

Nelson Mandela

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Introduction

This ungraded summary is for the teacher's use only and should not be given to students.

Chapter summary

Chapter 1 (The beginnings 1918–1941) introduces Rolihlahla Mandela who was born in a village in the Transkei province. He was named Nelson by his teacher. When his father died, he lived with his uncle, a man with a deep knowledge of African history. In trouble at university for taking part in a protest, and unhappy at his uncle's attempt to arrange a marriage for him, he ran away to Johannesburg without finishing his studies.

Chapter 2 (Johannesburg 1941–1952) shows how the wealth of white South Africans, in comparison with the poverty, overcrowding, and danger faced by black people, made a strong impression on Mandela. He studied law, and became involved with the African National Congress, taking part in the non-violent Defiance Campaign against apartheid laws.

Chapter 3 (Working for the ANC 1953–1960) describes Mandela's campaigning for justice and how it brought constant police harassment and imprisonment. At one point he was even charged with treason. However, at the end of the trial – which was interrupted by the Sharpeville massacre – he walked free. His first marriage, with Evelyn Mase, had broken down, and he met his second wife, Winnie, just before the trial.

Chapter 4 (The Spear of the Nation 1961–1962) outlines how it was becoming clear that non-violent campaigning was ineffective against the brutal apartheid regime. The ANC asked Mandela to organise the MK ('spear of the nation'), with help from other African countries. Bombs were planted in power stations and government property.

Chapter 5 (The Rivonia Trial 1963–1964) shows how the police found out about the MK, and how Mandela and other members were put on trial for sabotage – which was punishable by death. Mandela did not deny the accusation, but used the trial to call for justice and equality for black Africans. Along with the other defendants, Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Chapter 6 (Robben Island 1964–1970) is a portrayal of the harsh conditions on Robben Island, particularly



for black political prisoners like Mandela, who was to spend the next eighteen years there. Communication with the outside world was very limited. Despite everything, Mandela maintained his spirit and his dignity, and secretly gave legal advice to many prisoners.

Chapter 7 (Prison and Separation 1971–1984) describes how Mandela wrote his autobiography in prison, with the help of other prisoners who copied it in tiny writing and buried the pages in the prison garden. An international campaign to free Mandela was starting to gather pace. In 1982 he was moved to Pollsmoor, a more modern, comfortable prison, where he was finally reunited with Winnie – without an intervening glass wall.

Chapter 8 (Walking to Freedom 1985–1994) talks about the violence and chaos that continued in South Africa. With international pressure increasing, it became clear that the government would have to negotiate. In 1990, the new President, F. W. de Klerk, lifted the ban on the ANC and freed Mandela. Finally an election was held in which all South Africans could vote, and Mandela became President.

Chapter 9 (The new South Africa 1994–1999) describes the new ANC government and the difficult task ahead of it. Gradually it made progress in building homes and supplying electricity and clean water. The Truth and Reconciliation Committee was formed, allowing victims and perpetrators to talk about life under apartheid. Mandela was succeeded as President by Thabo Mbeki.

Chapter 10 (A quieter life 2000–2005) looks at Mandela in his eighties, having left the world of politics. It shows how he continues to travel and campaign, particularly against poverty and for better treatment of people with HIV/Aids.

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Pre-reading activity

Word search

Look at the definitions and find the words in the word search below.

C	O	N	C	E	R	T	Y	O	P	M	A	F
C	T	E	I	F	O	Q	F	S	R	I	E	R
E	S	R	C	E	Q	U	A	L	O	N	V	E
L	U	W	R	N	W	A	L	X	T	E	U	E
L	I	G	O	V	E	R	N	M	E	N	T	D
Y	K	O	W	I	A	R	G	I	S	P	L	O
L	E	L	D	T	P	Y	A	Z	T	O	L	M
A	M	D	G	C	O	U	R	T	A	F	N	E
W	V	O	T	E	N	R	G	U	I	L	T	Y

DEFINITIONS:

- 1 a public performance of music
- 2 to speak or act against something you disagree with
- 3 a deep hole or tunnel in the ground where valuable minerals like gold or diamonds are dug
- 4 being able to do or say what you want
- 5 small room in a prison
- 6 a place where stone is dug from the ground
- 7 a large group of people
- 8 having the same rights as other people
- 9 something that can hurt people (like a gun, knife or spear)
- 10 yellow metal that is worth a lot of money
- 11 a group of people who control a country
- 12 the rules of a country
- 13 the place where a judge decides if a person has done something wrong
- 14 to choose a leader in an election
- 15 having done something that is against the law

To the teacher

Aim: To introduce key vocabulary and themes

Time: 15–20 minutes

Organization: Give one copy of the worksheet to each student or group of students. Give the students five minutes to find as many words as possible. Then ask them to match the words they have found with the definitions (most of which are taken from the glossary). Go through the words and deal with

any remaining difficulties over meanings. Finally ask students to predict why these words might be included in the book and to make sentences using some of the words.

