



# 1

## Introduction to South Africa







*A crowd of South African rugby fans support their team*

## QUESTIONS

1. What do you know about South Africa? Individually, write down anything that comes to your mind.
2. Share the information with the rest of the class.
3. Try to categorize the different pieces of information.
4. What do you think will be characteristic of a country called 'A Rainbow Nation'?
5. In groups, make a quiz for another group based on ten or more words from "Useful words when learning about South Africa" (see p. 146). Your questions should start with "What is ..." or "Explain ..." in order to avoid yes/no-answers to the questions.

## The State of the Rainbow Nation

BY JEFF CANGIALOSI (2012)

national anthem natio-  
nalsang  
strain anstreng sig  
decipher dechifrere, tyde

**FOLLOWING THE REST OF THE CROWD**, I stood quickly as the South African national anthem began to play. I was about to watch my first rugby game at the University of the Western Cape and sitting beside me was my newest South African friend Francis. As I strained to hear the national anthem, I realized that the majority of the song was not in English but a mixture of other languages that I could not decipher.



Sitting back down, I turned to Francis and asked him what languages I had just heard in the national anthem. He responded, "There are five different languages in the song, brother ... Xhosa, Zulu, Sesotho, Afrikaans, and English ... it's supposed to create unity, but brother, the people here, they are not unified. No one knows the words."

Language is one of the most obvious indicators of the vast diversity of South Africa. The national anthem may be composed of five different languages, but in total the country has eleven official languages. In Cape Town, Afrikaans, English, and Xhosa are the most widely spoken languages, but as you travel across the country, you encounter many different indigenous languages.

In addition to language, another marker of South Africa's diversity is color. Infamous for its past of apartheid, South Africa is the land of people who are black, white, colored, and Asian. Making up almost 80% of the population demographic, black South Africans are the largest racial group, but in my view, this black population is heterogeneous in nature, speaking various languages and hailing from different places and cultures found throughout South Africa.

In terms of religion, South Africa is a diverse place as well. As I sat in my room unpacking during my first night in South Africa, I was taken aback to hear the muezzin reciting the call to prayer from the mosque that I soon discovered was around the corner from my house. Mosques abound in Cape Town, along with countless churches from a variety of Christian denominations.

Just in the suburb of Mowbray, where I stay, the Anglicans, Methodists, Catholics, Presbyterians, Seventh-day Adventists, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints all have erected churches. On the whole, South Africa is 80% Christian, but its unique history of absorbing peoples from around the globe has left it with immense religious diversity ranging from traditional African religions to Hinduism and Buddhism from Asia.

Coming back to Francis' quote, the big question in South Africa is how do you achieve unity with such a diverse people? Complicating the matter immensely is a history of division where a system of apartheid enforced not just physical separation but psychological separation that divided the people of South Africa.

With the creation of a national unity government in 1994 and the election of Nelson Mandela to the presidency in that same year, the world witnessed one of the greatest examples of compromise and unity in history. The "rainbow nation", a phrase coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, had been formed, but what is the state of the rainbow nation eighteen years after its birth?

The question is a complicated one with no easy answer. In honor of Desmond Tutu's retirement in 2010, the Desmond Tutu Peace Centre sponsored a public debate entitled "Rainbow Nation: Myth or Reality?"

vast enorm  
diversity mangfoldighed  
encounter møde  
indigenous oprindelig  
infamous berygtet  
population demographic  
befolkningstal  
heterogenous forskelligartet  
hail from stamme fra  
be taken aback blive overrasket over  
muezzin person, der kalder muslimer til bøn  
recite fremsige  
abound være rig på  
demomination trosretning  
suburb forstad  
Anglican anglikansk (fællesbetegnelse for en række kirkesamfund med udspring i den engelske statskirke. I 1538 blev den engelske statskirke udskilt fra den romersk-katolske kirke, da Kong Henrik VIII ville skilles fra sin hustru)  
Methodist metodist (protestantisk retning, der bl.a. lægger vægt på en særlig "metodisk" levemåde, hvor man skal leve dydigt og ærbart)  
Presbyterian presbyteriansk (protestantisk kirkesamfund, særligt om engelsktalende landes reformerte kirker)  
Seventh-day Adventist syvendedagsadventister (protestantisk kirkesamfund, hvor man bruger lørdag som den syvende dag – som originalt)  
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Mormonnernes kirke  
erect opføre  
immense enorm  
range række  
quote citat  
enforce tvinge  
coin skabe, opfinde  
retirement fratræden

