11th 1990.
- (viii) On October 15th 1989.
- (ix) The government moved him to Victor Verster Prison.

- 4 There is a mistake in each sentence about the information in Chapter 7. Find and correct the mistakes.

- (a) Mandela was seventeen years old when he left prison.
- (b) He told people in London, 'We listened to your songs about apartheid in prison.'
- (c) In 1991, he was the new President of South Africa.
- (d) The South African police helped the Xhosa people in 1991.
- (e) At the end of 1993, Mandela and Buthelezi won the Nobel Peace Prize.
- (f) Mandela met Graca Machel and then left Winnie.
- (g) The government of Nelson Mandela was for black people.
- (h) After 27th April 1994, there were no problems for people in South Africa.

### Activities after reading the book

Work in pairs. Test each other on the life of Nelson Mandela.



Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (July 18, 1918 – December 5, 2013) was a South African anti-apartheid leader and politician who served as President of South Africa from 1994-1999. For his life Mandela received more than 250 honors, including the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize, the US Presidential Medal of Freedom (from George W. Bush), the Sakharov Prize, the Soviet Order of Lenin and the Bharat Ratna. Nelson Mandela facts and information about his role in the Civil Rights Movement, including Long Walk to Freedom. Warren Buffett's heir, NEWS (12/5/2013): Mandela Dies at 95 in Johannesburg. Read More about Nelson Mandela's Death. Read The Full Story. Related Key Phrases. mandela. nelson mandela. mandela nelson. mandela's. nelson mandella. nelson mandela's. nelson mendela. nelson mandelas. nelson madela. nelsonmandela. nelson mandela 2008. nelson mandala. nelson rolihlahla mandela. Nelson Mandela, Writer: Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom. Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (July 18, 1918 - December 5, 2013) was the former leader of the African National Congress (ANC). Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (July 18, 1918 - December 5, 2013) was the former leader of the African National Congress (ANC). He was known for his lifelong struggle against apartheid (enforced racial separation), which was instituted in South Africa in 1948.