Key: 1 concert, 2 protest, 3 mine, 4 freedom, 5 cell, 6 quarry, 7 crowd, 8 equal, 9 weapon, 10 gold, 11 government, 12 law, 13 court, 14 vote, 15 guilty.

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While reading activity

Who's who?

Match the people with the descriptions.

1 Walter Sisulu	a Was leader of the Afrikaner National Party	k Started the Black Consciousness Movement
2 Nelson Mandela	b Was King of the Thembu people	l Nelson Mandela stayed secretly at his flat
3 Chief Jongintaba	c Was a white man who worked for a newspaper	m Was taken from her daughters and put in prison alone for 17 months
4 Winnie Mandela	d Opened the first African law office with Nelson Mandela	n Nelson Mandela often visited his house for meals and long conversations
5 Oliver Tambo	e Was a businessman	o Her baby was given a name meaning 'hope'
6 Evelyn Mase	f Married a prince from Swaziland	p Tried to arrange a marriage for Nelson Mandela
7 Daniel Malan	g Left South Africa to organise the ANC abroad	q Was badly beaten by the police, and died later in prison
8 Zeni Mandela	h Was known as 'David Motsamayi' for some time	r Left her husband and became very involved with her church
9 Steve Biko	i Introduced 'apartheid'	s Couldn't kiss her husband for 21 years
10 Wolfie Kodesh	j Was Nelson Mandela's first wife	t His first job was as a guard at a gold mine

To the teacher

Where: At the end of chapter 7

Aim: To revise key characters and events in the book so far

Time: 10–20 minutes

Organization: Give out the worksheet to students or groups of students and ask them to match the names

with the events and descriptions in the next two columns. When they have finished, go through the answers, encouraging students to give more detail about the relevant people and events.

Key: 1 e, n 2 h, t 3 b, p 4 m, s 5 d, g 6 j, r 7 a, l 8 f, o 9 k, q 10 c, l.

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After reading activity

Order the events

Put the following events in the correct order.

EVENT	ORDER	
a	Mandela and his cousin sold two of Chief Jongintaba's cows and ran away to Johannesburg.	
b	Mandela secretly wrote his life story and buried the pages in the prison garden.	
c	The first election for all the people of South Africa took place.	
d	Mandela began the 46664 music campaign to help people with HIV/Aids	
e	Mandela's father died, and he went to live with his uncle.	
f	At the age of 86, Mandela travelled to Tromsø in Norway for the 46664 concert.	
g	Mandela helped organise the Defiance Campaign against unfair laws.	
h	Thabo Mbeki became President, and Mandela moved to Qunu for a quieter life.	
i	Mandela was moved to Victor Verster Prison.	
j	Mandela became President of South Africa.	
k	In the prison visiting room, Mandela and his wife kissed for the first time in 21 years.	
l	Mandela started to study law in the evenings at Witwatersrand University.	
m	Makgatho, Mandela's son, died of Aids at the age of 54.	
n	Mandela started the Children's Fund to help poor children in South Africa.	
o	Mandela finished his studies and became a lawyer.	
p	The ANC asked Mandela to organise the MK to use violence against the government.	
q	At school, Mandela's first teacher gives him the name 'Nelson'.	1
r	Mandela was sentenced to life in prison, and taken to Robben Island.	
s	At the age of 71, Mandela was released from prison.	
t	Mandela was moved to Pollsmoor Prison.	
u	Chief Jongintaba sent Mandela to study at Fort Hare.	
v	At the Rivonia Trial, Mandela was accused of sabotage.	

To the teacher

Aim: To order, revise, summarise and discuss what has been read

Time: 15–20 minutes

Organization: Give each student, or group of students, a copy of the worksheet. Ask them to try to remember the order in which events happened. When they have

finished the exercise, go through the answers with the class, asking them to add more details to the sentences if possible.

Key: a 4, b 11, c 16, d 20, e 2, f 22, g 7, h 19, i 14, j 17, k 13, l 5, m 21, n 18, o 6, p 8, q 1, r 10, s 15, t 12, u 3, v 9.