I am pleased to bring to you the 2012 "Commemoration of Significant Historical Anniversaries" booklet that chronicles our historical anniversaries. Perhaps, it is apposite to first make the point as to the importance of history in contemporary South Africa. Among one of the great leaders in our continent is Sir Seretse Kgama, the first President of Botswana who agitated for codification and reverence of a nation's past. He is often quoted to have said "a nation without a past is a lost nation and a people without a past is a people without a soul". That is, to have a past, to know about that past and celebrate it completes us in some way as humans. Celebrating and commemorating our past is one way of building collective memory and consciousness and thus build social cohesion.

The report of the Working Group on Values in Education entitled "Values, Education and Democracy" emphasised the immense value of history teaching and the nurturing of historical consciousness. This report laid the foundation on which was to be inaugurated the South African History Project which aimed to promote and enhance the quality and status of the learning and teaching of history in our schools. Following on these earlier initiatives, we have compiled the 2012 booklet on historical anniversaries. Celebrating people and events of historical significance in our journey to freedom and democracy in this country is an important platform to build a common identity and chart the way forward to a cohesive society. Through the commemoration of key historical events that contributed to shaping our democracy, the Department of Basic Education aims to create the space to reflect, appreciate and learn from our challenges and achievements of the past.

This booklet therefore, is intended to assist schools to utilize effectively the opportunity created by public holidays and national events. The booklet aims to inculcate in young people appreciation for the history and heritage of our country while fostering respect for constitutional values, human rights, diversity and symbols of our nation. The activities in the booklet provide assistance to schools to organise and participate in commemorative anniversaries by providing insight into their historical significance and providing recommendations for activities. The activities proposed are aimed to foster dialogue and to give real expression to Unity in Diversity.

Provinces are therefore encouraged to use opportunities provided and use national days to engage learners, teachers and School Governing Body members in meaningful activities to celebrate these days. Schools are encouraged to include these days in their work plan for the year. However, the commemoration need not be limited to these days only. Schools could also draw on the community and other organisations to enrich their programmes. Key people responsible for the activities could also include local government, provincial government and Members of House of Traditional Leaders.

This booklet captures those defining moments in our nation's history, as well as the players and issues at play. Unlike other learning resources, this booklet is plainly written and is meant to actively engage the reader. It therefore has relevant activities for the classroom, some of which can be done in a group work situation while some require solo effort. In places, the educator may have to organise visual representations as part of the lesson plan.

I hope you will find this booklet intellectually stimulating and that you will help us in your own way in reimagining our past so that we can continue to learn valuable lessons from that past.

Director-General: Basic Education
**2012 Historic Anniversaries**

**Key Anniversaries commemorating the history of South Africa**

This is a selection of some historical anniversaries that our nation will remember during 2012. We call them ‘historical anniversaries’ because the number of years ago that these events took place are significant to 2012 i.e. the event took place 220 years ago, 100 years ago or 25 years ago. You may want to do some research on some of these events at your school.

The past is everything that has ever happened. It is impossible for historians to write down everything. Historians select events and interpret evidence from the past in order to write history.

This means that all history is contested and disputed. It is important to understand that history does not simply exist; historians construct history. Each historian selects and interprets evidence that has survived from the past in the light of the present as well as his or her own values, attitudes and ideology. There is not just one History, but many histories. So, this selection of anniversaries has been selected by the people who wrote this book.

For a more comprehensive listing of events visit SAHO’s ‘this day in history’ online archive.

Ruth First was assassinated 30 years ago while in exile in Mozambique. Source: National Library of South Africa, Cape Town Campus.

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**The 100 Year Struggle for Freedom**

This booklet comes at a significant moment in South Africa’s journey towards creating a unified society. The ruling party, the African National Congress, is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2012. Many of the public holidays that are described in this booklet originate in the freedom struggle, a struggle in which the ANC played a significant role.

The section of this booklet titled ‘2012 Historic Anniversaries’ provides a list of other anniversaries in 2012, which are not celebrated as public holidays, but are significant milestones in our history.

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1632: Autshumato (Harry), a Khoi chief asked sailors passing by the Cape to ferry him and twenty of his followers to Robben Island where they lived on and off for a period of eight years.

1812: The end of the Fourth Frontier War between the Xhosa and British. (The British colonised the Cape at the beginning of the nineteenth century). The British forced the Xhosa back across the Great Fish River and set up forts along this boundary.

1902: The South African War between the Boers (in the mineral-rich Transvaal and Orange Free State Republics) and the British ended. The British won the war.

1902: The Founding of African Political Organisation (APO), the predominantly coloured organisation formed to rally against the racist South Africa Act 1909.

1912: The South African Native National Congress (SANNC, later ANC) was founded to protest against the Land Act. The ANC is the ruling party in South Africa today, and its centenary was celebrated on 8 January 2012.

1912: Walter Sisulu, later to become a prominent leader of the ANC, was born. He died in 2003. To read his full biography visit the ‘People’ section on www.sahistory.org.za

1922: The Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA, later SACP) first came to prominence during the armed Rand Rebellion by white miners.

1942: Chris Hani was born. He was the leader of the SAPC and chief of staff of MK, the armed wing of the ANC. He was assassinated on 10 April 1993.

1952: Albert Luthuli became President of the ANC. He later received the Nobel Peace Prize.

1952: ANC began the Defiance Campaign during which people deliberately broke the Apartheid laws.

1952: The Coloured People’s Organisation (CPO later CPC) was formed under James La Guma. It became the successor to the APO, and continued to represent South African coloured protest, particularly against the removal of coloureds from
ANC Presidents

John Langalibalele Dube, 1871-1946

ANC President: 1912-1917

Dube was born in Natal in 1871. He was educated at Inanda and Amanzimtoti (later Adams College) in South Africa and then went to study in America for 4 years. When he got back to South Africa, in 1901, he established the Zulu Christian Industrial School in Ohlange. He also founded the Zulu/English newspaper Ilanga lase Natal (Sun of Natal).

When the ANC, first called the South African Native Congress (SANNC) was founded in 1912, Dube who was not at the founding conference in Bloemfontein but had been active in the period leading to the conference was elected as the party’s first President.

Together with other ANC members, Dube went to London in 1914 to protest against the 1913 Land Act. Dube was ANC President until 1917, after this he remained politically active in Natal. He represented Natal on the Native Representative Council from 1936 until his death in 1946.

8 January 1912 - The SANNC is formed at the Wesleyan School, Waaikoek in Bloemfontein. Dube is elected as its first President.

June 1913 - The Native Act is passed. This law forced black people to live in reserves where they became a pool of cheap labour for white people in farms and towns.

July 1913 - An SANNC group of leaders meets with F.S. Malan, the Acting Native Affairs Minister, to discuss the Land Act.

January 1914 - A SANNC delegation made up of John Dube, Sol Plaatje and Walter Rubusana among others, travel to Great Britain to protest against the 1913 Natives’ Land Act.

Sefako Mapogo Makgatho, 1861-1951

ANC President: 1917-1924

Makgatho was born at Mphahlele, Pietersburg district in Transvaal (now Limpopo province) in 1861. He completed his primary school education in Pretoria and then went overseas to study at Ealing, Middlesex. When he returned to South Africa in 1885 he worked as a teacher at the Kilnerton Training Institute, near Johannesburg.

Makgatho formed one of the earliest Black political organisations called the African Political Union (APU) in 1906 and became its president. He also later became president of the Transvaal Native Organisation (TNO) in 1908. The TNO joined the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) when it was formed. He was also part of the group that went to protest the Native Land Act in Britain in 1914. In 1917, Makgatho became President of the SANNC.

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ANC PRESIDENTS

In 1918, the SANNC confronted the Union Government over the extension of passes to women, which led to the famous 1919 women's strike. Under his leadership, the organisation successfully challenged the Union Government over the Transvaal Poll Tax of £2.10 in court. Towards the end of his life, he resigned from active politics and became a preacher at the local Methodist Church. Makgatho died in 1951.

March-April 1919 A delegation from the South African Native National Congress, which includes Josiah Gumede, Sol Plaatje and Selpo Thema, travels to Great Britain and Europe to present the African case at the Versailles Peace Conference.

February 1920 – The SANNC helps organise a strike of more than 40,000 African mineworkers on the Witwatersrand.

28-29 May 1923 – At its annual conference the SANNC changes its name to the African National Congress (ANC).

Josiah Tshangana Gumede, 1870-1947

ANC President: 1927-1930

Gumede was born in Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal). He was a teacher, politician, businessperson and journalist. He received his training at the Native College in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape. Gumede was one of the founder members of the Natal Native Congress (NNC) in 1900, as well as being a founding member of the SANNC. He contributed to the drafting of its 1919 constitution. Gumede was a member of the 1919 SANNC group that attended the Versailles Peace Conference and then went to petition the British Government. The group failed to ensure a better position for South African Blacks.

From 1924, Gumede openly criticised the South African government for enforcing segregation. He was elected as President-General of the ANC during its annual congress in July 1927. During his three-year presidency he introduced new radical ideas into the ANC, and there were some disputes among party members. In 1943, Gumede was honoured as a lifelong Honorary President of the ANC. He died in November 1946.

ANC PRESIDENTS

Zaccheus Richard Mahabane, 1881-1971

ANC President: 1924-1927 and 1937-1940

Mahabane was born in Thaba Nchu, Orange Free State (now Free State Province) in 1881. After school, he attended the Morija Mission Institute in Basotholand (now Lesotho) where he qualified as a teacher in 1901. In 1908, he trained at the Leshyster Theological School near Queenstown. He was ordained as a Methodist minister in 1914. From there he was transferred to Cape Town where he became involved in politics.

Mahabane was elected as President of the ANC in 1924 and served until 1927. During his presidency he worked hard to achieve unity among black people. He organised the Non-European Unity Conferences between 1927 and 1934 where Africans, Coloureds and Indians met to discuss issues affecting them, and their goals. He was closely involved with the Hertzog Draft Bills. One result of this was the formation of the All-African Congress (AAC) in 1935. Mahabane was elected as a member of the executive committee and served as acting Vice President in 1937.

Mahabane served a second term as President of the ANC from 1937 until 1940, and remained involved with the party until late in his life, he was in fact made a lifelong Honorary President of the ANC in 1943. He died in September 1971.