assess vurdere  
 embrace omfavne  
 forge skabe  
 egalitarian egalitær, som  
 stræber efter lighed  
 somber dystert  
 inhabit bebo  
 vestige spor, levn  
 prevalent udbredt  
 provide sørge for  
 Afrikaner hvid sydafrikaner  
 med hollandske rødder  
 stir røre, opsig  
 expel ekskludere  
 generate skabe  
 populist populist (typisk  
 brugt om politikere, der vil  
 gøre det, der er mest po-  
 pulært)  
 chant råbe  
 enact vedtage  
 Black Economic Empower-  
 ment en politik, der skal  
 sørge for positiv særbe-  
 handling  
 advent indtog  
 reconciliation forsoning

The focus of the debate was to assess how well South Africa has managed to embrace its diversity to forge a unifying national identity and create an egalitarian society despite a history of injustice under apartheid. During the debate, former anti-apartheid activist Mamphela Ramphele said that South Africa is still a “deeply wounded nation” and that she “can’t see any rainbow” in the new South Africa.

Unfortunately, I heard this same somber analysis from my friend Francis. In his mind, South Africa has yet to really come together and tensions abound between the different races and economic classes in the country. He described how the white population lives in the hills of Cape Town while the majority of the black and colored populations continue to inhabit the poor area outside of the city known as the Cape Flats.

As in the United States, vestiges of white supremacy still exist, but in South Africa they seem to be more prevalent. In the February 24th edition of the weekly South African newspaper, the *Mail & Guardian*, one of the leading stories detailed a right-wing organization called the Kommandokorps, which is supposedly providing military training to white teenage Afrikaner boys so that they can defend themselves and their families against the threat of the black population. The article apparently created quite a stir and caused the *Mail & Guardian* to publish a follow up article the next week detailing the police chief’s and various other experts’ opinions on the right wing in South Africa.

While the extent of the strength of the right-wing is a hotly debated topic, the “us vs. them” mentality can be found amongst the black population as well. Recently expelled as the leader of the Youth League of South Africa’s leading political party, the African National Congress, Julius Malema has generated much controversy by leading his populist followers in chanting “kill the Boer” (Boer is a term that refers to a section of the white population).

Another complex racial issue has to do with the place of the coloreds in South African society (in South Africa, colored refers to people of mixed descent from black and white families). One often hears that during apartheid, the coloreds were not white enough, and now in the post-1994 South Africa they are not black enough to find their place in society. The government has enacted several economic programs, such as the Black Economic Empowerment program, that seem to benefit the black community much more than the colored community.

These are just a few examples of what I am discovering in terms of the importance of culture and race in South Africa. Eighteen years after the advent of democracy here in 1994, the struggle continues to forge a harmonious “rainbow nation.” Reconciliation and harmonization will surely take time, but that does not mean there is a lack of hope or promise in South Africa. If anything, South Africa’s struggle to create unity amongst its diverse population is what makes it such an extraordinary place.

