

Nelson Mandela timeline



1918

Born as Rolihlahla Dalibhunga Mandela on July 18 in South Africa's Cape Province. He becomes the first member of his family to attend school. Is given the English name 'Nelson' by a teacher.

1927 His father dies. The chief of the clan becomes Nelson's guardian and makes sure he receives a good education.

1939 Starts studying for a B.A. at Fort Hare University. There he meets his lifelong friend Oliver Tambo (who later becomes President of the ANC). Gets involved in a boycott of the Student's Representative Council against the university policies and is told to leave Fort Hare. Moves to Johannesburg to avoid an arranged marriage. Starts to work at a law firm and completes his B.A. degree at the University of South Africa via correspondence. Begins to study law.

1944 Joins the ANC as an activist and protests against Apartheid.

1952 Sets up the first black legal firm in South Africa along with Oliver Tambo and provides free legal advice to black people.

1961 Becomes leader of the ANC's armed wing. Coordinates a sabotage campaign against military and government targets and makes plans for a possible guerrilla war should sabotage fail to end Apartheid.

1964 Mandela is arrested and convicted for sabotage and treason and sentenced to life imprisonment. The ANC is banned. Most of the time, he is imprisoned on Robben Island where he studies law with the University of London by correspondence.

1990 Released from prison after 27 years. The ban on the ANC is lifted by the South African President de Klerk.

1991 Appointed President of the ANC.

1993 Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

1994 Becomes the first black President of South Africa after a free election where blacks are allowed to vote for the first time.

2004 Announces his retirement from public life.



1 Understanding the text

- Read the timeline and pick out five events which you think are most striking.
- Use these events and prepare a two-minute talk for the class in which you portray Nelson Mandela's life.

2 Writing

Write a portrait on Nelson Mandela for a teenage magazine. (300 words)