

NELSON MANDELA



The South African activist and former president Nelson Mandela (1918-2013) helped bring an end to apartheid and has been a global advocate for human rights. A member of the African National Congress party beginning in the 1940s, he was a leader of both peaceful protests and armed resistance against the white minority's oppressive regime in a racially divided South Africa. His actions landed him in prison for nearly three decades and made him the face of the antiapartheid movement both within his country and internationally. Released in 1990, he participated in the eradication of apartheid and in 1994 became the first black president of South Africa, forming a multiethnic government to oversee the country's transition. A symbol of global peacemaking, he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993. After retiring from politics in 1999, he remained a devoted champion for peace and social justice in his own nation and around the world until his death in 2013 at the age of 95.

NELSON MANDELA



Where & when born`

Nelson Mandela was born Rolihlahla Mandela on July 18, 1918, in the tiny village of Mvezo, on the banks of the Mbashe River in Transkei, South Africa.

Brief history of the Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela's father, who was destined to be a chief, served as a counselor to tribal chiefs for several years, but lost both his title and fortune over a dispute with the local colonial magistrate. Mandela was only an infant at the time, and his father's loss of status forced his mother to move the family to Qunu, an even smaller village north of Mvezo. The family lived in huts and ate a local harvest of maize, sorghum, pumpkin and beans, which was all they could afford. Water came from springs and streams and cooking was done outdoors. Mandela played the games of young boys, acting out male rights-of-passage scenarios with toys he made from the natural materials available, including tree branches and clay.

At the suggestion of one of his father's friends, Mandela was baptized in the Methodist Church. He went on to become the first in his family to attend school. As was custom at the time, and probably due to the bias of the British educational system in South Africa, Mandela's teacher told him that his new first name would be Nelson.

When Mandela was 9 years old, his father died of lung disease, causing his life to change dramatically. He was adopted by Chief Jongintaba Dalindyebo, the acting regent of the Thembu people—a gesture done as a favor to Mandela's father, who, years earlier, had recommended Jongintaba be made chief. Mandela subsequently left the carefree life he knew in Qunu, fearing that he would never see his village again.

Mandela was given the same status and responsibilities as the regent's two other children, his son and oldest child, Justice, and daughter Nomafu. Mandela took classes in a one-room school next to the palace, studying English, Xhosa, history and geography. It was during this period that Mandela developed an interest in African history, from elder chiefs who came to the Great Palace on official business. He learned how the African people had lived in relative peace until the coming of the white people. According to the elders, the children of South Africa had previously lived as brothers, but white men had shattered this fellowship. While black men shared their land, air and water with whites, white men took all of these things for themselves.



NELSON MANDELA

When Mandela underwent a ceremony of circumcision, an African tradition to mark the transition from boyhood to manhood, his mood shifted during the proceedings, however, when Chief Meligqili, the main speaker at the ceremony, spoke how their land was controlled by white men and, they would never have the power to govern themselves. Mandela would later say that while the chief's words didn't make total sense to him at the time, they would eventually formulate his resolve for an independent South Africa.

From the time Mandela came under the guardianship of Regent Jongintaba, he was groomed to assume high office, not as a chief, but a counselor to one. As Thembu royalty, Mandela attended a Wesleyan mission school, the Clarkebury Boarding Institute and Wesleyan College, where, he would later state, he achieved academic success through "plain hard work." He also excelled at track and boxing.

In 1939, Mandela enrolled at the University College of Fort Hare, the only residential center of higher learning for blacks in South Africa at the time. Fort Hare was considered Africa's equivalent of the University of Oxford or Harvard University, drawing scholars from all parts of sub-Saharan Africa. In his first year at the university, Mandela took the required courses, but focused on Roman Dutch law to prepare for a career in civil service as an interpreter or clerk—regarded as the best profession that a black man could obtain at the time.

In his second year at Fort Hare, Mandela was elected to the Student Representative Council. For some time, students had been dissatisfied with the food and lack of power held by the SRC. During this election, a majority of students voted to boycott unless their demands were met. Aligning with the student majority, Mandela resigned from his position. Seeing this as an act of insubordination, the university's Dr. Kerr expelled Mandela for the rest of the year and gave him an ultimatum: He could return to the school if he agreed to serve on the SRC.

A few weeks after Mandela returned home, Regent Jongintaba announced that he had arranged a marriage for his adopted son. Shocked by the news, feeling trapped and believing that he had no other option than to follow this recent order, Mandela ran away from home. He settled in Johannesburg, where he worked a variety of jobs, including as a guard and a clerk, while completing his bachelor's degree via correspondence courses. He then enrolled at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg to study law.

In addition to advocating for peace and equality on both a national and global scale, in his later years, Mandela remained committed to the fight against AIDS—a disease that killed Mandela's son, Makgatho, in 2005.

