

South Africa



South Africa occupies the southern part of the African continent. The people of South Africa have been the victims of an abominable political regime in world history based on racial discrimination. South Africa was originally inhabited by Bushmen and by the Hottentot and Zulu tribes. In the 16th century it was colonised by the Dutch known as Boers. In 1814 the English founded a colony in the area of Cape Town. In the 1870s and 1880s, when parts of South Africa were discovered to be rich in gold and diamonds, there was rivalry between the British and the Boers for the control of these areas. The result was the Boer War (1899-1902). During this war the English started the occupation of the country. The black populations were treated very badly by their white masters. Meanwhile protest organizations such as the African National Congress (ANC) came into being. The Boers called themselves Afrikaners and gradually extended their influence.

In 1948 the Apartheid regime was set up. Apartheid is a system of keeping people separated on the basis of race. As a consequence, black Africans were segregated into separate territories. They lived in ghetto areas, received an inferior education and were not allowed to marry whites. In 1978 the South African government declared that the policy of Apartheid was to be abandoned.

South Africa has recently become a democracy. The political elections of 1994 marked the birth of the new Republic of South Africa and Nelson Mandela, leader of the ANC, was appointed President.

Pretoria is the capital of South Africa and the administrative seat of the government. Cape Town is the seat of the legislature. Other large towns are Johannesburg, Durban and Port Elizabeth.



Nelson Mandela

Comprehension

Answer the following questions:

1. Where is South Africa located? What is its climate like?
2. Who were the first inhabitants of South Africa?
3. When and by whom was South Africa colonised?
4. When did the Boer War end? Why did this war break out?
5. Why couldn't whites and blacks marry under the Apartheid regime?
6. What happened in 1987? When did the Republic of South Africa come into being?
7. Who is Nelson Mandela? When was he appointed President of South Africa?
8. Where is Cape Town located? Why is it an important city?
9. In your opinion, is South Africa a densely populated country? Give a full answer.
10. What important event revolutionised the economy of South Africa?

