



South Africa lies at the southern end of the African continent, where the Atlantic and Indian oceans come together. For a long time in the past **centuries** South Africa was **governed** by whites, although about 80 % of the **population** are blacks. In the 1990s the **election** of the first black president , Nelson Mandela opened a new **chapter** of South African history.

## SIZE AND GEOGRAPHY

South Africa has an **area** of about 1.2 million square kilometres. Its neighbours to the north are Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Swaziland. Lesotho is a small country that is completely **surrounded** by South Africa. On the other three sides South Africa is **surrounded** by oceans.



Most of the country lies on a plateau. The central part known as the Highveld lies between 1,200 and 1,800 metres above **sea level**. Large farms and ranches and fields **dominate** the countryside. The **Great Escarpment separates** the higher regions of the inner country from the low areas along the coast. The highest part of this **mountain range** is the Drakensberg which **reaches a height** of 3,350 metres. In western South Africa the Kalahari and Namib deserts **spread** over a great part of the country. The biggest river is the Orange. It begins in the Drakenberg Mountains and **flows** into the Atlantic Ocean.



South Africa has a **moderate** climate with mild temperatures. In some areas there is not enough rain for farming and **droughts** are **common**.

## POPULATION

About 44 million people live in South Africa. Blacks make up almost 80 % of the population. They belong to different **ethnic groups** and speak different languages. The largest **tribes**, the Zulu and Xhosa, have lived in South Africa for the longest time. About half of them live in cities and the other half on small farms in the countryside. Many blacks still work for white people in gold and diamond **mines** but many are poor and have no jobs.

South Africa has three **minorities**. The Whites make up about 10% of the population. **Apart from** the English speaking population there are also the **descendants** Dutch, German and French **settlers**, who are called **Afrikaners**. Almost all whites live in the big cities. Many **Afrikaners** control the farms in the countryside.

9% of the population are Coloreds , people of **mixed race**. Many work as **servants** and hold jobs in **factories**. Asians, which make up about 2% of the population, are the fourth largest group. Most of them are **descendants** of **settlers** who came from India to work on large farms and plantations in the last part of the 19th **century**.

95 percent of all South Africans live in the eastern half of the country and along the southern coast. The northern and western part of the country is very **sparsely populated** because it is too dry.

The **majority** of the population are Protestants or Roman Catholics, but there are also Hindus and Muslims in the country and some of the **tribes** in the countryside follow traditional religions.

**CITIES**

Johannesburg is South Africa’s largest city. It was **founded** in 1886 as a **gold mining** town. Today it is the centre of the country’s industry and **trade**. Near it you can still see the yellow **mounds** of the gold **mines** that brought **wealth** and **prosperity** to southern Africa.

Cape Town is South Africa’s oldest and second largest city. **Founded** as a Dutch **trading** station it was the biggest town until gold was found. Cape Town is known for its famous **landmarks**. Durban, on the east coast, is South Africa’s main **port** and a major industrial centre. Most of the country’s Asian people live here.



*Location of Cape Town*

**GOVERNMENT**

South Africa has three capitals. **Laws** are made in Cape Town where Parliament gets together . The government and the Prime Minister meet in Pretoria and the country’s highest **court** is in Bloemfontein.

**ECONOMY**

South Africa is the richest country in Africa. **Although** it has only 4 % of Africa’s area it produces about 25% of the continent’s **goods** and **services**. **However** it is mostly the white population that has built up most of the country’s **wealth**. They **owned** the **major** companies for a long time. Today, years after the end of apartheid, Whites still control most of the **economy** but Blacks are getting better jobs and **earning** more than some years ago.

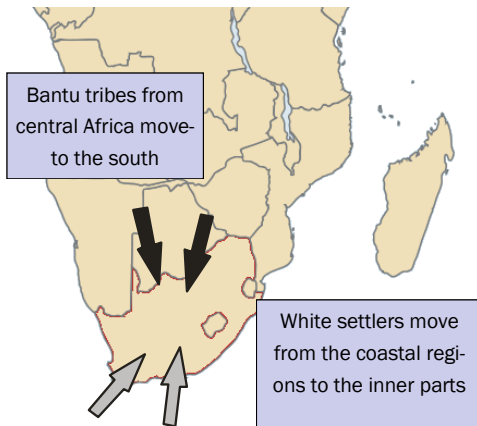
South Africa’s **economy** is **based on mining** and industry. It is the world’s biggest gold producer. Centre of production is the Witwatersrand in the north of the country. About 40% of all the gold that has ever been **mined** on earth comes



from this region. Diamonds, coal and **copper** are other **valuable raw materials**. Factories in South Africa produce cars, chemicals, **iron** and **steel** and machines.