Nelson Mandela made his last public appearance at the final match of the World Cup in South Africa in 2010. On December 5, 2013, at the age of 95, Nelson Mandela died at his home in Johannesburg, South Africa. Zuma released a statement later that day, in which he spoke to Mandela's legacy: "Wherever we are in the country, wherever we are in the world, let us reaffirm his vision of a society ... in which none is exploited, oppressed or dispossessed by another," he said. For decades to come, Nelson Mandela will continue to be a source of inspiration for [civil rights activists](#) worldwide.



NELSON MANDELA

Career in Political

Mandela soon became actively involved in the anti-apartheid movement, joining the African National Congress in 1942. Within the ANC, a small group of young Africans banded together, calling themselves the African National Congress Youth League. Their goal was to transform the ANC into a mass grassroots movement, deriving strength from millions of rural peasants and working people who had no voice under the current regime. Specifically, the group believed that the ANC's old tactics of polite petitioning were ineffective. In 1949, the ANC officially adopted the Youth League's methods of boycott, strike, civil disobedience and non-cooperation, with policy goals of full citizenship, redistribution of land, trade union rights, and free and compulsory education for all children.

For 20 years, Mandela directed peaceful, nonviolent acts of defiance against the South African government and its racist policies, including the 1952 Defiance Campaign and the 1955 Congress of the People. He founded the law firm Mandela and Tambo, partnering with Oliver Tambo, a brilliant student he'd met while attending Fort Hare. The law firm provided free and low-cost legal counsel to unrepresented blacks.

In 1956, Mandela and 150 others were arrested and charged with treason for their political advocacy (they were eventually acquitted). Meanwhile, the ANC was being challenged by Africanists, a new breed of **black activists** who believed that the pacifist method of the ANC was ineffective. Africanists soon broke away to form the Pan-Africanist Congress, which negatively affected the ANC; by 1959, the movement had lost much of its militant support.

In 1961, Mandela, who was formerly committed to nonviolent protest, began to believe that armed struggle was the only way to achieve change. He subsequently co-founded Umkhonto we Sizwe, also known as MK, an armed offshoot of the ANC dedicated to sabotage and guerilla war tactics to end apartheid. In 1961, Mandela orchestrated a three-day national workers' strike. He was arrested for leading the strike the following year, and was sentenced to five years in prison. In 1963, Mandela was brought to trial again. This time, he and 10 other ANC leaders were sentenced to life imprisonment for political offenses, including sabotage.

Nelson Mandela was incarcerated on Robben Island for 18 of his 27 years in prison. During this time, he contracted tuberculosis and, as a black political prisoner, received the lowest level of treatment from prison workers. However, while incarcerated, Mandela was able to earn a Bachelor of Law degree through a University of London correspondence program.

With increasing local and international pressure for his release, the government participated in several talks with Mandela over the ensuing years, but no deal was made. When Botha suffered a stroke and was replaced by Frederik Willem de Klerk that Mandela's release was finally announced—on February 11, 1990. De Klerk also unbanned the ANC, removed restrictions on political groups and suspended executions.

Upon his release from prison, Nelson Mandela immediately urged foreign powers not to reduce their pressure on the South African government for constitutional reform. While he stated that he was committed to working toward peace, he declared that the ANC's armed struggle would continue until the black majority received the right to vote.



NELSON MANDELA

In 1991, Mandela was elected president of the African National Congress, with lifelong friend and colleague Oliver Tambo serving as national chairperson.

On April 27, 1994, South Africa held its first democratic elections. Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as the country's first black president on May 10, 1994, at the age of 77, with de Klerk as his first deputy.

From 1994 until June 1999, Mandela worked to bring about the transition from minority rule and apartheid to black majority rule. He used the nation's enthusiasm for sports as a pivot point to promote reconciliation between whites and blacks, encouraging black South Africans to support the once-hated national rugby team. In 1995, South Africa came to the world stage by hosting the Rugby World Cup, which brought further recognition and prestige to the young republic.

Mandela also worked to protect South Africa's economy from collapse during his presidency. Through his Reconstruction and Development Plan, the South African government funded the creation of jobs, housing and basic health care. In 1996, Mandela signed into law a new constitution for the nation, establishing a strong central government based on majority rule, and guaranteeing both the rights of minorities and the freedom of expression.

By the 1999 general election, Nelson Mandela had retired from active politics. He continued to maintain a busy schedule, however, raising money to build schools and clinics in South Africa's rural heartland through [his foundation](#), and serving as a mediator in Burundi's civil war.

Mandela at the age of 85, announced his formal retirement from public life in June 2004 and returned to his native village of Qunu.

