Introduction

Signs designating “whites only” areas were common under apartheid.

The tall, gray-haired man approached the ballot box with a warm smile. At 76 years of age, he appeared strong, fit, and determined as he pushed his ballot into the box. Like other blacks throughout South Africa, he was being allowed to vote in an election for the first time. This elderly man was not just anyone, however. He was Nelson Mandela, and when all the votes had been tallied, Mandela would become the newly elected president of South Africa.

South Africa is a multiracial society, meaning that it is a society that is made up of many ethnic groups. South Africa has four major ethnic groups, which South African census data defines as blacks, whites, coloureds, and Asians. Before that historic election day in 1994, it was illegal for black South Africans to vote or to hold office.

For nearly 50 years, whites had ruled South Africa under a policy called apartheid, a word that means “separateness.” Under apartheid, whites and nonwhites lived apart from each other. This policy of racial segregation hurt nonwhite ethnic groups, causing nonwhites to have fewer economic resources and less political power than whites.

In this lesson, you will learn about life in South Africa under the policy of apartheid, and you will discover how the distribution—or division—of power and resources changed after the end of apartheid. Finally, you will read about some of the challenges facing the people of South Africa today.

Essential Question

How might ethnic group differences affect who controls resources and power in a society?

This circle graph shows four main ethnic groups in South Africa in 2016. Note the size of the white ethnic group. Until 1994, this group controlled most of the nation’s wealth and power. Keep this graph in mind as you try to answer the Essential Question.

1. The Geographic Setting

Farming in South Africa
South Africa has two main types of farming. White farmers raise cash crops on large modern farms, and black farm families produce food mainly for their own needs on small plots of land.

South Africa is located at the southern tip of Africa. Compared with many other African countries, it is small in land area, but it is the most developed African country. Although only about 5 percent of Africans live in South Africa, the country produces two-fifths of Africa’s factory goods and about half of its minerals. South Africa also produces about one-fifth of the continent’s farm products.

A Land Rich in Natural Resources  Much of South Africa’s wealth has been built on the export of mineral resources, including large deposits of gold, copper, and other valuable minerals. The development of these mineral resources has transformed the country of South Africa into an economic powerhouse.

South Africa’s mild climate and rich soil are also significant resources. Many cash crops grow well here, including corn, wheat, and sugarcane. Cattle, sheep, and goats graze on vast ranch lands.

South Africa has a great variety of wildlife, too. In the past, these animals were important for groups of people who lived by hunting, but in recent years, wildlife has become a prominent tourist attraction. Visitors arrive from all over the world to see elephants, lions, zebras, and other animals in their natural habitats.

The Development of a Multiracial Society  People have lived in what is now South Africa for a very long time. The ancestors of most South African blacks came from Central Africa, probably migrating south approximately 2,000 years ago. South African blacks form a large ethnic group that is made up of many smaller groups, each with its own language and culture.

Europeans began to settle in Southern Africa in 1652. The first to arrive were Dutch colonists who were known as Boers, which is the Dutch word for “farmers.” The settlement that the Boers established was called Cape Colony and, over time, settlers from other parts of Europe joined the Boers. Dutch remained the language of the colonists, with the addition of many words picked up from other settlers and from black Africans. The result was a new language called Afrikaans, and the white colonists who spoke this language came to be known as Afrikaners.
Settlers from Great Britain, most of whom were farmers, began to arrive in Cape Colony around 1820. In 1867, a rich diamond field was discovered within the colony, and gold was found a few years later. These discoveries of diamonds and gold attracted more colonists. Descendants of the first Afrikaners and British colonists make up South Africa’s white ethnic group.

Over time, some blacks and whites in Cape Colony married and had families. The children from these mixed marriages were described as colored, and today, their descendants form South Africa’s third major ethnic group, the coloureds.

Asians first came to South Africa in the 1860s, mostly arriving from India, which was then a British colony. These people came to work for British colonists on their sugarcane plantations, and their descendants in South Africa, still called Asians, form the last major ethnic group in this multiracial society.

Mines, Farms, and Factories
South Africa is Africa’s most developed country. Its mines produce more gold than any other country, its farms grow enough food to feed its people, and its factories

Geoterms

apartheid the former official South African policy of separating people according to race. Apartheid gave most of the political and economic power to whites.

distribution the way people or things are spread out over an area or space. This term can also refer to the way resources, power, or goods are divided among people or groups.

multiracial made up of people from several ethnic groups

seggregation the separation of one group of people from another, such as by race. Segregation can involve laws or customs that require different groups to use different facilities and live in separate areas.
2. South Africa During Apartheid

South Africa’s colonial period ended in 1910, which was the year that the Union of South Africa became an independent country. The new country’s constitution awarded whites complete control over the country’s national government.