## QUESTIONS

1. What kind of text is this?
2. Who is speaking and what is the person's background?
3. What is the subject of the text?
4. Using key words, summarize Jeff Cangialosi's meeting with South African culture paragraph by paragraph.
5. Give examples of facts mentioned in the text.
6. Find examples of the writer's opinion expressed in the text.
7. Describe the overall construction of the text.
8. Explain:
  - "... the us versus them mentality" (p. 12, l. 24)
  - "... witnessed one of the greatest examples of compromise and unity in history" (p. 11, l. 38)
9. Compare the ending of the text (p. 12, ll. 38-44) with the ending of the text *South Africa still haunted by apartheid's legacy* (p. 65, ll. 6-14).
10. Sum up the diversities of South Africa. Would you use the word "rainbow" to describe this country? Why/why not?
11. What is the writer's intention?
12. Give examples of other incidents in history of outstanding "compromise and unity".





*South Africa, 1976*

## Apartheid

Most people have heard the word, but what is implied by the concept of apartheid?

Matrix work: Students are to be divided into five groups A-E. Each group is given one of the topics below. The task of each group is to find information, including important dates, about their topic below. When each group is finished, new groups should be formed containing one member from each original group A, B, C, D and E. Each person should then tell the other members of their new group what their findings are.

- A. President Verwoerd, National Party
- B. ANC, Freedom Charter
- C. The Population Registration Act of 1950, The Group Areas Act of 1950, Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act of 1952
- D. Bantu Education Act No 47 of 1953, Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953, Natives Resettlement Act 1954
- E. Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act 1970, The Medium Decree of 1974



# UPRISINGS

Two events, the Sharpeville Massacre and the Soweto Uprisings, caused the international community to start looking critically at South Africa during the time of apartheid.

## PRE-READING

In pairs, discuss the following: what are the characteristics of an eye-witness report? What is to be expected in terms of language, writer's objectivity and reliability?

## Humphrey Tyler's eye-witness report

"WE WENT INTO SHARPEVILLE THE BACK WAY, behind a grey police car and three Saracens. As we drove through the fringes of the township many people shouted the  
5 Pan-Africanist slogan 'Izwe Lethu', which means 'Our Land', or gave the thumbs-up 'freedom' salute and shouted 'Afrika!'

They were grinning, cheerful, and nobody seemed to be afraid ... There were crowds in the streets as we approached the police station.  
10 There were plenty of police, too, wearing more guns and ammunition than uniforms ... An African approached ... and said he was the local Pan-Africanist leader. He told (us) his organisation was against violence and that the crowd was there for a peaceful demonstration ... The crowd seemed perfectly amiable. It certainly never crossed our minds that they  
15 would attack us or anybody ...

There were sudden shrill cries of 'Izwe Lethu' – women's voices it sounded – from near the police, and I could see a small section of the crowd swirl around the Saracens and hands went up in the Africanist salute. Then the shooting started. We heard the chatter of a machine gun,  
20 then another, then another. There were hundreds of women, some of them laughing. They must have thought the police were firing blanks. One woman was hit about ten yards from our car. Her companion, a young man, went back when she fell. He thought she had stumbled. Then he turned her over and saw that her chest had been shot away. He looked  
25 at the blood on his hand and said: 'My God, she's gone!' Hundreds of kids were running, too.

## Sharpeville, 1960

The Sharpeville Massacre took place on March 21, 1960, and was essentially what made the outside world begin asking questions about the racial policies in South Africa. Black people burned their passbooks in protest against the Pass Laws, and the incident ended with the police opening fire on the demonstrators. The official death toll was 69. The UN condemned the shooting of civilians and the South African government declared a state of emergency – the first of many to come. Humphrey Tyler, reporter and assistant editor of *Drum* magazine, wrote down his account of what he witnessed in Sharpeville on March 21, 1960. *Drum* magazine was widely known for its reports in the 50s and 60s about living conditions and life in the townships.