16 December 1929 – A protest march, organised jointly by the CPSA, ANC and ICU, is held in Cape Town and across the Rand in protest of the Riotous Assemblies Act.

December 1937 – The ANC holds a convention in Bloemfontein to celebrate 25 years since its formation.

Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme, 1881-1951

ANC President: 1930-1940

Born in 1881 in Natal, Seme obtained his primary school education at the local mission school before attending the Mount Hermon School, Massachusetts, in the USA. He then attended Jesus College in Oxford, England and studied law, graduating and passing his first bar exam in 1909.

Seme returned to South Africa in 1910. On 8 January 1912, Seme was amongst a group of intellectuals that called for a convention of Africans to form the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) in Bloemfontein. Seme became the Treasurer-General of the organisation and launched the SANNC newspaper, Abantu Batho.

Dr Seme was elected President-General of the ANC at the 1930 annual ANC congress. He tried to transform the ANC into an organization of economic self-help and tried to give the traditional Chiefs more power in the running of the ANC.

but this did not work. His comrades accused him of doing little to grow the ANC. As a result, Seme was replaced by Mahabane as president of the ANC in 1937. After this, Seme worked as a lawyer in Johannesburg until his death in June 1951.

ANC PRESIDENTS

Dr Alfred Bitini Xuma, 1893-1962

ANC President: 1940-1949

Xuma was born in 1893 in the Transkei. He studied at the Pietermaritzburg Training Institute and taught in the Eastern Cape before leaving in 1913, to study medicine in the USA. He later went to Britain, and became the first Black South African to graduate with a PhD from the London School of Tropical Medicine. Xuma returned to South Africa in 1928 and began practicing as a physician in Johannesburg.

In 1935 he was elected Vice-President of the All-African Congress (AAC). Then in 1940 he was elected President of the ANC. Under his leadership, the ANC’s constitution was revised and the organization became more organised. In 1943, Xuma and the Atlantic Charter Committee produced a document called African Claims, which proposed one way in which South Africans may achieve racial equality.

On 9 March 1947, Xuma signed the ‘Doctor’s Pact’, with Dr G.M. Naicker from the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) and Dr Yusuf Dadoo from the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC). All three men were doctors, hence the name of the agreement. This laid the foundation for a united front between Indians and Africans to fight against racial discrimination. Pressure from militants in the ANC Youth League, who demanded a closer working relationship with the South African Communist Party (SACP), Xuma was replaced by Moroka as ANC President. He died in Johannesburg in 1962.

Dr. James Sebe Moroka, 1892-1985

ANC President: 1949-1952

Moroka was born at Thaba Nchu in the Orange Free State (now the Free State Province) in 1892. He went to Scotland from 1911 to 1918 where he graduated from the University of Edinburgh as a doctor. When he returned to South Africa he
ANC Presidents

ANC President: 1991-1997

Mandela was born at Mvezo in the then Transkei in 1918. After matriculating from Healdtown Methodist Boarding School in 1938, he enrolled at the University of Fort Hare but left following his suspension after a boycott. He went to Johannesburg where he enrolled at UNISA and completed a BA via correspondence. He later registered for an LLB Degree at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Mandela was one of the founding members of the ANC Youth League in 1944. In December 1949, he was elected to the ANC’s National Executive Council. When the ANC launched its Defiance Campaign in 1952, Mandela was elected National Volunteer-in-Chief. In the 1960s, Mandela headed the ANC’s military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK).

In 1962, Mandela left the country and travelled to Africa and Europe. Upon his return, he was arrested and charged with illegally leaving the country. While he was returning to Johannesburg from a secret visit to Natal the police arrested him at Howick. Mandela was convicted and sentenced to five years imprisonment. In July 1963, the police arrested other ANC leaders in Rivonia where MK had established a base. At the trial, Mandela and eight others were sentenced to life in prison.

Mandela initiated talks with the Apartheid regime in 1985. He was released in 1990 after 27 years in prison. In 1991, at the first national conference of the ANC held inside South Africa, Mandela was elected President of the ANC.

Mandela was inaugurated as President of South Africa in 1994, and retired in 1999.

ANC President: 1997-2007

Mbeki was born in Idutywa in the then Transkei in 1942. He joined the ANC Youth League at the age of 14. After completing his schooling in 1962, he went into exile, first in Tanzania and later Britain where he completed a Masters degree in Economics at Sussex University.

Mbeki worked at the ANC’s London office before being sent to the Soviet Union for military training in 1970. After training he was elected as the Assistant Secretary of the ANC’s Revolutionary Council in Lusaka. He was later appointed to the ANC’s National Executive Committee (1975) while also serving as the ANC’s acting representative in Swaziland.

During the 1980s, Mbeki headed the Department of Information and Publicity and coordinated diplomatic campaigns to involve more white South Africans in anti-Apartheid activities. In 1989, he headed the ANC’s Department of International Affairs and was involved in the ANC’s negotiations with the Apartheid Government.

After the elections in 1994, Mbeki became the Deputy President of South Africa. He was elected President of the ANC in 1997, and was inaugurated as President of South Africa in 1999. He served a second term as President in 2004. In September 2008, Mbeki resigned from his position as President of the country.
Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma, 1942-
ANC President: 2007-

Zuma was born at Nkandla in northern KwaZulu-Natal (then Zululand) in 1942. He joined the ANC in 1958. He joined the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) in 1959 and became involved in trade union activities. After the banning of the ANC in 1960 and the formation of its armed wing (MK), Zuma participated in sabotage acts in Natal. He was arrested in June 1963 while trying to leave the country for military training and was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment on Robben Island. He was released in December 1973. He went into exile in December 1975. In the 1980s, he served as the head of the ANC’s Intelligence Department.

At the ANC National Conference in Mafeking in December 1997 he was elected as Deputy President of the ANC. He then served as Deputy President of South Africa from 1999 until June 2005.

In December 2007, Zuma was elected as ANC President at the national conference in Polokwane, Limpopo. After elections in 2009, he was elected as South Africa’s fourth democratic President and inaugurated on 9 May 2009.

2 June 1999 - South Africa’s second general election is won by the ANC with 66.35% of the votes. This increased the ANC’s seats in Parliament by 14.

14 June 1999 - Mbeki is elected President of the ANC by the new Assembly and succeeds Nelson Mandela.

14 April 2004 - South Africa’s third general election is won by the ANC with an increased majority of 69.65%.

Human Rights Day – 21 March

Every year South Africans celebrate Human Rights Day on 21 March. South Africans celebrated this holiday for the first time in 1995.

Why do we celebrate Human Rights Day on 21st March every year?
A large unarmed crowd gathered outside the Sharpeville police station on 21 March 1960 to demonstrate against the Pass Laws. The Apartheid police opened fire on the crowd, and at the end of the day, 69 people were dead and nearly 200 wounded. Most of those killed had been shot in the back as they tried to flee.

The law required that every black man and woman to carry a pass at all times. The Pass Laws were only one of the many gross human rights abuses black South Africans experienced under the Apartheid government.

The commemoration of this day reminds us of the human rights we have in our democracy today. On 21 March we remember the hundreds of thousands of South Africans who fought and often died so that we may enjoy these rights.
HUMAN RIGHTS DAY – 21 MARCH

PASS LAWS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Passes were one of the cornerstones of the Apartheid system in South Africa. Passes were used to control the movement of black African people as a source of cheap labour. At various times in the 19th and 20th centuries pass laws were met with fierce resistance.

When the National Party came to power in 1948 they tightened up the already existing racial segregation laws. They passed laws that extended government control over the movement of the black population in urban areas and made it compulsory for all black people to carry a pass (‘dompas’) or reference book at all times. This not only prevented people from moving freely throughout the country, but black people were prevented from working in urban areas without a pass. In other words, if you didn’t have a pass you could not work or live in the city. If you could not produce your pass book, the police could arrest you and throw you in jail. At the height of Apartheid, the South African police had arrested more than one million black South Africans a year for breaking pass laws.

Try to imagine that each time you wanted to visit a family member that lived in a different area you had to apply to the government for permission. How would this impact on your life?

What happened on 21 March 1960?

At the African National Congress’s (ANC) annual conference in 1959, Chief Albert Luthuli declared 1960 the ‘Year of the Pass’. As a result the ANC embarked on a drive to prepare its members for the nationwide anti-pass campaign early in 1960. Careful planning was still to happen.

On Human Rights Day in 1960 a premature march was organised by the PAC, a breakaway group of the ANC that was barely a month old. The PAC had a yet-to-be-developed administration and intelligence gathering capability, however, PAC leader (Robert Sobukwe) announced details of this protest at a press conference in March. The PAC called on their supporters to leave their passes at home and gather at administration and intelligence gathering capability, however, PAC leader (Robert Sobukwe) announced details of this protest at a press conference in March. The PAC called on their supporters to leave their passes at home and gather at police stations across the country, offering themselves up for arrest.

The night before the march Sobukwe said: “Sons and daughters of the Soil, remember Africa! ….The step we are taking is historical, pregnant with untold possibilities. We must, therefore, appreciate our role. We must appreciate our responsibility. The African people have entrusted their whole future to us. And we have sworn that we are leading them, not to death, but to life abundant. My instructions, therefore, are that our people must be taught NOW and CONTINUOUSLY THAT IN THIS CAMPAIGN we are going to observe ABSOLUTE NON-VIOLENCE.”

So, on the morning of 21 March, PAC leaders gathered supporters, and groups marched to local police stations. In most townships in and around Johannesburg the campaigners were easily dispersed by the police. However, in Sharpeville – a township situated between the industrial cities of Vanderbijlpark and Vereeniging - events turned out very differently.

The crowd of protesters marched to the Sharpeville police station singing freedom songs. They were met by a large group of policemen lined up outside the police station. By mid-day the crowd outside the station had grown to approximately 5000 people and the number of policemen was increased to 300. Reports indicate that a scuffle broke out near the entrance of the station at 13h15. As the crowd pushed forward, a policeman was knocked over. According to the police the campaigners then began to throw stones at them. Without warning a policeman panicked and opened fire. His colleagues followed suit and the firing lasted approximately two minutes. The protesters could do nothing but run. By the end of the shooting, 69 people had been shot dead and 180 were seriously wounded. Police would normally have used batons when charging resisters.