**Although** South Africa does not have so much good farming land the country can export many products, **including** corn, **wheat**, **sugar cane**, citrus fruits. Great wines are produced in the southern regions which have a **Mediterranean** climate. Farmers raise sheep, **cattle** and pigs for meat and other products.



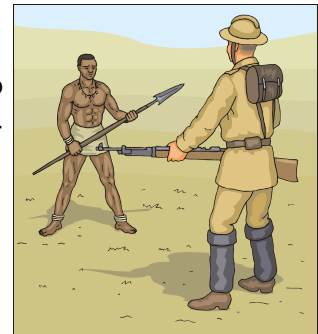
**HISTORY**

The Portuguese **navigator** Bartholomeu Dias was the first European to see the **Cape of Good Hope** in 1488. Years later the **Dutch** set up a colony there as a stopping place on their way to Asia.

As time went on the Dutch started to move into the **interior** parts of the country. At the same time Bantu **tribes** came **southwards** from central Africa. **As a result** there was a lot of fighting between the African **tribes** and the Dutch over farming lands.

In 1815 the British **took over** the colony from the **Dutch**. As more and more British **settlers** went to the Cape the Dutch **Boers** moved to the north in what they called the Great Trek. They **founded** new **settlements** in Transvaal and the Orange Free State.

**Towards** the end of the 19th century two **major** discoveries changed South Africa. In 1867 diamonds were **discovered** near Kimberley and in 1886 large gold **deposits** were found in the Transvaal. Because of this even more British **settlers** came to the Cape colony. They tried to **take control of** the **Dutch** areas, where these **discoveries** were made. This led to a war between the British and the Dutch Boers. The Boers were **defeated** in 1902 and the leaders of the British and the Dutch colonies **decided** to form a **single** state which they called the Union of South Africa.



**APARTHEID**

From the beginning, the **government** of the newly formed country was controlled by the Whites, **even though** the **majority** of the people who lived there were Blacks. They **passed laws** to keep people from different **races** apart. This series of **laws** became known as **Apartheid**, which means being “separate” in the **Afrikaans** language.

The black people started to organize themselves in their **battle** against the Whites. In 1912 the African National Congress was **founded**. Its **aim** was to put the Blacks in power in South Africa. Some ANC leaders were **arrested** and put into **prison**, the most famous of them being Nelson Mandela.

The **apartheid** system was criticized by many countries around the world. They stopped **trading** with South Africa and tried to isolate it. As the country was becoming **economically weaker** a new president Frederik de Klerk **announced** that **apartheid** was going to end. He made the ANC **legal** again and **released** its leader Nelson Mandela from **prison**, where he was kept for over twenty years. In the first democratic **elections**, in which all **races** could take part, the ANC won and Nelson Mandela became the country’s first black President in 1994. Mandela **retired** in 1999 and since then South Africa has been trying to give freedom and **equality** to people of all **races**.



**SOUTH AFRICA'S PROBLEMS**



Like many other African nations, South Africa's population has **serious** health problems. In the last two **decades** AIDS has begun to **spread rapidly throughout** the country. Today 5 million people are infected with HIV, more than any other country the world.

**Corruption** and crime are also big **issues** in South Africa. **According to** the United Nations it is among the most dangerous countries in the world. **As a result** rich people are putting up **fences** and walls and have been **hiring security companies** to **protect** them from crime.



**Unemployment** is very high in the country. About one third of the population do not have a job. As in many African countries **educated** and **skilled** people are leaving South Africa and moving on to Europe or the United States.

The world will be looking towards South Africa in the **upcoming** years. In 2010 the nation will be the first African country to **stage** the football World Cup, the biggest event ever to take in the region.

- **according to** = as said or reported by someone
- **Afrikaans** = language spoken by Dutch settlers in South Africa
- **Afrikaner** = a white South African who is related to the Dutch people who came to the country in the 1600s
- **aim** = goal, wish
- **although** =while
- **announce** = to say officially
- **apart from** =except for
- **Apartheid** = the political and social system in South Africa, in which only white people had rights: other races had to live separately
- **area** =size
- **arrest** = to take to a person to a police station because they may have done something wrong
- **as a result**=something happens because of something else
- **based on** =here: is the most important part of ...
- **battle** = fight
- **Boer** = a white South African with Dutch roots
- **Cape of Good Hope** = at the southwestern end of South Africa; where the Atlantic Oceans meets the Indian Ocean
- **cattle** = cows and bulls on a farm
- **century** = a hundred years
- **chapter** = section, period, phase
- **common** = something happens very often
- **copper** = a soft reddish brown metal that lets electricity pass through easily; it is used in wires and pipes
- **corruption** = bad behavior from someone who has power
- **court** =place where a trial is held . A judge and a jury decide if someone is guilty or not
- **decade** = ten years
- **decide** =choose to do something
- **defeat** = to win against in a war
- **deposit** = a layer of rock in the earth that has important minerals in it
- **descendant** = a person of someone's family who lived a long time ago
- **discovery** = to find something for the first time
- **dominate** = overlook, stand out
- **drought** = a long phase of dry weather, when plants and animals do not get enough water
- **Dutch** = a person from the Netherlands
- **earn** = to get money when you work
- **economy** =financial system of a country; how goods are bought and sold
- **educate** = to go to school and learn things
- **election** =when people choose someone for an