**Saracen** pansret mandskabs-  
vogn på seks hjul  
**fringe** udkant  
**township** uformelt beboel-  
sesområde, typisk blikskurs-  
byer for sorte fattige  
**Pan-Africanism** politisk  
ideologi og bevægelse, der  
opfordrer til afrikansk fæl-  
lesskab og sammenhold  
**amiable** venlig  
**shrill** skinger  
**swirl** hvirvle  
**chatter** klapre, hakke  
**fire blanks** skyde med løst  
krudt  
**stumble** snuble





*Sharpeville, 1960*

blanket coat kort overfrakke  
 leap springe  
 arc bue  
 pan panorere  
 strew sprede  
 dazedly omtumlet  
 stagger vakle  
 heap bunke  
 disperse sprede  
 warning volley advarsels-  
   skudsalve  
 compound område

One little boy had on an old blanket coat, which he held up behind his head, thinking, perhaps, that it might save him from the bullets. Some of the children, hardly as tall as the grass, were leaping like rabbits. Some were shot, too. Still the shooting went on. One of the policemen was standing on top of a Saracen, and it looked as though he was firing his gun into the crowd. He was swinging it around in a wide arc from his hip as though he were panning a movie camera. Two other officers were with him, and it looked as if they were firing pistols. Most of the bodies were strewn on the road running through the field in which we were. One man, who had been lying still, dazedly got to his feet, staggered a few yards, then fell in a heap. A woman sat with her head cupped in her hands.

One by one the guns stopped.

Before the shooting, I heard no warning to the crowd to disperse. There was no warning volley. When the shooting started it did not stop until there was no living thing in the huge compound in front of the police station. The police have claimed they were in desperate danger



because the crowd was stoning them. Yet only three policemen were reported to have been hit by stones – and more than 200 Africans were shot down. The police also have said that the crowd was armed with ‘ferocious weapons’, which littered the compound after they fled.

**ferocious** drabelig  
**litter** flyde med noget (affald)

- 5 I saw no weapons, although I looked very carefully, and afterwards studied the photographs of the death scene. While I was there I saw only shoes, hats and a few bicycles left among the bodies. The crowd gave me no reason to feel scared, though I moved among them without any distinguishing mark to protect me, quite obvious with my white skin.
- 10 I think the police were scared though, and I think the crowd knew it.”

## QUESTIONS

1. What kind of text is this?
2. Who is speaking and what is the person’s background?
3. Write a summary of the text based on key words.
4. How is the text constructed?
5. Point out the facts in the text.
6. Give examples of Humphrey Taylor’s reflections on the incident.
7. Describe the atmosphere of the text and give examples of how it is created.
8. Point out a few of the similes used in the text and explain the effect they have.
9. Comment on this quote: “One little boy had on an old blanket coat, which he held up behind his head, thinking, perhaps, that it might save him from the bullets. Some of the children, hardly as tall as the grass, were leaping like rabbits. Some were shot, too.” (p. 16, ll. 1-4)
10. Discuss in class what emotions you have after reading Humphrey Tyler’s report.



### Ingrid Jonker (1933-1965)

Ingrid Jonker started writing poetry at the age of six, and her first published poems appeared in her high school magazine. Her first known collection of poems, "Na die Somer" ("After the Summer") was compiled in 1946 when she was just thirteen. Jonker was an active member of Die Sestigers, a group of white anti-establishment writers and poets, who had taken it upon themselves to challenge the conservative literary norms of the time. Jonker's work (a great number of poems and a play) was condemned by her own father, who was a leading member of the National Party and the chairperson of the parliamentary committee responsible for the apartheid system of censorship. She committed suicide by drowning at the Cape when she was 32 years old.

### PRE-READING

1. To fully understand the poem it is advisable to read the article *Sharpeville 1960* or search the Internet for information on Sharpeville.
2. Find out what the Pass Laws were.