Eyewitness accounts support the view that the protesters were given no warning to disperse and that large numbers of people were shot in the back as they tried to run from the hail of bullets.

SHARPEVILLE MASSACRE: WITNESS ACCOUNTS

“The police have claimed they were in desperate danger because the crowd was stoning them. Yet only three policemen were reported to have been hit by stones - and more than 200 Africans were shot down. The police also have said that the crowd was armed with ‘ferocious weapons’, which littered the compound after they fled. I saw no weapons, although I looked very carefully, and afterwards studied the photographs of the death scene. While I was there I saw only shoes, hats and a few bicycles left among the bodies. The crowd gave me no reason to feel scared, though I moved among them without any distinguishing mark to protect me, quite obvious with my white skin. I think the police were scared though, and I think the crowd knew it.” - Humphrey Taylor, an assistant editor at Drum magazine who was at Sharpeville that day. Source: "Taylor in Fox", 2010

"With hindsight, the story is simple. The PAC, which was 16 days short of its first birthday, had called on African men to leave their pass books at home, go to the nearest police station and demand to be arrested for not carrying the dompas... When the police in Sharpeville saw the masses marching towards them, they panicked and opened fire, killing the 69 and injuring hundreds... The country went up in flames as anger spread through townships across the country. More were killed in the days after Sharpeville." - Joe Tlholoe - a high school pupil at the time of the massacre and later one of the country’s leading journalists.
Within hours the news of the killing at Sharpeville became headlines across the world. Four days later, on 30 March 1960, the government declared a State of Emergency and banned all public meetings. On 7 April 1960 the Unlawful Organisations Act came into effect that allowed the government to declare any organisation unlawful that they saw as a threat to public order. Using this Act, the government declared the ANC and PAC unlawful and the organisations were banned.

Under democratic rule

The Department of Basic Education recognizes the importance of promoting a culture of human rights in schools. All members of the school community need to work together to develop this culture. The school should be a peaceful and safe environment for learning. The policy of the schools should ensure that there is no unfair discrimination. Education should encourage mutual respect and dignity in the school.

The South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 states that every child in South Africa:

- Must have access to basic education
- Must be treated fairly
- May not be abused at school
- Should not feel threatened by any form of violence against them

In a school environment that upholds human rights, teachers will be able to:

- Use material and methods in the classroom that will give learners the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that promote democracy, human rights and peace;
- Use material and methodologies that promote an understanding of Rights and Responsibilities for the whole school community – draw up a Charter of Rights and Responsibilities for the school;
- Promote human rights in their relationship with other teachers, parents and the community;
- Monitor and report human rights violations and incidents of abuse occurring in the school

Activity 1: Conduct an interview

1. Interview someone you know who had to carry a pass during Apartheid.
2. After the interview, write a summary of what you learnt from the interview.

Planning your interviews

Here are some points to think about when you plan your interviews:

- How are you going to introduce the theme of the interview to the person you are interviewing? How are you going to make sure that they agree to the interview?
- What questions are you going to ask? Write down your main questions. Avoid asking too many questions or questions that can be answered simply with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’.

Activity 2: Writing in a democracy

Living in a country that has a democratic system of rule is very different to living under Apartheid, a system where there were no human rights.

1. Rewrite this table into your notebook.
2. Place the sentences below under the correct heading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Under apartheid rule</th>
<th>Under democratic rule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People had no rights to</td>
<td>People have rights to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to protest against the government</td>
<td>Against the government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws are fair to everyone</td>
<td>Laws outline human rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People could be detained without trial</td>
<td>People cannot be detained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government elected by white adult citizens</td>
<td>Government elected by all adult citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of movement from one place to another</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of belief and speech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activity 3: Commemorating Human Rights Day

How can you commemorate Human Rights Day? One idea is to write a poem.

Mzwakhe Mbuli is known as the people’s poet. He performed many poems about apartheid. Here is a verse from his praise poem to Nelson Mandela:

To read more about this event and its effect on the course of the Freedom Struggle in South Africa visit the ‘Sharpeville Massacre’ on ‘Liberation Struggle’ features on www.sahistory.org.za/politics_and_society

Commemorating the Sharpeville Massacre

During the anti-apartheid struggle, 21 March became known as Sharpeville Day and was commemorated annually by anti-apartheid organisations. In 1966 the United Nations declared the day the ‘International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination’.

After the elections of our first democratic government in 1994, the 21 March was declared a public holiday to commemorate the human rights that are protected in the South African Constitution as part of the Bill of Rights. Our Constitution recognizes the injustices of the past and calls for us ‘heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values.’ It goes on to declare that in a democratic and open society, government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by the law.

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To the fountain of wisdom and inspiration.
Let me dedicate my poetic praise
To the symbol of hope and prosperity.
Let me dedicate my poetic praise
To the symbol of resistance.
Let me dedicate my poetic praise
To the fountain of wisdom and inspiration.

I talk of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela
The leader that stood the test of time.
Like gold and diamond
In order to be refined
You have gone through the fires of time.

1. Write your own poem about the events at Sharpeville on 21 March 1960, or about ordinary people that fought against apartheid.
2. Display these poems on notice boards around the school or read your poem in a school assembly in the build up to Human Rights Day.

Planning your interviews

Here are some points to think about when you plan your interviews:

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Activity 2: Writing in a democracy

Living in a country that has a democratic system of rule is very different to living under Apartheid, a system where there were no human rights.

1. Rewrite this table into your notebook.
2. Place the sentences below under the correct heading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Under apartheid rule</th>
<th>Under democratic rule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People had no rights to</td>
<td>People have rights to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to protest against the government</td>
<td>Against the government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws are fair to everyone</td>
<td>Laws outline human rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People could be detained without trial</td>
<td>People cannot be detained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government elected by white adult citizens</td>
<td>Government elected by all adult citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of movement from one place to another</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of belief and speech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activity 3: Commemorating Human Rights Day

How can you commemorate Human Rights Day? One idea is to write a poem.

Mzwakhe Mbuli is known as the people’s poet. He performed many poems about apartheid. Here is a verse from his praise poem to Nelson Mandela:

To the fountain of wisdom and inspiration.
Let me dedicate my poetic praise
To the symbol of hope and prosperity.
Let me dedicate my poetic praise
To the symbol of resistance.
Let me dedicate my poetic praise
To the fountain of wisdom and inspiration.

I talk of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela
The leader that stood the test of time.
Like gold and diamond
In order to be refined
You have gone through the fires of time.

1. Write your own poem about the events at Sharpeville on 21 March 1960, or about ordinary people that fought against apartheid.
2. Display these poems on notice boards around the school or read your poem in a school assembly in the build up to Human Rights Day.
Every year South Africans celebrate Freedom Day on 27 April. Freedom Day is an annual celebration of our first non-racial democratic election. On 27 April 1994 South Africans of all races voted for the first time. Freedom Day symbolises the end of apartheid and the beginning of our new democracy. On this day, South African’s renew their commitment to uphold human rights, human dignity and equality for all people.

Extract from Speech by President Nelson Mandela at the First Freedom Day Celebrations in 1995

(Union Buildings, Pretoria, 27 April 1995)

“As dawn ushered in this day, the 27th of April 1995, few of us could suppress the welling of emotion, as we were reminded of the terrible past from which we come as a nation; the great possibilities that we now have; and the bright future that beckons us.

And so we assemble here today, and in other parts of the country, to mark a historic day in the life of our nation. Wherever South Africans are across the globe, our hearts beat as one, as we renew our common loyalty to our country and our commitment to its future.

The birth of our South African nation has, like any other, passed through a long and often painful process. The ultimate goal of a better life has yet to be realised. But if any one day marked the crossing of the divide from a past of conflict and division to the possibility of unity and peace; from inequality to equality; from a history of oppression to a future of freedom, it is 27 April 1994.

On this day, you, the people, took your destiny into your own hands. You decided that nothing would prevent you from exercising your hard-won right to elect a government of your choice. Your patience, your discipline, your single-minded purposefulness have become a legend throughout the world. You won this respect because you made the simple but profound statement that the time had come for the people to govern.

You turned our diversity from a weakness to be exploited for selfish ends; into a richness to be celebrated for the good of all. Today, we meet to reaffirm that we are one people with one destiny: a destiny that we can now shape together from the sweat of our brows.”

What happened on 27 April 1994?

For those who were old enough to vote at the time, the first democratic election in South Africa was a day to remember. People stood together in long queues, patiently waiting to cast their vote.

Of South Africa’s 22, 7 million eligible voters, 19.7 million voted in the 1994 national election. These figures indicated a poll of 86%. Very few spoiled votes were recorded in spite of the substantial number of illiterate voters. The ballot papers were simple: they depicted each party’s name and crest in party colours, along with a photograph of the leader. The campaign for the Congress of the People and the Freedom Charter united the ANC, the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), the Coloured People’s Organisation and the Congress of Democrats (whites) in their demands for freedom and human rights. During this campaign the ANC and its allies invited South Africans to record their demands so that they could be incorporated into one document, the Freedom Charter.

The Congress of the People gathered at Kliptown (outside Johannesburg) from 25-26 June 1955. This was a large, colourful and exciting event attended by 3000 delegates who formally adopted the Freedom Charter, a vision for a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

The preamble to the Freedom Charter:

We, The people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know: that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the People; that our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality; that our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities; that only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief.

And, Therefore we, the People of South Africa, black and white together - equals, countrymen and brothers - adopt this Freedom Charter. And we pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won.

The Freedom Charter, 1955

As the struggle for freedom reached a new intensity in the early 1950s, the ANC saw the need for a clear statement on the future of South Africa. The idea of a Freedom Charter was born, and the Congress of the People Campaign was initiated. The campaign for the Congress of the People and the Freedom Charter united the ANC, the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), the Coloured People’s Organisation and the Congress of Democrats (whites) in their demands for freedom and human rights. During this campaign the ANC and its allies invited South Africans to record their demands so that they could be incorporated into one document, the Freedom Charter.

The Freedom Charter was adopted on 26 June 1955 by a Congress of the People in Johannesburg. It was a document that stated the aspirations of the people of South Africa and embodied the values of non-racial democracy. The Freedom Charter was a powerful statement of the people’s desire for a better life and a symbol of the struggle for freedom.