On July 18, 2007, Mandela convened a group of world leaders, including Graca Machel (whom Mandela wed in 1998), Desmond Tutu, Kofi Annan, Ela Bhatt, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Jimmy Carter, Li Zhaoxing, Mary Robinson and Muhammad Yunus, to address some of the world's toughest issues. Aiming to work both publicly and privately to find solutions to problems around the globe, the group was aptly named "The Elders." The Elders' impact has spanned Asia, the Middle East and Africa, and their actions have included promoting peace and women's equality, demanding an end to atrocities, and supporting initiatives to address humanitarian crises and promote democracy.

Leadership qualities

1. He was a man of peace.
2. He had a powerful presence and disarmed enemies with his smile.
3. He showed the world what [forgiveness](#) looks like.
4. He was positive, thinking about what could be.
5. He was a visionary and could see the big picture.



NELSON MANDELA

6. He was focused on goals and a mission beyond himself.
7. He had remarkable endurance.
8. He showed grit and determination.
9. He was humble.
10. He was full of hope, not hate.
11. He was patient.

Traits

- **Self-Awareness**

Mandela could be, when necessary, an eloquent statesman, an articulate technocrat, or a humorous storyteller. He knew which situations called for which role and he was self-aware enough to recognize how people were viewing him. At the same time, he could put himself in their place too and feel as they felt.

- **Sense of humor**

Humor disarms opponents, diffuses tense moments, and acts as a diversion. Self-deprecating humor humanizes a person and shows a level of self-confidence. Mandela regularly referred to himself as an old man and frequently shared a humorous story during speeches in which a young girl called him a “stupid old man”. There is something special about people who are confident enough to laugh at themselves, especially when it is a larger-than-life figure like Mandela.

- **Humility**

Effective leaders do not let their egos get in the way of accomplishing their mission. When Mandela’s death became public, many people who knew him commented on how humble he was. When meeting someone he frequently said: “It’s an honor to meet you.” He never presented himself as being above or better than other people. He also famously wrote in his memoir “I am not a saint, unless you think of a saint as a sinner who keeps on trying.”

- **Forgiveness**

Mandela forgave those that imprisoned him for 27 years. He invited a former guard to his inauguration and shared the Noble Peace prize with his predecessor, F.W. de Clerk. His magnanimity won trust and set an example of how an entire nation could move forward. Why was he so willing to forgive? His answer- “Hating clouds the mind.”

- **Doggedness**



NELSON MANDELA

Mandela was so tenacious and committed to his mission. He sacrificed 27 years of his life in prison. He faced critics from his own party and from international leaders. Mandela was driven to accomplish his mission and never stopped moving towards the ultimate goal of liberating his country.

The biggest takeaway from Mandela's amazing life and accomplishments is that you do not need to liberate a country, become president, or win a Nobel Peace prize to adopt some of the character traits listed above. These traits will help you be an effective leader at your place of work, school, and home. Maybe we can all start 2014 by channeling a little bit of Mandela as we begin the New Year.

Critical moments of struggle, Civil War etc.

- A 1981 memoir by South African intelligence agent Gordon Winter described a plot by the South African government to arrange for Mandela's escape so as to shoot him during the recapture; the plot was foiled by British intelligence. Mandela continued to be such a potent symbol of black resistance that a coordinated international campaign for his release was launched, and this international groundswell of support exemplified the power and esteem that Mandela had in the global political community.
- After Mandela was elected president of the African National Congress, Mandela continued to negotiate with President F.W. de Klerk toward the country's first multiracial elections. White South Africans were willing to share power, but many black South Africans wanted a complete transfer of power. The negotiations were often strained and news of violent eruptions, including the assassination of ANC leader Chris Hani, continued throughout the country. Mandela had to keep a delicate balance of political pressure and intense negotiations amid the demonstrations and armed resistance.

Awards and achievements

- In 1993, Mandela and President de Klerk were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their work toward dismantling apartheid.
- In 2009, Mandela's birthday (July 18) was declared Mandela Day, an international day to promote global peace and celebrate the South African leader's legacy.

Literary Works

- Also in 1994, Mandela published an autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, much of which he had secretly written while in prison. The following year, he was awarded the Order of Merit.
- He also published a number of books on his life and struggles, among them *No Easy Walk to Freedom*; *Nelson Mandela: The Struggle is my Life*; and *Nelson Mandela's Favorite African Folktales*.

Sources

- <https://www.nelsonmandela.org/content/page/biography>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nelson_Mandela
- <http://www.history.com/topics/nelson-mandela>
- <http://www.biography.com/people/nelson-mandela-9397017#related-video-gallery>
- <http://www.skipprichard.com/11-leadership-qualities-of-nelson-mandela/>
- <http://corneralliance.com/5-character-traits-that-made-nelson-mandela-an-effective-leader/>