## The Child Who Was Shot Dead by Soldiers at Nyanga

BY INGRID JONKER (1963)

cordoned afspærret  
 righteousness retfærdighed  
 embattled presset, kampberedt

**THE CHILD** is not dead  
 the child lifts his fists against his mother  
 who screams Africa; shout the breath  
 of freedom and blood  
 5 in the locations of the cordoned heart

The child lifts his hand against his father  
 in the march of the generations  
 who are shouting Africa; shout the breath  
 10 of righteousness and blood  
 in the streets of his embattled pride



The child is not dead  
 not at Langa nor at Nyanga  
 not at Orlando nor at Sharpeville  
 nor at the police station in Philippi  
 5 where he lies with a bullet through his brain

The child is the shadow of the soldiers  
 on guard with rifles Saracens and batons  
 the child is present at all assemblies and legislation  
 10 the child peers through the windows of houses and into the hearts of  
 mothers  
 this child who just longed to play in the sun at Nyanga is everywhere  
 The child grown into a man treks on through all over Africa  
 the child grown into a giant journeys through the whole world

15  
 Without a pass

Nyanga, Langa, Orlando,  
 Sharpeville, Philippi  
 lokaliteter i Sydafrika, hvor  
 der var demonstrationer  
 foran politistationerne midt  
 i 1970'erne.

on guard på vagt  
 Saracen pansret mandskabs-  
 vogn på seks hjul  
 baton knippel  
 assembly forsamling  
 legislation lovgivning  
 peer spejde  
 long for længes efter  
 trek Afrikaans ord for at  
 vandre; ordet anvendes om  
 de store folkevandringer i  
 Sydafrika 1835-37

## QUESTIONS

1. Summarize the poem stanza by stanza using your own words and expressions.
2. Explain the actions of "the child" throughout the poem.
3. Describe the development of the child from stanzas 1-3 to the concluding lines in stanza 4.
4. What is the structure of the poem?
5. Explain the following metaphors in the poem:
  - a. St. 1: "shout the breath of freedom and blood" (p. 18, ll. 3-4)
  - b. St. 1: "in the locations of the cordoned heart" (p. 18, l. 5)
  - c. St. 2: "in the march of the generations" (p. 18, l. 7)
  - d. St. 2: "in the streets of his embattled pride" (p. 18, l. 11)
  - e. St. 4: "the child is the shadow of the soldiers" (p. 19, l. 6)
6. What is the message of the poem?
7. Compare this poem with the poem *The Question*, p. 143.
8. What do you think was the effect created by the reciting of this poem at Mandela's inaugural address to Parliament in May 1994?

This article shows how the riots were first reported in the British media.

June 16, 1976:

## Soweto protest turns violent

BBC

At least 12 people are reported to have been killed in a series of violent clashes between black demonstrators and police in several South African townships.

Angry youths threw stones and beer bottles at police, as a protest against the compulsory use of Afrikaans as the main teaching language in black schools turned violent.

The violence spread from one end of the city to the other, with fires in Soweto reaching Alexandra, a township in the northern outskirts close to some of the rich white suburbs.

The Times newspaper called it the worst outbreak of racial violence seen in South Africa since the Sharpeville massacre 16 years ago.

There are known to be at least two black children among the dead and two white men.

The final number of dead may be much higher. Ambulance drivers say they were unable to get through the crowds to reach the injured.

Police squads patrolled the streets in an attempt to prevent shops and public buildings from being damaged.

As the situation worsened more police were drafted in.

Two men were reportedly shot dead after a car sped down a street and tried to run down police at an intersection.

*"This government will not be intimidated"*

Prime Minister Vorster

The day began with a march by 10,000 students carrying banners and slogans, saying "Down with Afrikaans" and "Viva Azania" (the name given to South Africa by black nationalists).

Armed police tried to surround the pupils as they reached Phefeni School, on a small hill surrounded by the homes of more than a million black South Africans.

Police say the students began throwing stones and other missiles. They responded by firing live rounds into the crowd.

Another reporter said she saw police throw a tear gas grenade into the crowd without warning. When demonstrators responded with stones, the officers opened fire.

A senior officer in charge of the operation, Brigadier R Le Roux, described the situation as "very bad" and later refused to give any comment to journalists and ordered them to leave the area.