The congress called for the immediate implementation of the Freedom Charter and the establishment of a provisional government to carry out the people’s programme. The Freedom Charter was a document that brought together the people of South Africa in their struggle for freedom and democracy. It was a document that became a symbol of hope and a call to action for those who believed in the principles of non-racial democracy.

The seven parties that were represented and their percentage share of the vote and seats in Parliament were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African National Congress (ANC)</td>
<td>62.65 %</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Party (NP)</td>
<td>20.39 %</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)</td>
<td>10.54 %</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom Front (FF)</td>
<td>2.17 %</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party (DP)</td>
<td>1.73 %</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC)</td>
<td>1.25 %</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)</td>
<td>0.45%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To appreciate the significance of our first democratic election we should re-visit and understand South Africa's journey up until this point. The struggle for democracy was a long and difficult one.

Although Apartheid only ‘officially’ started in 1948, racial segregation existed in South Africa long before that. Segregation began with the settlement by the Dutch, and later the British during colonial rule. There were many examples of early resistance to segregation. A resister takes action when they see something is wrong. Resistance takes moral courage. Resistance may take many forms, including active or passive, overt or covert, individual or organized, aggressive or timid.

In 1912 resistance was formalised when the South African Native National Congress, which was renamed the African National Congress (ANC) in 1923, was formed in Bloemfontein. Other organisations like the Coloured People’s Organisation and the Natal Indian Congress were also formed, and these organisations began working towards improving the economic and political conditions that black people faced in 20th Century South Africa. South Africa's successful struggle for freedom and democracy is one of the most dramatic stories of our time. The racial tyranny of apartheid ended with a negotiated transition to a non-racial democracy, but not without considerable personal cost to thousands of men, women, and young people.

We can’t examine all of these stories in this booklet, but one turning point in the Freedom Struggle was at the Congress of the People, held in Kliptown in 1955, where the Freedom Charter was adopted. The Charter provided the Congress Alliance with a blueprint for a democratic South Africa.

The 1980s also marked a watershed in the Freedom Struggle. Trade Union movements started to re-organise and demand rights for workers and hundreds of civic associations, sports, student, women’s and religious organisations joined the anti-Apartheid struggle.

In 1983, the government tried to reform apartheid. They introduced the Tri-Cameral parliament that gave Indian and coloured people the right to vote for separate chambers of parliament. The real power, however, was still held by the National Party (NP). The United Democratic Front (UDF) was established to protest against the Tri-Cameral parliament. The UDF brought together over 600 organisations that were opposed to Apartheid. There was an increase in the number of strikes, marches and protests against the government. In 1985 a State of Emergency was declared in an attempt to control the growing discontent.

By 1988 a stalemate had been reached between the government and the anti-apartheid movement. International pressure and economic sanctions against the apartheid regime was also increasing. As a result the government began to look for a way out and started negotiations with ANC leaders.

**Commemorating Freedom Day**

27 April is a day to mark the liberation of our country and its people from over 300 years of colonialism, segregation and apartheid. It is a day when we pledge: ‘never again will a minority government impose itself on the majority’.

On Freedom Day we remember the relentless efforts of those who fought for liberation. Some joined MK and APLA, the armed wings of the ANC and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), others organised resistance inside and outside South Africa. Many men and women suffered and sacrificed, were imprisoned, banned or tortured so that we can enjoy a democracy today.

Since 1994 South Africa has worked to undo the wrongs of the past. On 27 April 1994 South African’s received political freedom. However, freedom should also mean emancipation from poverty, unemployment, racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination. Many of these social problems still exist in our society, so there is still much work to do.

Therefore, on Freedom Day we should all commit ourselves to defending the freedoms that we won as a result of a long, difficult and costly struggle. The guarantee of our freedom requires that we stand up against things like corruption and the erosion of the values of the freedom struggle. We need to be active citizens that work towards abolishing the legacy of racism and economic inequality.
Every year South Africans celebrate Workers’ Day on 1 May. South Africans first officially celebrated this day as a public holiday in 1995, joining the international celebrations of this day.

Workers’ Day commemorates the role played by South African trade unions, the South African Communist Party (SACP previously CPSA) and other labour movements in the struggle for worker’s rights and against Apartheid. ‘May Day’ is an internationally celebrated day which was born out of the industrial struggle for better working conditions, especially an eight-hour working day.

What happened on 1 May?

International Worker’s Day

May Day originated in the United States when carpenters in Philadelphia began to campaign for a ten-hour working day in 1791. Men, women and children had to work anything up to 16 hours a day in very difficult conditions.

In 1835, Philadelphia workers organised a general strike. Their banners read, ‘From 6 to 6, ten hours work and two hours for meals!’ The strike was successful, and the workers in Philadelphia began working a ten-hour day.

Big business and the government in the USA reacted strongly to this rapidly growing trade union movement. In Chicago local business even purchased a $2,000 machine gun for the Illinois National Guard to use against workers if they went on strike.

The workers did go on strike in Chicago, on 1 May 1886. 35,000 workers Downed tools to demand an eight-hour work day. Over the next few days they were joined by thousands of other skilled and unskilled workers in the centre of Chicago. On 3 May the police fired into the crowd of strikers. Four people were killed, and many were wounded. This became known as the Chicago Haymarket Massacre.

Three years later, in 1889, over 400 Trade Union delegates met in Paris, France on the 100th anniversary of the French Revolution. A resolution was passed that called for an international demonstration to carry on the campaign for an eight-hour day. The demonstration would be held on 1 May 1890, on the same date as the 1886 demonstrations. The call was a huge success. May Day demonstrations took place in the United States, Chile, Peru, Cuba and most countries in Europe.

May Day quickly became an annual international event. Throughout the world workers used the date to campaign for worker’s rights on ‘May Day’. Ironically, while May Day gained momentum across the world, it lost momentum in the United States where the celebration originated. Today May Day is celebrated as a public holiday in most countries with the exception of the United States, because of the holiday’s association with Communism.

Worker’s Day in South Africa

In South Africa strike action increased in the early 20th century. The white mineworkers’ strike of 1922 was harshly repressed by the state. After the formation of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) in 1921, May Day was used to organise large, often multi-racial events to raise worker issues and demands.

In 1922 workers demanded that May Day become a paid public holiday, and this became a regular call by workers every year on 1 May. The last major May Day rally, for a long period, was organised by the CPSA and ANC in 1950, just before the CPSA was banned by the Apartheid government. An increase in restrictive laws and state harassment of the Trade Union movement led to the movement’s virtual collapse. It was only after a series of spontaneous strikes in Durban in 1973 that the Trade Union movement gave impetus to a new wave of resistance. This strike led to the development of the modern workers’ movement in South Africa. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) was formed in 1982. It later became the biggest affiliate of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) that was formed in 1985.

During the 1980s, the annual observance of May Day became a rallying point for Trade Unions again. May Day became one of a number of annually significant days used to symbolise and mobilise resistance to the Apartheid government. There was long standing dissatisfaction with the choice of public holidays in Apartheid South Africa. In 1986 Cosatu and the United Democratic Front (UDF) began a five month campaign to make May Day a public holiday. A nationwide May Day stayaway involved approximately 1.5 million workers. This forced employers to give unofficial recognition to May Day as a public holiday from 1986.

As a result of the success of the 1985 May Day protest, similar stayaways were held annually on 1 May. In 1987 Cosatu started a campaign for a ‘living wage’ which was so successful that members of Cosatu all received a wage increase that was greater than the inflation rate.

Commemorating Workers’ Day

Though May Day has been celebrated unofficially in South Africa since the 1980s it only became an officially recognised public holiday after the democratic elections of 1994 and was celebrated for the first time in 1995.

South Africa’s Trade Union movement is an important element of the ANC’s government administration as Cosatu is part of the Tripartite Alliance (ANC, Cosatu and SAPC). This has ensured legislation that secures workers’ rights to fair labour practices. Legislation includes the Labour Relations Act, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, the Mines Health and Safety Act and the Employment Equity Act. Great strides have been made in improving working conditions, and South Africa’s trade union movement continues to represent workers to ensure the effective implementation of the new legislation.
Activity 1: Commemorating Workers Day

How can you commemorate Workers Day? Two ideas are listed below:

1. A research project on trade unions
2. Do an oral presentation of your research.

A Workers Day class debate on the meaning of a song “Shoshola”

Shoshola means “to push forward”. The song was sung by migrant workers who came to work on the mines on the Witwatersrand in the late 19th century. The rhythm of the song sounds like the pulse of a steam train that transported workers to work. It became an inspirational song of protest during the struggle against apartheid in the 20th century. It was a song with a political meaning that encouraged resistance. After 1994, it evolved into a sporting anthem and is sung at South African sporting events to encourage our teams.

The words of the song are probably familiar to all South Africans:

- Ku lezontaba (Through those mountains)
- Wenu yabaleka (You are leaving)
- Stimela sphuma eSouth Africa (Train from South Africa)
- Ku lezontaba (Through those mountains)
- Shosholoza, shosholoza (Moving fast, moving strong)

Africans: The words of the song are probably familiar to all South Africans.

Events to encourage our teams.

The other group should argue that singing.

Group 1: The song has lost its meaning
- One group should argue that it is insulting and inappropriate for a workers’ song to be turned into a sporting song.
- Each group should elect a spokesperson for the group.
- Each group should discuss and share ideas for the spokesperson to present to the class.
- The spokesperson should write down the key points of her/his argument.

Group 2: The song now has greater meaning
- The other group should argue that singing Shoshola is a celebration of democracy and workers’ rights in South Africa today.
- Decide which group is going to take which side of the debate.

Activity 2: Solving youth unemployment

Youth unemployment rates in South Africa today are very high. Unemployed workers are those who are currently not working but are willing and able to work for pay, currently available to work, and have actively searched for work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009: the percent of the total labour force ages 15-24 unemployed</th>
<th>Unemployment of youth ages 15 - 24</th>
<th>48,15%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44,59%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>52, 51%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ideas for civic action:
- As a class, suggest why unemployed people are not organized like workers are organized.
- Do you think there is a solution to the problem of unemployment for young people?
- If you were the Minister of Labour, how would you go about solving the problem? Write up a detailed step-by-step plan, with practical solutions.
- As a class, write an open letter with your ideas to the Minister of Labour to a letters page of a newspaper that is widely read in your community.
- Ask a few leading members of your local community to help you.

What happened on 16 June 1976?