<p>official position</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>equality</b> = being the same</li> <li>• <b>escarpment</b> = a steep slope between two levels on a hill or mountain</li> <li>• <b>ethnic group</b> = people that belong to a certain tribe, race or country and have their own traditions and language</li> <li>• <b>fence</b> = something made of wood or metal that is around a house</li> <li>• <b>flow</b> = runs into</li> <li>• <b>found -founded</b> = start, create, set up</li> <li>• <b>goods</b> = products</li> <li>• <b>govern</b> = rule</li> <li>• <b>government</b> = the people who rule a country</li> <li>• <b>height</b> = how high or tall something is</li> <li>• <b>hire</b> = to pay someone to work for you</li> <li>• <b>however</b> = but</li> <li>• <b>including</b> = together with</li> <li>• <b>iron</b> = a hard metal with which you can make steel</li> <li>• <b>issue</b> = topic , subject</li> <li>• <b>landmark</b> = famous sight</li> <li>• <b>law</b> = the system of rules that a country has</li> <li>• <b>legal</b> = to be officially allowed</li> <li>• <b>major</b> = important</li> <li>• <b>majority</b> = the largest group of people in a country, opposite of minority</li> <li>• <b>Mediterranean</b> = the area between Europe and Africa</li> <li>• <b>mine</b> = deep hole in the ground where people dig important minerals like coal</li> <li>• <b>minority</b> = a small group of people in a country</li> <li>• <b>moderate</b> = not too hot and not too cold</li> <li>• <b>mountain range</b> = a group of mountains usually in one line</li> <li>• <b>navigator</b> = a person on a ship who tells you which way to go</li> <li>• <b>own</b> = have, possess</li> <li>• <b>pass a law</b> = when parliament makes a law</li> <li>• <b>populated</b> = many people live in an area</li> <li>• <b>population</b> = the people who live in an area</li> <li>• <b>port</b> = harbor</li> <li>• <b>prison</b> = a building or room where people are kept if they have done something wrong</li> <li>• <b>protect</b> = defend, guard</li> <li>• <b>race</b> = group of people who have the same skin colour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>rapid</b> = quick, fast</li> <li>• <b>raw materials</b> = natural resources that exist in nature and can be used by people , like coal, oil, trees etc..</li> <li>• <b>reach</b> = get to</li> <li>• <b>release</b> = to set free</li> <li>• <b>retire</b> = to stop working because you are old</li> <li>• <b>sea level</b> = the average height of the sea; it is used to measure other things, like the height of mountains etc..</li> <li>• <b>security company</b> = a company that you pay to install machines in your house that protect you or keep you safe</li> <li>• <b>separate</b> = divide</li> <li>• <b>serious</b> = important</li> <li>• <b>servant</b> = someone who gets paid to help in the household</li> <li>• <b>services</b> = work that you do for someone else and get paid for it</li> <li>• <b>settlement</b> = new village, town</li> <li>• <b>settler</b> = a person who goes to and lives in a place where not very many people have gone to before</li> <li>• <b>single</b> = one</li> <li>• <b>skilled</b> = someone who has the training to do something well</li> <li>• <b>southward</b> = to move south</li> <li>• <b>sparse</b> = thin</li> <li>• <b>spread</b> = stretch, expand; or to move from one place to another</li> <li>• <b>stage</b> = host , present</li> <li>• <b>steel</b> = a strong metal that you can form easily ; made from iron</li> <li>• <b>sugar cane</b> = a subtropical or tropical plant from which you can make sugar</li> <li>• <b>surround</b> = to be around something</li> <li>• <b>take over</b> = to take control of</li> <li>• <b>throughout</b> = in all of</li> <li>• <b>towards</b> = just before</li> <li>• <b>trade</b> = to buy and sell things</li> <li>• <b>tribe</b> = same as ethnic group</li> <li>• <b>unemployment</b> = to be without a job</li> <li>• <b>upcoming</b> = the next</li> <li>• <b>valuable</b> = worth a lot, expensive</li> <li>• <b>weak</b> = not strong</li> <li>• <b>wealth</b> = being rich</li> <li>• <b>wheat</b> = a plant that you make white bread from</li> </ul>
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