Homelands in South Africa During Apartheid

Segregated Homelands
Beginning in the 1960s, South Africa’s government forced more than 4 million blacks to move to segregated homelands. The government claimed that the move was to give blacks self-rule, but for the most part, the lands were barren and undesirable.

Apartheid Makes Segregation an Official Policy
Segregation became a way of life throughout South Africa after independence. Then, in 1948, the ruling whites took this practice a step further by making apartheid an official government policy.

Under the new apartheid laws, South Africans were classified by race, and whites and nonwhites were kept separate from one another. They lived in segregated neighborhoods and went to different schools, hospitals, movie theaters, and restaurants. They were even separated on trains and buses. Signs appeared on public beaches and in parks announcing “For White Persons Only.”

Apartheid Treats Each Ethnic Group Differently
Under the policy of apartheid, whites in South Africa lived well. They had the best schools, the best jobs, the best health care, the best living conditions, and they ran the government and the economy.

Asians and coloureds were treated as second-class citizens. These groups did not have the same job opportunities. Additionally, their schools were inferior, and their political rights were limited compared to those of whites.

No ethnic group in South Africa, however, was treated as poorly as blacks. Many black families were forced to move to poor rural areas that were called homelands. In the homelands, there were few jobs or resources, schools were very poor, and there was little access to health care.

Blacks were also not allowed to move freely throughout the country. They could leave their homelands to work in distant cities; however, blacks who worked in the cities were forced to live in townships that consisted of slums located just outside the cities. A
A typical township home was a shack that lacked running water and electricity. During the day, black workers went to their jobs in the “white” cities and, at night, they had to return to the townships.

Soweto: A Black Township
Soweto, located near Johannesburg— the country’s most important city— is the

3. Protests Lead to Political Change

Long before apartheid became an official government policy, blacks had formed groups to protest unfair treatment by whites. The most important group, the African National Congress (ANC), was established in 1912. “The white people of this country have formed what is known as the Union of South Africa,” said one of the group’s founders, “a union in which we have no voice in the making of the laws.” It would take the ANC decades of protest to gain that voice for blacks.

Waiting to Vote
These people are waiting to vote in South Africa’s 1994 election. This event was the first time people of all ethnic groups could vote for their national leaders. Some new voters walked for miles and stood in line for hours to cast their first ballot.

The Fight Against Apartheid
The African National Congress led the struggle against apartheid. In 1952, the organization began its “Campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws.” An ANC lawyer named Nelson Mandela took charge of this fight to end apartheid laws. In 1962, Mandela was jailed for his protest activities, and he would remain in prison for the next 27 years.

The struggle continued, at times turning deadly. The worst violence began in the township of Soweto on a June morning in 1976, when 10,000 students gathered for a protest march against apartheid. When the police tried to break up the crowd, some of the
students threw rocks in response. The police reacted by opening fire on the protesters, and by the end of the day, 172 protesters lay dead. The protests quickly spread to other townships, and nearly 600 people died by the time the demonstrations were finally crushed.

Some whites, coloureds, and Asians in South Africa joined the struggle. People around the world protested as well, leading to many countries refusing to trade with South Africa until it ended apartheid. Mandela became the world’s most famous prisoner, and the United Nations formally called for his release from jail.

Changes in Voting
These graphs show who voted during and after apartheid. In 1989, whites made up more than half of all voters, giving them control of the government. By 1999, most South Africans could vote, which led to a political power shift to black South Africans.

Apartheid Ends and Blacks Gain Political Power
In 1989, an Afrikaner named F. W. de Klerk became the president of South Africa. In the past, de Klerk had supported segregation, but later he decided that South Africa would never be at peace until apartheid was abolished. He quickly freed Mandela and other political prisoners, and South Africa’s apartheid laws ended by 1991.

In 1993, de Klerk and Mandela were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, an award given each year to those who have done the most to bring peace to the world. These two South Africans were honored for their work to end apartheid.

A year later, all South Africans could both vote and run for political office, resulting in a shift in the distribution of political power in the country. The ANC became South Africa’s most powerful political party, and the party’s leader, Nelson Mandela, was elected as the country’s first black president.

Under Mandela’s leadership, South Africa established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Reconciliation means the ending of conflict between groups. This commission investigated many unjust acts that had taken place under apartheid, which South Africans saw as a necessary step toward healing the wounds left by those acts. As Bishop Desmond Tutu, the head of the commission, explained, “You cannot forgive what you do not know.”
4. South Africa Today: Job Opportunities

Out of Work
South Africa has suffered from years of slow economic growth, which has caused a rise in unemployment, or joblessness. These circle graphs show unemployment by ethnic groups during and after apartheid. What changes do you see?