In Natalspruit, a township east of Johannesburg, buses were used as battering rams to destroy official buildings, while others were set on fire.

Six other African townships around the nation's biggest city were affected by the violence, but police roadblocks prevented journalists from entering the townships to find out what was happening for themselves.

Prime Minister Vorster demanded an immediate end to the disturbances.

He said: "We are dealing here not with a spontaneous outburst but with a deliberate attempt to bring about polarisation between whites and blacks. This government will not be intimidated and instructions have been given to maintain law and order at all costs."

The schools boycott began in mid-May with pupils refusing to attend school in protest at what they saw as a discriminatory ruling which meant they had to learn lessons in English and Afrikaans, whereas white pupils could choose which language to learn.

clash sammenstød

township uformelt beboelsesområde, typisk blikskurbyer for sorte fattige

compulsory tvungen

Afrikaans det sprog hvide sydafrikanere af hollandsk afstamning taler (minder meget om hollandsk)

outskirts udkant

draft in indkalde

reportedly angiveligt

intersection veikryds

Prime Minister B.J. Vorster

premierminister 1966-78

og præsident 1978-79.

Mest husket for at være

nazi-sympatisør, men også

for udenrigspolitisk at være

mere uadvendt og for at

fastholde gode relationer

med andre lande

live round skarpe skud

tear gas grenade tåregasgranat

brigadier brigadegeneral

battering ram rambuk

roadblock vejspærring

outburst udbrud

deliberate bevidst

intimidate true

ruling afgørelse





*School children marching from the southwestern end of Soweto while protesting against the Afrikaans Medium Decree, 1976*

## Soweto uprisings

The South African government passed the Afrikaans Medium Decree of 1974, which stated that Afrikaans was to be the primary school language. The Afrikaans language was considered “the language of the oppressor” by the black population, and so a series of protests in black townships started on June 16, 1976. The Soweto uprisings spread to the rest of the country and lasted for roughly a year. Although the riots did not change the government of the country, the brutality of the apartheid system was exposed to the rest of the world. Reports of the death toll vary a great deal, but as many as 3000 people (mainly students) are considered to have been shot by the police.

## QUESTIONS

1. Define the topic.
2. What are the circumstances?
3. Who is the writer?
4. Define the audience and a possible reaction to the article.
5. Find passages in the text that indicate the speaker's intention.
6. Comment on the use of “reported” and “reportedly” (l. 1 and l. 32, left column).
7. Discuss the reliability of the article.
8. In pairs, find a map of South Africa and indicate on the map the various names of towns mentioned in the article.

## COMPARISON

1. Compare the two articles *Humphrey Tyler's eye-witness report*, p. 15 and *1976: Soweto protest turns violent*, p. 20 and focus on intention and reliability.

## WRITE ABOUT IT

1. Write a short article in about 250 words in which you look into and comment on Prime Minister Vorster's statements. Usually writing an article implies using:
  - a headline – the title of the article
  - a byline – the name of the writer – use italics
  - a lead – where you put in the most important facts very briefly
  - a body text – where you have sub-headlines.





*Sharpeville massacre, 1960*

## PHOTOS

1. Several photos are famous throughout the world for depicting the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 and the Soweto uprisings in 1976. One of the photos from the Sharpeville massacre is shown above. The photo from 1976 of the Soweto uprisings you will have to find yourself on the internet. Search for "Hector Pieterse" and your top search result will be a black and white photo depicting a man carrying a lifeless body with a girl walking next to them. Write down individually what you think of when you look at the photos.
2. In pairs, point out two major differences between the Sharpeville photo and the Soweto photo.
3. In pairs, share how the two photos affect the viewer.
4. Sum up in class how the pictures mirror the two massacres respectively.

## WRITE ABOUT IT

1. Write one page about your impression of South Africa without looking for information in this chapter. Start by answering why this country is called the rainbow nation and what events in the country's past or present might still create tension within the population.