



Segment 10 (Units 17–20)

South Africa and apartheid

Genre: Documentary

Viewing Time: 2:18

Background Information

"Apartheid" means any system of separating people, especially to give advantage to one group. In South Africa, the apartheid system kept different races separate. People of color (meaning non-white) were not allowed in certain places, they could not vote, and they were forced to live in places with substandard services. The apartheid system ended officially in 1994, when democratic elections were held and Nelson Mandela was elected president of South Africa.

Vocabulary for Comprehension

Preview the vocabulary with your students.

compelling: *so interesting that you have to pay attention*

endure: *to suffer pain or deal with a difficult situation for a long time*

harshly: *in an unkind, cruel, or very strict way*
off and on: *going for short periods of time, stopping, and then starting again*

Answer Key

Previewing (Answers may vary—as long as they are appropriate guesses, accept them for now.)

1. (sample answer) Traditional dances, street protests, a city, a town in the countryside.
2. Nelson Mandela, the first black person elected president of South Africa.
3. They are in South Africa.
4. There was a long struggle to end apartheid in South Africa.

In-Depth Viewing

1. F—They are the majority of the population.
2. F—Afrikaner means born in Africa, but of European descend.
3. T
4. T
5. F—Nelson Mandela spent 28 years in prison in South Africa.



Video Script

Narrator: Numerous countries around the world have gone through political changes in the last two decades. One of the most compelling is South Africa. South Africa is a land of contrast—the natural beauty is exquisite, but many South Africans have endured a bitter history.

The population here is about 45 million people, and black South Africans make up the vast majority of the population. A small minority, only about 14 percent, of the people are Afrikaner. That means they were born in Africa, but come from European descent. Until recently, this small minority controlled all of South Africa through a policy called “apartheid,” or separateness.

South Africa’s largest city, Johannesburg, and the neighboring township of Soweto demonstrate clearly what life was like under the apartheid system. Johannesburg grew wealthy from the diamond mining industry and became the country’s commercial and cultural center. But under apartheid, only whites were allowed to live here.

Blacks had to move to a “homeland” about 50 miles west of Johannesburg. This homeland, Soweto, became a symbol of injustice. Its 4 million people were served by only one train line and only one hospital. Throughout the country blacks were kept in poverty, were not allowed to vote, and were only allowed low-paying jobs.

Many white South Africans strongly opposed apartheid and worked to end it, but resistance to the government was treated harshly by the South African Army and police department.

In 1976, students in Soweto took to the streets in protest. They were angry about a new law mandating that all classes in black schools be taught in Afrikaans, the language of white South Africa’s minority. Riot police were sent into Soweto and fighting broke out. Riots continued off and on during all of 1976, and even when peace was restored, it was an uneasy one.

Finally, in April 1994, after years of protest, democratic elections were held in South Africa. Nelson Mandela, a man who spent 28 years in prison for his work against apartheid, was elected president of a free South Africa.

Today the spirit of change continues, with black and white South Africans working to rebuild the country they love.