In 2001, for the first time ever, blacks took home more than half of all the income that was earned by South Africans. Before then, whites had always earned the majority of the money. Yet this fact does not tell the whole story of the distribution of wealth within the country. As you know, there are far more blacks than whites in South Africa, which means that blacks still earned far less per capita than whites.

Government Programs Open Up Job Opportunities
During apartheid, whites received the best jobs, and they also earned the most money. When apartheid ended, the ANC-led government took steps to change the distribution of job opportunities. One of these steps was to help blacks start businesses. To some degree, this initiative was successful. A 2010 study showed that 80 percent of the country’s businesses were run by non-white South Africans. However, only 2 percent of these businesses employed more than five people, compared to the 14 percent of white-owned businesses.

In 1998, the government also passed the Employment Equity Act, which opens job opportunities to all South Africans. This law identifies groups that have been unfairly denied jobs in the past, including blacks, coloureds, Asians, women, and the disabled, and requires businesses to hire people from these groups when filling jobs and to pay all of these workers fairly.

The Employment Equity Act has opened to all groups jobs that were once limited to whites. At the same time, the law has caused resentment among white job seekers, who argue that it is unfair to deny them jobs just because they are white.

Slow Economic Growth Hurts All Ethnic Groups
Despite these changes, many South Africans still lack jobs. One reason for this has been the slow growth of the economy, which has resulted in not enough jobs being created each year to hire everyone who wants to work. In 2016, about one-fourth of job seekers could not find work. Some of these job seekers were whites, but blacks, coloureds, and Asians are still more likely to be out of work than white South Africans.
Slow economic growth has also led to an increase in poverty, in which some South Africans are not able to make enough money to take care of their basic needs. Many of the poorest people are struggling just to survive.

**Poverty Affects All Ethnic Groups**
This white family is part of South Africa’s growing number of people living in poverty. While some South Africans, both white and nonwhite, have done very well since the end of apartheid, others seem worse off than ever before.

**5. South Africa Today: Education**

**Education for All**
Under apartheid, schools were segregated by ethnic group. Today, such segregation is illegal. Public schools that had once been all-white opened their doors to all children after apartheid ended.

While any students attending a public school in South Africa today will learn to read, write, and do math and science, this was not always the case. During apartheid, there were separate schools for each ethnic group, and students who were attending a black school were not taught much about science or math. This lack of education was not accidental since the government knew that people with math and science skills would be able to get higher-paying jobs once they entered the workforce. By not teaching those skills to blacks, the government ensured that South Africa had a supply of cheap labor.
More South Africans than ever are finishing high school. This graph shows the percentage of each ethnic group that graduated from high school in 1991 and 2011. For blacks and coloureds, the percentages more than doubled.

The Link Between Education and Opportunity

In general, the more years of school that a person has completed, the more money he or she will make as an adult. In South Africa, more than half of the adults with no education are poor, while only 5 percent of South Africans who have gone to college are poor.

During apartheid, nonwhites had limited educational opportunities. Their schools were poorly built, and their teachers were undertrained and not well paid. Although children were supposed to attend school from the ages of 7 to 16, this requirement was not enforced. In fact, more than 10 million nonwhite adults never went to high school, and over 4 million received no schooling at all.

Schools Are Now Open to All Ethnic Groups

The end of apartheid brought important changes to the educational system. The amount of money the government spends on schools has risen sharply, and students of all ethnic groups can now attend the same public schools.

Students of all ethnic groups are being encouraged to remain in school, which has resulted in the percentage of students who finish high school to rise for every ethnic group. The number of nonwhites going to college has increased as well.

Despite this, students in South Africa still struggle. Over 25 percent of students who have attended school for over 6 years still cannot read. Additionally, less than half of students are able to pass their secondary school exit exams, and even fewer students go on to college. Though opportunities for students has increased, much still needs to be done.

6. South Africa Today: Living Conditions

Under the policy of apartheid, most whites in South Africa lived well. In contrast with houses in the black townships, whites owned nice homes in the cities and had access to electricity, running water, and even swimming pools. Today, most South African whites still have those comforts, but they also have something they did not have during
apartheid: neighbors who are not white. A few nonwhites now live in the nicer neighborhoods of South African cities.

Cities Are Becoming Less Segregated During apartheid, many South African cities were “whites only.” Blacks were allowed to work in these cities during the day, but they had to leave at night. After apartheid, people could live wherever they could afford. Some formerly “whites only” cities became racially mixed as nonwhites moved in.

South African Annual Income Levels

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<th>2001</th>
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As this graph shows, annual incomes are improving in South Africa. By 2011, most annual incomes doubled. Many blacks, however, still make far less than other groups.

