

## **NELSON MANDELA**

Rolihlahla Dalibhunga was born in 1918. His family belonged to a tribe in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. When he went to school his teachers gave him the English name "Nelson Mandela" and taught him about "the superiority" of the British. Years later Mr Mandela became a lawyer and with another lawyer, Oliver Tambo, he campaigned against apartheid in general but in particular in South Africa. Nelson Mandela was vice-president of a political party called "The African National Congress" (ANC).

As Gandhi had done in the past and Martin Luther King was doing in the USA, the ANC adopted a policy of peaceful resistance to apartheid but there was a lot of violence towards black people. In 1960 this party became illegal but Nelson Mandela did not stop his activities and he was arrested.

During his trial Mr Mandela said: "I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities."

"It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die"

He lost the case. In 1964 he was sentenced to life in prison. The violence related to apartheid continued and in 1967 the international community imposed sanctions on South Africa.

One of the violent events that took place while Mandela was in prison was the Soweto Children's Uprising.

On 16th June, 1976 twenty black school children in Soweto were killed by white police during a peaceful demonstration outside their school. Some of the kids killed were only twelve years old. The demonstration took place because the government said that all kids had to speak Afrikaans at school. Afrikaans is a form of 17th century Dutch. It is spoken mainly by white Afrikaners, coloured South Africans and some black people.

In 1980 Mr Tambo started an international campaign to free Nelson Mandela and in 1990 the President of South Africa, FW de Klerk, finally lifted the ban on the ANC and freed Nelson Mandela after 26 years in prison.

The ANC and the white National Party under Mr de Klerk started discussing a new multi-racial democracy for South Africa. The violence continued but Mandela and FW de Klerk continued to meet and discuss and, in December 1993, Mr Mandela and Mr de Klerk were both awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In May 1994, for the first time in South Africa's history, all races voted in democratic elections and Mr Mandela was elected president.

Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned, is now a World Heritage Site. It is, like the man himself, an international symbol of the fight for human rights.

In 2002, on June 16th, the anniversary of the Soweto Children's Uprising, a memorial and museum was opened near the place where the children died. Today, 16th June is "National Youth Day".

1. When was Nelson Mandela born?
2. Did he come from a middle class family?
3. How did he get his name?
4. As an adult what was his profession?
5. What do the letters ANC stand for?
6. In what way were his policies similar to those of Martin Luther King and Gandhi?
7. How did other countries react to the events in South Africa?
8. What happened in 1964?
9. Why did the kids in Soweto decide to hold a peaceful protest?
10. How long did Mandela stay in prison?
11. Who was FW de Klerk?
12. Why was he important?
13. Who became the President of South Africa in 1994?
14. Why is Robben Island a World Heritage Site?
15. Why did they choose the date June 16th as "National Youth Day"?
16. Do you know of any other person who is famous for his or her work to improve the lives of others?

Who is/was he or she? What nationality is/was he or she? What does/did he or she do?