Soweto stands for South-Western Townships, and lies to the South-West of Johannesburg. It was a township set up by the government for black South African’s to live in. Students were protesting against having to use Afrikaans as one of the languages of instruction at school. The issue of Afrikaans was just the spark that started the Uprising - the real issue was the oppressive Apartheid laws, especially the Bantu Education Act of 1953.

The Bantu Education system was designed to ‘train and fit’ Africans for their role as servants and labourers in apartheid society. Education was viewed as a part of the overall apartheid system including ‘homelands’, pass laws and job reservation. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 clearly intended for black children to be educated to suit their ‘role’ - one of worker and servant.

Although the Bantu Education Act made schooling more accessible for black children than schooling had been under the previous Christian missionary system of education, there was a great deal of unhappiness about the lack of facilities for black school children. There was a shortage of classrooms and qualified teachers. The budget allocation for black children disadvantaged black children. The Apartheid government spent about R644.00 per year for a white student, compared to R42.00 per year for a black student.

The march in Soweto started off peacefully, but the police opened fire on the protesting students. Chaos broke loose throughout the whole of Soweto. Students began targeting apartheid symbols such as beer halls, which were looted and then set alight. Anti-riot police vehicles poured into Soweto. Roadblocks were erected at all entrances to the township. Helicopters hovered overhead, fired teargas and shot into crowds of students.

By the third day the uprising gained momentum and spread to townships around Soweto and other parts of the country. By the following week, at least 176 students had died. Within the next few months, the protests and clashes with the police had spread to 160 black townships all over South Africa.

Eyewitness Accounts of 16 June

Account 1

“Twenty thousand Soweto schoolchildren marched in protest against a decree by the South African government’s Department of Bantu Education that Afrikaans had to be used as one of the languages of instruction in secondary schools… Newspaper photographs and several eyewitness accounts suggest that the marching students were good-humoured, high-spirited and excited. Some were giving the clenched first ‘Black Power’ salute. Others were carrying placards bearing slogans ‘Down with Afrikaans, ’We are not Boers’, and ‘If we must do Afrikaans Vorster must do Zulu.” Police vehicles rushed to the scene… The pupils taunted them and they responded with teargas… Apparently no order from the police to the marchers to disperse was heard, and a senior police officer admitted at the time that no warning shots had been fired either. The first child to be killed was evidently a thirteen-year old schoolboy Hector Petersen, apparently by a bullet fired at him directly from behind. Several other youngsters were also shot dead. Then, in the words of one newspaper, ‘All hell broke loose.’”

- John Kane-Berman, journalist with Financial Mail, quoted in newhistory.co.za

Account 2

“Despite the tense atmosphere the students remained calm and well ordered. Suddenly a white policeman lobbed a teargas canister into the front of the crowd. People ran out of the smoke dazed and coughing. The crowd retreated slightly but remained facing the police, waving placards and singing. A white policeman drew his revolver. Black journalists standing by the police heard a shot: “Look at him. He’s going to shoot at the kids.” A single shot ran out. There was a split seconds silence and pandemonium broke out. Children screamed. More shots were fired. At least four students fell and others ran screaming in all directions.”

- Brooks & Brickhill, 1980
1976 was a turning point in South African history, and ushered in an era of increased confrontation between the State and political organisations fighting for liberation. Over 14,000 male and female students left the country and went into exile. They joined the armed wings of the ANC and PAC, MK and APLA for military training in other countries. This huge increase in the number of military trainees, and the intensified resistance within South Africa, breathed new life into the liberation struggle. However, after 1976 the Apartheid government’s repression of the struggle also increased in intensity.

The Black Consciousness Movement

The Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), and a man named Steve Biko, played a large role in inspiring protests and ideas, which led to the Soweto Uprising on 16 June 1976.

After the Sharpeville Massacre, the ANC and PAC had been banned. Leaders of the liberation movements were either in jail or in exile. They joined the armed wings of the ANC and PAC, MK and APLA for military training in other countries. This huge increase in the number of military trainees, and the intensified resistance within South Africa, breathed new life into the liberation struggle. However, after 1976 the Apartheid government’s repression of the struggle also increased in intensity.

The route taken by the protesting youth in Soweto has been declared a heritage trail which can be walked by visitors. For more information go to www.joburg.org.za

Activity 1: Commemorating Youth Day

How can you commemorate Youth Day?

One idea:
1. The youth who participated in the education protests of 1976 made posters and banners that illustrated their issues with the unjust Apartheid education system. Design your own posters and banners that contain slogans and images that represent education in South Africa today. These can be positive messages, in contrast to the posters and banners used by the youth in 1976.
2. Display these posters around the school.

Activity 2: Interpreting a photograph and writing a caption

Read the sources below and answer the questions which follow.

Source A

“In the confusion, Antoinette Pieterson searched for her younger brother Hector. She had seen him in the crowds earlier that morning … now Hector, twelve and a grade six pupil, had melted away. Where could he be? … Then she saw a group of boys surrounding a youngster who lay injured on the side of a street…It was Hector! He was bleeding. He had been shot. She called him but he neither responded nor opened his eyes. She screamed hysterically. Mbuzisa Makhubo … carried him in his arms while she walked alongside. The horror of the whole tragedy is mirrored on their faces as they walked down the street.” – Source: Black South Africa: A People on the Ball by Harry Mashabela

Source B

“I saw a child fall down. Under a shower of bullets I rushed forward and went for the picture. It had been a peaceful march, the children were told to disperse, and they started singing Nkosi Sikele. The police were ordered to shoot.” – Sam Ntizima, photographer

Source C

The photograph in the flyer in Source D was published all over the world. It has become an iconic image. An icon is an image that symbolizes something much bigger than the image itself. In this case, the picture of Hector Pieterson symbolizes the whole liberation movement.

1. Look at the photograph. On which day, month and year was the photograph taken?
2. Name the two boys in the photograph.
3. Name the girl in the photograph. What was her relationship with the dying boy?
4. Use three words to describe what you think she was feeling.
5. The words that are written to describe a picture are called a caption. Write your own caption for this photograph.
6. In what way do you think that the photograph in Source D symbolizes the whole liberation movement against Apartheid?
7. Discuss in your class how you can take forward the heroism of people like Antoinette Pieterson, Hector Pieterson and Mbuzisa Makhubo.
8. Write down on a piece of paper one thing that you plan to do before the end of the year on how you want to be involved in continuing the process of transformation.
9. Pin your piece of paper on your classroom wall and read it to your class.
10. At the end of the year, tell your class what you did.

To read more about the events of 16-18 June 1976 and to read an interview with Dorothy Molefi, Hector Pieterson’s mother, go to www.sahistory.org.za

1976 was a turning point in South African history, and ushered in an era of increased confrontation between the State and political organisations fighting for liberation. Over 14,000 male and female students left the country and went into exile. They joined the armed wings of the ANC and PAC, MK and APLA for military training in other countries. This huge increase in the number of military trainees, and the intensified resistance within South Africa, breathed new life into the liberation struggle. However, after 1976 the Apartheid government’s repression of the struggle also increased in intensity.
In 2008, Nelson Mandela celebrated his 90th birthday. A concert was organised in London's Hyde Park for Mandela. The celebration was so successful that it was decided to make it an annual event. The day would be a reminder of his legacy to humankind.

Mandela Day is a call to people not only in South Africa, but across the world, 'to do as Nelson Mandela did'. This means taking responsibility for turning the world into a better place, one small step at a time.

What happened on 18 July?

He 18 July is Nelson Mandela's birthday. He was born in 1918 in a place called Mvezo, a small village in the Eastern Cape. Mandela was the first member of his family to attend high school. After he completed his schooling he went to Fort Hare University, the only South African university for black students at the time. He later moved to Johannesburg and worked at a white law firm which was prepared to register him as an articled clerk, a rare offer in segregated South Africa. While working, Mandela studied law at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits).

In 1940 Mandela joined the African National Congress (ANC) and in 1944 he became a founding member of the ANC's Youth League (ANCYL). By the time the National Party (NP) was elected to power in 1948, Mandela was the National Secretary of the ANC. The National Party based its racial segregation policies on an ideology they called apartheid. The NP passed stricter racist laws, and used brutal force to repress people who resisted them.

At a joint ANC, South African Indian Council (SAIC) and Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) May Day rally in 1950, Mandela witnessed police brutality first hand. It was then that he became convinced that freedom would only come from forging a broad-based non-racial alliance against apartheid and white minority rule. This stance received some opposition, but Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu and CPSA general secretary Moses Kotane went ahead and formed the Congress Alliance, organising the Defiance Campaign of 1952-1954.

In 1952, Mandela and Oliver Tambo opened the first African run legal practice in South Africa. Over the next 2 years they defended hundreds of people affected by apartheid laws and their practice became very successful.

In 1956 Mandela was one of 156 black, Indian, coloured and white men and women Congress Alliance leaders who were arrested and charged with Treason. After four-and-a-half years the charges against the accused were dropped.

Mandela went underground and remained a fugitive for 17 months. In August 1962 Mandela was captured at a roadblock. In November of the same year he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for incitement and illegally leaving the country. While serving his sentence he stood trial, along with 8 others, on charges of sabotage and conspiracy to overthrow the government by revolution in what became known as the Rivonia Trial. Mandela was the National Secretary of the ANC, the National Party based its racial segregation policies on an ideology they called apartheid. The NP passed stricter racist laws, and used brutal force to repress people who resisted them.

This statement received worldwide publicity and enhanced his status as the acknowledged leader of the South African freedom struggle. In 1982 a campaign demanding the release of all political prisoners was launched in South Africa and abroad. The campaign was titled 'Release Nelson Mandela' and together with the campaign for economic, and other sanctions against South Africa become the symbol of the international Anti-Apartheid Movement. This movement was the largest social movement in the world for decades.

From July 1986 onwards a small group of the government and intelligence agents began engaging with Mandela to persuade him to renounce armed struggle. In exchange, he would be released to the Transkei Bantustan, an apartheid homeland. Mandela refused but did not close the door to dialogue with the government. Unknown to the government, Mandela had kept Tambo, the President of the ANC in exile, informed of his discussions with the government through Mac Maharaj, a former Robben Island prisoner and a confidant of Mandela.

