

Nelson Mandela biography

Nelson Mandela was born in South Africa on 18th July 1918. At birth, he was given the name Rolihlahla. It was a Primary School Teacher who gave him the Christian name Nelson.

Mandela took an interest in politics and in 1944 he became a member of the African National Congress (ANC). This group wanted to stop the unfair laws against black people in the system of apartheid.

Mandela studied law at University and went on to open the first black law practice in 1952 with Oliver Tambo. In June of that year, Mandela helped to launch the Defiance Campaign. Black people across South Africa broke apartheid laws. For example, some people burned their pass books, a special book that black South Africans had to carry which contained their photograph, their address and their fingerprints. Others went to 'white only' places.

In December 1956, Mandela was arrested along with 155 other people and they were charged with treason. It was a long trial but they were found not guilty in 1961.

On 12th June 1964, Mandela was found guilty of planning to take over the government by force. He was sentenced to life imprisonment. In the late 1980s, the government were put under a lot of pressure from the South African people to release Mandela from prison. They believed a civil war may break out so they decided to release him from prison on 11th February 1990.

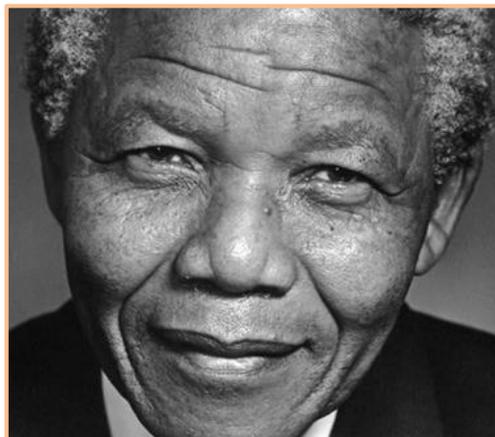
Mandela went back to work with the ANC when he was free. He was voted the President of the group in July 1991. He fought for the rights of black and 'coloured' people to vote and he was able to reach an agreement with the government. He and Frederick Willem de Klerk had worked so hard to put a peaceful end to apartheid that they were given the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993.

The first fair election for people of all races was held on 27th April 1994. This was the first time Nelson Mandela had ever voted in his life. This important date is now a national holiday in South Africa and it is known as Freedom Day. It is a celebration for the end of apartheid.

The ANC won the election and Mandela became the first black President of South Africa on 10th May 1994 until his retirement on 14th June 1999.

In 2008, Nelson Mandela turned 90. To celebrate his life and his birthday, a special tribute concert was held for him in Hyde Park, London on 27th June 2008. Lots of celebrities took part such as Will Smith, Amy Winehouse and Brian May. Mandela made a speech asking the rich people in the world to help the poor people.

Nelson Mandela passed away after an illness on 5th December 2013. He will always be remembered for his incredible work.



Activity 1

Read the biography of Nelson Mandela and then cut out the dates and events below and match them. Then sort them into chronological order.

18 th July 1918	Nelson Mandela and 155 others were arrested for treason. They were found not guilty.
1944	Nelson Mandela retired from his presidency.
26 th June 1952	After 27 years in prison, Nelson Mandela was released.
December 1956	Nelson Mandela was born.
12 th June 1964	Nelson Mandela died at the age of 95.
11 th February 1990	The Nelson Mandela 90 th Birthday Tribute Concert was held in Hyde Park in London.
July 1991	Nelson Mandela became the first black President of South Africa.
1993	Nelson Mandela was voted President of the African National Congress (ANC).
27 th April 1994	Nelson Mandela became a member of the African National Congress (ANC).
10 th May 1994	Nelson Mandela and Frederik Willem de Klerk were given the Nobel Peace Prize for their work in ending the system of apartheid.
14 th June 1999	Nelson Mandela voted for the first time in his life.
27 th June 2008	Nelson Mandela helped to launch the Defiance Campaign.
5 th December 2013	Nelson Mandela was found guilty of planning to take over the government by force. He was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Activity 2

Read the biography of Nelson Mandela and then using the information write a sentence for each significant date in his life.

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Answers

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