Most nonwhites, however, still cannot afford to live in nice city neighborhoods. Instead, the poor often settle in slums around the cities, typically living in homes constructed from scrap metal or wood. Even today, few of these houses have running water or electricity, and the slum areas often become a breeding ground for crime.

Housing Conditions Are Improving South Africa’s constitution guarantees decent housing to all of the country’s citizens. In the first decade following the end of apartheid, the government provided approximately 1.6 million homes to poor South Africans. Efforts to create more housing for the poor are continuing.

The government is also working to improve urban slums. Streets have been paved in some poor areas, and water systems have been constructed to provide safe water. Streetlamps have also been installed to help combat crime. The government is starting to replace shacks with improved housing, and it is also beginning to build schools, police stations, and health clinics in poor neighborhoods.

Health Care Remains Limited In addition to improving housing, the government must face the challenge of providing better health care. During apartheid, most doctors and hospitals were located in “white” cities, and people living in rural areas had a difficult time finding health care. Although the cities are no longer segregated, 9 out of 10 doctors in South Africa still work in urban areas.

Today, South Africa is making a strong effort to bring health care to all citizens. The government has built many new health clinics in rural areas. By 2013, rural parts of South Africa without health clinics were gaining access to mobile clinics. These mobile clinics
could travel to different rural areas and provide much needed health services. Meanwhile, new doctors are being asked to work for a year in a rural clinic in order to help reduce the shortage of doctors outside cities. Pregnant women and children under six are entitled to free health care.

The need for health care has risen sharply as a result of the spread of HIV/AIDS throughout South Africa. The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) attacks the body’s ability to fight disease. Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is the medical condition that results from an HIV infection. There is no cure for the disease, but treatment can help people infected with the virus to live longer.

Mobile Health Care
This mobile clinic brings health care to people living outside South African cities. Despite government efforts, health care remains poor in many areas, and because of the country’s high rate of HIV infection, life expectancy in 2014 was just under 57 years.

South Africa has the highest number of people living with HIV/AIDS in the world. By 2015, almost 7 million South Africans had become victims of this disease, and almost 400 people die from HIV/AIDS in that country every day. The loss of so many people presents a huge challenge to South Africa’s hope for a better future.
Summary

In this lesson, you learned about life in South Africa before, during, and after apartheid. You saw how segregation divided a multiracial society and how the distribution of power and resources in the society changed over time.

You also read about some of the challenges that face South Africa today. One of those challenges is the continued spread of HIV/AIDS. When this disease first appeared in humans, no one knew how the virus was spread, but today we know that the virus is found in the blood and other body fluids. The virus is passed through the transfer of blood or other body fluids from person to person and that it can also be passed from mother to child during pregnancy and birth.

South Africa is not the only country facing the challenge of HIV/AIDS. The disease has become a global health threat. In 2015, about 37 million people worldwide were living with HIV/AIDS. During that one year alone, about 2 million people were newly infected with the virus, and approximately 1 million people died from the disease. Think about this as you examine the map of HIV/AIDS infection rates around the world in the next section.

Global Connections

This map shows the percentages of adults who have been infected with the HIV/AIDS virus in various areas worldwide. Note the areas with no color. These are the places where no one has collected information on HIV/AIDS. People there may or may not be free of the disease.

Why has Africa been more affected by HIV/AIDS than other regions? Scientists think the disease may have begun in Africa in the 1950s, which means the virus has been infecting people in this region for longer than in other parts of the world. Poverty has also contributed to the spread of the disease in Africa because poor countries lack money for education programs that might slow the spread of the virus.

What factors have contributed to the global spread of HIV/AIDS? Unlike many diseases, HIV/AIDS develops slowly. The virus that causes the disease can hide in the body for years without the person knowing it. As a result, victims can transmit the infection without knowing they have it. Improved transportation is also a factor, as people today travel easily from country to country, and they transport the disease with them as they do this.
How might HIV/AIDS hurt the countries that are most severely affected? Most victims of the disease are working-age adults, and the loss of these adults hurts a country in many ways. As people sicken and die, they leave the workforce, which can hurt a country’s economy. They also leave children behind, which becomes a burden for a poor country since caring for many orphans can be expensive. If too many working-age people die, a country may be left with a population consisting of the very old and very young.

Cumulative Worldwide HIV Infection Rates and AIDS Deaths

The Impact of HIV/AIDS
This line graph shows the cumulative effect of HIV/AIDS. *Cumulative* means becoming larger with each addition. Since 1980, the cumulative number of people infected with HIV has risen as new cases are added each year. The cumulative number of people who have died from AIDS has risen as well.

HIV Infection Rates Around the World, 2014