On 2 February 1990, in his speech formally opening Parliament, State President F.W De Klerk unbanned the ANC and other political parties. After 27 years of imprisonment, Mandela walked out of Victor Vorster prison on Sunday 11 February 1990. That same day he addressed a mass rally in the centre of Cape Town, his first public appearance in nearly 30 years, beginning his speech, "I greet you all in the name of peace, democracy and freedom for all".

In May 1990, Mandela headed an ANC delegation in talks with South African government, a process that lasted almost four years and was one of the most violent periods in South African history. In 1993 Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk were jointly awarded the Noble Peace Prize. The ANC won the 1994 election by an overwhelming majority. After being sworn in as South Africa's first democratically elected president on 10 May 1994, he restated his commitment to a government of national unity in which each party shared power for five years. Mandela retired from active political life in June 1999 after his first term of office as president but continued to play an active role mediating conflicts around the world. On 1 June 2004 Mandela announced that he was bowing out of public life.

Despite his retirement Mandela has continued to be the symbol of the freedom struggle in South Africa and the global icon of peace, reconciliation and perseverance. His extra ordinary journey as a young man from the small village of Mvezo to a world renowned statesman and national hero is the embodiment of the values we cherish and aspire to as a young democracy. His experiences show that values cannot be learnt merely by reading about them in books, rather they are expressed by the actions and the choices we make in our lives.

In 2006, Nelson Mandela was jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.
Mandela talks about the inherent human need for freedom that compels us as human beings to fight for freedom at all costs if denied. “I was not born with a hunger to be free. I was born free – free in every way that I could know. Free to run in the fields near my mother’s hut, free to swim in the clear stream that ran through my village, free to roast mealies under the stars and ride the broad backs of slow-moving bulls. As long as I obeyed my father and abided by the customs of my tribe, I was not troubled by the laws of man or god. I was only when I began to learn that my boyhood freedom was an illusion, when I discovered as a young man that my freedom had already been taken from me that I began to hunger for it.”

As a young man, Mandela realised that the majority of South Africans were denied their freedom and were oppressed by apartheid. This propelled Mandela to join the national liberation movement and became a member of the African National Congress (ANC). His solidarity with other political activists and struggle icons, like Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo energized the ANC in its quest to uplift and liberate disenfranchised South Africans. This quest for freedom led to his banishment and eventually his imprisonment. Mandela’s choice to fight for the right to freedom is clearly captured in our Constitution where it states that “The Bill of Rights is the cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom.”


His greatness lies in the fact that he is a visionary, a democrat and international political leader who exercises his influence and leadership with humility and respect for his colleagues and opponents alike. He is, above all, a man who is stubborn in his resolve to fight all forms of discrimination, injustice and inequality.” (SAHO, 2011)

Mandela’s life teaches us that each of us can make a small difference. If we all make a difference together, our collective effort can truly change the world. Getting involved on 18 July is an opportunity for each of us to share Nelson Mandela’s vision of a better future for all.

In 2010 Mandela Day was dedicated to the visions of the Millennium Development Goal 2, calling for quality education for all of our children. Working together, the Department of Basic Education and the Nelson Mandela Institute continue calls on parents, teachers, officials, young people, learners and others to join people around the world and spend at least 67 minutes to come together on Mandela Day to support education. The intention is to use this as an opportunity to make every day Mandela Day by investing time, resources and commitment to improving the quality of education in our schools. Nelson Mandela is not only a political icon but a moral icon and we should draw inspiration from his life and legacy to assist us in the quest to ensure that quality teaching and learning takes place in our schools. These values ensure that we act in a responsible manner to promote the principles of our democracy. Our schools are the building blocks for the future and investing in quality teaching and learning secures the future of our democracy.

Activity 1: Celebrating Mandela Day
How can you celebrate Mandela Day?
One idea:
1. Mandela’s name is the spirit of volunteerism (and selflessness). As a class volunteer to do something for others in need over a weekend.

Activity 2: Learning from Mandela
1. In a small group, make a list of all the values that Mandela embodies.
2. In South Africa today the Constitution guarantees that we all have human rights and freedoms. But those rights and freedoms also involve taking responsibility.
   a) Make a list of all the problems that face South Africa today.
   b) What kind of leaders do we need to help solve these problems?
   c) What responsibility can you take to help solve just one of these problems?
On 27 October 1955, 2,000 women marched to the Union Buildings carrying petitions to protest against the introduction of pass laws to women. This march was led by four women from left, Rahima Moosa, Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, and Sophie Williams. On 9 August 1956, Women marched to the Union Buildings again, carrying petitions to protest against the pass laws. This march was also organised by FEDSAW and led by the same women. Photograph by Jurgen Schadeberg, www.jurgenschadeberg.com.

The struggle for democracy and gender equality is built on the foundation of struggles by generations of people. This struggle has its roots in the colonial period, but the South African struggle for women's rights and equality mainly developed alongside the struggle for national liberation from white minority rule in the early 1900s. This struggle was influenced by women's struggles in other parts of the world. In 1912, in the first mass passive resistance campaign in South Africa, Indian women encouraged black and Indian miners in Newcastle to strike against low wages. In 1913, black and coloured women in the Free State protested against having to carry identity passes. In 1918, Charlotte Maxeke started the first formal women's organization called the Bantu Women's League to resist the pass laws. In the 1930s and 1940s there were many mass protests, demonstrations and passive resistance campaigns in which women participated. By 1943, women could join the ANC and in 1948 the ANC Women's League was formed with Ida Mtsweni as its first president.

In the 1950s the women's struggle in South Africa really gained momentum. In 1954, the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) was established, which brought together women from the ANC, the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), trade unions and self-help groups for the first time. A Women's Charter was drawn up that pledged to bring an end to discriminatory laws. On 26 June 1955 thousands of women delegates joined men from all across South Africa at the Congress of the People to draw up the Freedom Charter. For the first time in the history of the country a multiracial gathering of men and women agreed on racial equality, human rights and gender equality.

In September 1955, the issue of passes was raised yet again when the government announced that it would start issuing reference books to black women from January 1956. The Federation of South African Woman (FEDSAW) organised a demonstration against the passbooks at the Union Buildings in Pretoria on 27 October 1955 and again in 1956. It was the second demonstration that had the most impact.

By the middle of 1956, plans had been made for the Pretoria march and FEDSAW requested a meeting with the Apartheid Prime Minister, JG Strijdom. A meeting was refused. The ANC then sent Helen Joseph and Bertha Mashaba on a tour of the main urban areas, accompanied by Robert Resha of the ANC and Norman Levy of (the white) Congress of Democrats (COD). The plan was to consult with local leaders who would then make arrangements to send delegates to the mass gathering in August.

On 9 August 1956, a huge crowd of about 20,000 South African women of all races flocked to Pretoria's Union Buildings. The March was lead by activists Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa, Sophie Williams and Lilian Ngoyi.

On 27 October 1955, 2,000 women marched to the Union Buildings carrying petitions to protest against the introduction of pass laws to women. This march was led by four women from left, Rahima Moosa, Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, and Sophie Williams. On 9 August 1956, Women marched to the Union Buildings again, carrying petitions to protest against the pass laws. This march was also organised by FEDSAW and led by the same women. Photograph by Jurgen Schadeberg, www.jurgenschadeberg.com.

What happened on 9 August 1956?

The situation on the day was very electrifying as everybody was looking forward to a serious confrontation," young marcher Amina Cachalia recalls. "As a young person at the time, the march was a learning curve for a journey that finally came to the election of the new democratic government."

The Women's March was the biggest demonstration yet held. Women from all parts of the country arrived in Pretoria in traditional dress and green black and gold and saris.

"We were all enthusiastic to get there and see this Boer 'baas' and tell him that we are not going to carry those things," another marcher Dorothy Masenya said. "So there were the ladies, oh, Mrs Moodley, Helen, Lilian Ngoyi, oh they were very many, I remember."

Dorothy Masenya said the women thought they might be arrested. "Where would they find a prison to fill up this entire mob?" she laughs. "Nobody was arrested on that day."

Some women had babies on their backs. Veteran marcher Rahaba Moeketsi recalls, "Some were carrying the white children with them, those who were working for whites."

The women easily filled the entire amphitheatre in front of the Union Buildings. Neither the Prime Minister nor any of his senior staff was there to see the women. The march leaders left the petitions on Strijdom's office doorstep, but they were probably removed before he bothered to look at them.

Then at Lilian Ngoyi's suggestion the huge crowd stood in absolute silence for a full half hour, their hands raised in the Congress salute. This was a masterful tactic of peaceful protest. The women concluded their demonstration by singing freedom songs like 'Nkosi sikelel Afrika' and a new song which became not only the anthem of the march, but also the credo of South African women.

"We were singing the song, which says 'Verwoerd, the Black people will kill you and we do not want Bantu Education', Magdalen Tsone reminiscences. "The song was saying: 'If you strike a woman, you strike a rock.'"

Since the march, the phrase 'Strike a woman, strike a rock' has come to represent women's courage and strength. The march had finally shown that the stereotype of women as politically inept and immature, tied to the home, was outdated and inaccurate. FEDSAW had politically come of age and could no longer be underestimated.

Without exception, those who participated in the event described it as a moving and emotional experience. Women throughout the country put their names to the anti-pass petitions. They risked arrest, detention and even banning to make their voices heard.

The anti-pass campaign inspired many women's organisations over the next 30 years such as the Black Women's Federation in 1975, the United Women's Congress in 1981, the Natal Organisation of Women in 1983, the Federation of Transvaal Women 1984 and the United Democratic Fronts' Women's Organisation of Women in 1988, the Federation of Transvaal Women's League in 1975, the United Women's Congress in 1981, the Natal Organisation of Women in 1983, the Federation of Transvaal Women 1984 and the United Democratic Fronts' Women's Congress in 1987.
In 2000, four young oral historians interviewed fourteen women who participated in the 1956 March. Here are extracts from one interview, to read more visit www.sahistory.org.za/womens-struggle-1900-1994

**Interview with Dorothy Masenya (DM)**

**Q: What motivated you to, finally, say “I’m taking the government with its horns? I’m facing the bull with its horns?” What motivated you to take part in the March itself?**

DM: Well I felt as an African woman I should to do something. I’m Black when I feel to be. What will I have done for the nation, yes?

**Q: So you felt you were concerned?**

DM: I was very concerned, directly, because this would come down even with our descendants.

**Q: What motivated you to, finally, say “I’m taking the bull with its horns?” What motivated you to take part in the March of 1956?**

DM: (laughing) We become now, really, we had never carried passes. We were all enthusiastic to get there and see this Boer bass and tell him that we are not going to carry those things. So there were the ladies oh Mrs Moodley, Helen, Lilian Ngoyi, oh they were very many I remember … oh ja Bertha Mashaba… Amina Cachalia. Yes she was young lady….We had so many things to talk about really. As I say, in fact I want to we wanted to see whether these were we going to be arrested, or where would they find a prison to fill up this entire mob. You see that was the big idea o a bona [you see] if they arrest one we all walk in and no turning back. We are all just there for ….So instead; really they gave us a way out. Nobody was arrested on that day.


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### National Women’s Day - 9 August

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**Q: How did the women get to Pretoria?**

DM: Yes, we all converged, other people from other centres, Johannesburg. They were coming by trains and thing like that Springs, East Rand and things like that… In fact old Johannesburg. They were coming by trains and thing like that. We are all just there for ….So instead; really they gave us a way out. Nobody was arrested on that day.


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Heritage Day, celebrated on 24 September, is one of South Africa’s public holidays. It is a day in which all are encouraged to celebrate our cultural heritage in the wider context of the great diversity of cultures, beliefs, and traditions that make up the nation of South Africa.

“Our heritage celebrates our achievements and contributes to redressing past inequities. It educates, it deepens our understanding of society and encourages us to empathise with the experience of others. It facilitates healing and material and symbolic restitution and it promotes new and previously neglected research into our rich oral traditions and customs.” (NhRA, 1999)

What happened on 24 September?

In KwaZulu-Natal, the 24 September was formerly known as Shaka Day, in commemoration of the legendary Zulu leader, King Shaka Zulu, who played an important role in unifying more than 100 chiefdoms into one cohesive Zulu nation. When the proposed Public Holidays Bill came before the new South African Parliament it did not include Shaka Day. The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), a political party with a large Zulu membership, objected to the bill. A compromise was reached when it was decided to create a day where all South Africans could observe and celebrate their diverse cultural heritage.

Heritage is what is left behind from the past over time. It is the most accessible part of our history. It begins at home as that which we inherit. Heritage includes the languages that we speak, the landscapes and buildings where we live and the remains of communities that no longer exist. Heritage is in the work that we do, in the objects we use and treasure, in our food, music, dance, and the games that we play. Heritage is in the way we interact with other people and in the institutions through which our society is governed. It is in the communication links that have been developed within our country and it is in the memories of our families, friends and fellow citizens.

South Africa’s Cultural Heritage

The population of South Africa is one of the most complex and diverse in world. Thus, the term ‘rainbow nation’ is often used to describe South African society with its diverse cultures, customs, traditions, histories and languages.

The People

Of the roughly 50 million South Africans, approximately 31 million are black, 5 million are white, 3 million are coloured and 1 million are Indian. The black population speak a variety of African languages, as well and English and Afrikaans. Almost two-thirds of the white population are Afrikaans and the rest speak English as a home language. Coloureds speak English and Afrikaans as home languages, and Indians speak mainly English.

The Languages

South Africa has 11 official languages: isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho sa Leboa, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, English and Afrikaans.

The South African national anthem has lyrics from the most widely spoken languages – isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho, Afrikaans and English.

In an address marking Heritage Day in 1996, (former) President Mandela stated:

“When our first democratically-elected government decided to make Heritage Day one of our national days, we did so because we knew that our rich and varied cultural heritage has a profound power to help build our new nation. We did so knowing that the struggles against the injustice and inequities of the past are part of our national identity; they are part of our culture. We knew that, if indeed our nation has to rise like the proverbial phoenix from the ashes of division and conflict, we had to acknowledge those whose selfless efforts and talents were dedicated to this goal of non-racial democracy.”

The Khoisan words Ke e Xarra Ke (“United in Diversity”), is the South African motto and is part of the Coat of Arms. It expresses the choice we made more than ten years ago – to put aside the racial classifications of apartheid and to work together in creating one nation.

A recent addition to Heritage Day is the celebration of a unique South African past time – the braai National Braai Day was announced in 2007. Archbishop Desmond Tutu became the patron and at the launch of the BraaiHeritage campaign in 2008 Tutu said:

“It’s a fantastic thing, a very simple idea. Irrespective of your politics, of your culture, of your race, of your whatever, hierdie ding doen ons saam [this thing we do together] ... just South Africans doing one thing together, and recognising that we are a fantastic nation.” (Tutu in The Witness, 2008).

Under the banner of BraaiHeritage South Africans are encouraged to take part in a relaxing and enjoyable activity that is shared by all cultures.

Heritage Day is also about preserving and enjoying our natural heritage. For example, Table Mountain National Park has more plant species than are found in the whole of Britain. The Drakensberg mountain range is the highest range south of Mt. Kilimanjaro and has the richest concentration of San rock art on the African continent. South Africa is also home to eight of the 851 UNESCO World Heritage Sites – iSimangaliso Wetland Park, Robben Island, Cradle of Humankind, uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park, Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape, the Cape Floral Region, Vredefont Dome and the Richtersveld Cultural and Botanical Landscape.
The Minister of Education encourages all schools to participate in Heritage Day through planning their own celebrations. The broad objectives of the heritage celebration in schools are:

- To celebrate issues of identity, heritage and unity in diversity amongst learners, educators, parents and members of the community
- To provide an opportunity to celebrate creativity and the values of the Constitution, including human rights, democracy and non-racism
- To generate awareness and commitment to human rights, democracy and anti-racism amongst students, educator, and parents
- To raise consciousness of a broader African continental identity
- To inculcate the importance of history in students, educators and the community
- To focus attention on the importance of history in students, educators and the community
- To encourage an recognize the development of good history teaching practice
- To deepen the relationship between the school and the community through co-operation and mutual support in educational endeavors

My message to you today is to rejoice in the richness of our society. I urge you to think of the countless opportunities that abound for each of us, for our communities, our country and our continent.

I would like you to think of your heritage, of how different it is, in many respects, from that of your parents. Think too of salient features that link you to the generations that came before, of themes and traditions that have shaped your life."

Activity 1: Celebrating Heritage Day
How can you celebrate Heritage Day?
One idea:
1. Organise a class braai after school. National Heritage Day is celebrated throughout South Africa as National Braai Day.

Activity 2: The global generation and culture
It is important to remember that culture is something that is always changing. The way things were done a hundred or even ten years ago, change over time. Since the globalisation of the world during the 21st century, our world is heavily influenced by American consumer culture.

Some people have described young people today as ‘the global generation’. This means that teenagers across the world have certain things in common: they know the same music, drink the same drinks, and follow the same clothing and hairstyle fashions. With television, cell phones, computers and the Internet, young people in different parts of the world can make contact with one another more easily and faster than any previous generation. At the same time, the ‘global generation’ is deeply divided by poverty and war.

1. Doing a survey
Try to work out what your generation, represented in your class, has in common. Start by counting how many learners there are in your class.
Now work out the following:

a) How many are male and how many are female?
b) What different languages can learners in your class speak? Make a list of all the languages and count how many people can speak each one.
c) What other categories or groups can your class be divided into? Make a list and do a count.
d) What influences you most? Make a list and do a count.
e) What do you all have in common?
f) What makes you all similar to other South Africans of the same age?
g) What makes you all different to other South Africans of your age?

2. Writing a slogan
In a group, discuss how your generation is different from previous South African generations. Together, brainstorm the characteristics of your generation. Include your values and attitudes, your ideals and dreams. Choose one person in the group to write these down on a piece of paper.

Now see if you can write a slogan for your generation that sums up the characteristics of your age group. Do you think your slogan could apply to all South African youth of your generation? Explain why or why not.
two key events in South African history took place on 16 December. The first is the Battle of Blood River which took place in 1838 between a group of Boer trekkers and the Zulu army. The second is the launch of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) in 1961. MK was the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC) and it was formed to carry out an armed struggle against the Apartheid government after non-violent resistance had failed.

To promote national unity and reconciliation after 1994 the government acknowledged the significance of this date in both the Afrikaner and Freedom Struggle traditions. The day was renamed the Day of Reconciliation and was celebrated as a public holiday for the first time in 1995.

For the greater part of the twentieth century 16 December was observed as a public holiday, called Dingane’s Day, with Afrikaans-speakers attending special church services or visiting the Voortreker Monument in Pretoria. When the National Party (NP) came to power in 1948, the day was renamed the Day of the Covenant or the Day of the Vow – allegedly commemorating the vow taken by the trekkers before the battle to observe the day as a day of thanksgiving should they be granted a victory.

Launch of MK

The various Freedom Struggle movements used the day to protest against white minority rule.

For many years these protests took the form of peaceful acts of resistance aimed at forcing the government to recognize the rights of black people in South Africa. In the 1950s and 1960s, because of various laws and severe repressive measures, it became harder and harder for black people to move around freely and find work outside the bantustans.

Many anti-Apartheid leaders began to think that a change in the way the Congress Alliance approached the struggle for freedom and equality was needed. The Sharpeville Massacre in 1960 and the banning of many liberation organisations were catalysts in moving the struggle from ‘passive resistance’ to ‘armed struggle’.

The ANC led Congress Alliance launched its armed wing, ‘Umkhonto we Sizwe’ (MK) on 16 December 1961. On that morning posters appeared in the city streets that read, ‘The time has come in the life of any people when there remain two choices: to submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We will not submit but will fight back with all means at our disposal in defence of our rights, our people and our freedom.’ (MK Manifesto, 1961)

The Congress Alliance consisted of the ANC, the Indian Congress, the Coloured Congress and the Congress of Democrats (whites). The South African Communist Party had been banned, but operated underground and many of its members worked with the Congress Alliance. The Pan Africanist Congress had broken away from the ANC in 1959. After Sharpeville it created its own armed wing called Poqo.

The formation of MK was also announced through a series of ‘planned sabotage attacks’ on government offices in Durban, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth. A year after its formation, MK began to face serious organisational problems and government infiltrations. This began with the arrest of MK’s Chief Commander, Nelson Mandela, in 1962 and was followed by the Rivonia Trial and the subsequent imprisonment of the top ANC leaders inside the country.

The arrest of Bram Fischer, who had tried to regroup the now dislocated underground movement, ensured that MK’s activities within South Africa had been splintered and they were forced to regroup outside the country. From 1965 attack preparation and military training was done outside South Africa – in 1965 the ANC had about 800 guerrilla trainees, based either at camps in Tanzania or in underground military courses in, among other places; Czechoslovakia, Odessa, in the Soviet Union and China. African states such as Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Angola and Zambia, supported MK despite acts of aggression by the South African government. The ranks of MK cadres swelled after the 1976 uprisings with thousands of students leaving South Africa to join MK. This group became known as the ‘June 16 Detachment’. Their numbers and experience re-energised MK’s sabotage attacks in South Africa.

From the early 1980s, the number and sophistication of MK attacks increased. Though MK continued to focus on armed propaganda and political mobilisation, there was also a growing focus on attacking strategic installations such as civilian, military, industrial and infrastructural sites. For example the 8 January 1982 attack on the Koeberg Nuclear Power Plant in Cape Town and the car-bombing of Magoo’s Bar in Durban on 14 June 1986. After the unbanning of liberation organisations in February 1990 and the dismantling of Apartheid, MK suspended operations on 1 August 1990. After the 1994 elections many members of the MK were integrated in the new South African National Defence Force.

What happened on 16 December?

Battle of Blood River, 1838

In the early hours of 16 December 1838, a battle was fought between a group of Boer trekkers, under the leadership of Andries Pretorius, and Zulu soldiers near the Ncome (Buffalo) River. Dingane was the Zulu King at the time and his army was led by King Dingane’s generals Dambuzo (Nzobo) and Ndlela kaSompisi. The battle was fought over the murder of Pretorius by his men.

On Saturday 15 December, the Pretorius party crossed the Ncome (Buffalo) River and reached the Thukela River. Their scouts reported that a large Zulu force was advancing (10 000-20 000 Zulu soldiers). After the scouts had given the warning the trekkers moved their wagons into a laager (circular formation) in the best strategic position possible, between a deep pool in the river and a donga (a large ditch). The trekker force consisted of 470 men. There were only two gaps in the laager and in each, a canon was placed.

At dusk on 15 December the Zulu army had already begun to circle the laager. A heavy mist surrounded the laager and only lifted in the early hours of the morning. This made visibility poor. At dawn on 16 December 1838 the Zulu soldiers, equipped with assegais and shields, swept towards the laager. To be able to use their assegais effectively they had to come as close as possible to their enemies. Eyewitnesses and writers differ slightly on the exact details of the battle, but at dawn when the first Zulu attack began, the firing was apparently so heavy that the Zulu soldiers could not be seen through the smoke. The main problem faced by the Zulu's was the long time it took to reload their guns. The first Zulu attack was forced to withdraw. When a second attack was launched, the Zulu army almost reached the laager. Meanwhile hundreds of Zulu soldiers were hiding in the donga. A group of 80 trekkers, led by Sarel Cilliers, attacked this group during a short lull in the fighting. When the Zulus, who had withdrawn about 50 yards from the laager, failed to launch a third attack, Pretorius sent some men to draw them out to seal the victory. ‘Pretorius’ cavalry met with determined resistance from the Zulus, and it was only after a third raid that the Zulus were put to flight, pursued by the trekkers. At midday the pursuit was called off.

More than 3000 Zulu corpses were counted around the laager. Only 3 Voortrekkers (including Pretorius himself) were wounded and none were killed. The Ncome River was red with blood, so the battle became known to the trekkers as the Battle of Blood River.

After this defeat, the Zulu kingdom never really recovered. Dingane’s half-brother Mpande allied with Pretorius to defeat Dingane, who was eventually killed by the Swazi as he tried to regroup further north. Source: www.sahistory.org.za

Nelson Mandela, second from left, with members of the National Liberation Front in Algeria, 1962. Mandela left the country for military training in Algeria and to arrange training for other MK members. Source: Pretoria News Library.
in the Natal Mercury. The damage was quite substantial. This operation was more successful than the one in Ordnance Road where a bomb did not explode properly and caused very little damage. Well, we thought it was because we were amateurs but later we suspected that Bruno must have sabotaged it when he went back after we had placed everything correctly.” (Mtshali in Dawn)

Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim, a member of the NIC and MK’s Natal High Command, recalls the one big operation, which left the whole of Durban area in darkness: “We blew up a very big pylon in a place called Montclair outside Durban. Roenie Kauril and I had gone to the area weeks earlier to conduct reconnaissances. The place was hilly and sparsely populated…we planted dynamites on two legs of the pylon. This required a lot of work. You had to place dynamite against the object and tape it to stick, get the fuse and put it to charge. Then at the spot you had to fill the capsule with acid, making sure that the acid does not touch you…as I was working with a friend, the whole Durban area went dark. I then knew our operation had been successful. At this stage I was working for the New Age newspaper. The New Age was the first to publish the story and the photographs.” (Mtshali in Dawn)

The TRC process – a personal experience of a victim: by Andy Ribeiro on behalf of the Ribeiro family

“My 53 year old father, a medical doctor and a man known for being outspoken against the then government of the day … became known as the “peoples doctor” in [Mamelodi] because he and my mother instilled hope in people. But he also became a marked man by the Apartheid regime. …On the 1st of December 1986 (four years before the release of Nelson Mandela) assassins in broad daylight, whilst my brother Chris had gone to the shop, walked into our burnt out home and shot and murdered my unarmed father and my brother. …With the advent in 1996 of the TRC process … My brother Chris led the family delegation to the TRC hearings. We had to relive the whole painful memory of the death of our parents and after being sucked dry emotionally and physically. The TRC gave amnesty to the people who murdered my parents. We only learnt of the amnesty verdict from the newspapers because he and my mother instilled hope in people. But he also became a marked man by the Apartheid regime. … became known as the “peoples doctor” in [Mamelodi] because he and my mother instilled hope in people. But he also became a marked man by the Apartheid regime.

“Retributive justice is largely western. The African understanding is far more restorative not so much to punish as to redress or restore a balance that has been knocked askew. The justice we hope for is restorative of the dignity of the people.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, during the TRC proceedings

Activity 1: Dealing with the past and facing the future: the work of the TRC

In an attempt to deal with the pain and injustice of the past, the new democratic government set up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Source A: Cartoon

Cartoon published in ‘The Times’ on 23 May 1995. Note: Dullah Omar was the former Minister of Justice (1995). Source: Zapiro
Apartheid literally means “apartness” in Afrikaans. A policy of racial segregation further entrenched by the National Party after it won the whites-only election in 1948. It brutally enforced a highly stratified society in which whites dominated politically, economically, and socially at the expense of blacks.

Capitalism is a system where production is undertaken for private profit. There is private ownership of the means of production (capital) and there is an unequal distribution of wealth. There is competition between producers and the price of goods is determined by supply and demand.

Colonisation is the establishment of colonies which would serve as a source of raw materials and market for finished or manufactured goods. A group of people settling in a new country but remaining loyal to the country constitutes a colony. The French, British, Dutch and Belgians colonised parts of Africa in the nineteenth century. Colonisation was always a violent process as indigenous people were dispossessed of their land.

Communism is a political and economic philosophy based on communal ownership of property. It argues that the people of the world will overthrow the capitalist system. The first communist revolution occurred in Russia in 1917. People who supported the rights of the poor established communist parties in all corners of the world, including South Africa. Communism came to an end in the Soviet Union in 1990, and since then the strength of the philosophy has been weakened.

Constitution is the laws and principles by which a country is governed. A new constitution replaced the racist constitution after the 1994 election which provided the framework for a non-racial democracy.

Democracy literally means power to the people. It is a system of government in which political control is exercised by all the people through their participation and consent through voting in elections. The people practice this control either directly or indirectly, through their elected representatives. It is a government of majority rule with the recognition of the rights of minorities. It operates through the practice of regular multiparty elections and emphasises the equality and freedom of the individual which are protected in the constitution. A fundamental principle of democracy is the separation of legislative, executive and judicial powers, and equality in front of the law. In a democracy the highest authority lies in the constitution and the structures of the state. The ruling party can only change the law in line with the constitution.

Gender equality – a society in which women and men have equal rights.

Heritage is something that is inherited from the past. Across the world there are a number of sites (or places) and monuments that have a specific meaning to certain groups of people and are considered to be part of heritage. Heritage ranges from things like traditions, customs, music, stories, songs, to monuments, places, people, artefacts, indigenous knowledge systems and legacies of the past. It is part of our inheritance and the way in which we commemorate and memorialise our past.

Human Rights are any basic rights or freedoms to which individuals are entitled and in whose exercise the government may not interfere. Human rights are balanced by responsibilities. Respect for the rights of others is essential in a human rights culture.

The Freedom Struggle is sometimes also called the Liberation Struggle. Freedom Struggle was broadly speaking all organised resistance against apartheid. The term became increasingly popular after major turning points in South Africa – after the National Party came to power in 1948, after the ANC and PAC were banned, after the 1976 Uprisings, and then was most widely used in the mass resistance of the 1980s.

Passes (also known as a dompas) are the identification papers for black African men and women that they had to carry with them at all times during apartheid. Racial classification and other personal information, including employment status and history was written by government officials onto pass books. The government used passes to restrict movement of black people in the labour market. Millions of people were jailed or fined for pass offences and thus criminalized millions of ordinary South Africans.

Racism is the belief that one group of people are superior to other groups of people. Racialism is accompanied by oppressive behaviour towards those considered inferior. In apartheid South Africa, white people believed they were superior and practiced extreme forms of racial oppression against black people.

Reconciliation is a process that attempts to create good relationships between people after a period of conflict.

Segregation is a political, social and economic system that kept people apart from each other based on physical appearance.

State of Emergency is a governmental declaration that may be passed to suspend certain normal government functions, suspend certain civil liberties, and order government agencies to implement emergency plans. Such a declaration is often made during times of natural/man made disaster, civil unrest or international/internal armed conflict.

Trade Union – a workers’ organisation that deals with worker issues like wages and working conditions. In South Africa, some trade unions also fought for political rights.

Tripartite Alliance is a historic alliance between the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu). The SACP and Cosatu put forward candidates for the elections through the ANC, members of the SACP and Cosatu hold senior positions in the ANC and influence party policy and dialogue.


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