

Penguin Readers



THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE OF

NELSON MANDELA





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Note about the book

Nelson Mandela (1918–2013) lived in South Africa in the time of apartheid. Apartheid means “separate” or not in the same place. Black people and white people had to live in separate places. Nelson did not like this. He wanted everyone to be **free*** and **equal**.

Nelson worked for a group called the African National Congress (ANC). Nelson and the ANC fought **against** apartheid – they were anti-apartheid. The **government** were not happy about this. They **arrested** Nelson and sent him to prison for many years. But Nelson did not stop fighting.

Nelson Mandela was a very important man. He left prison in 1990 after twenty-seven years and **became president** of South Africa in 1994.

Before-reading questions

- 1 Look at the cover of this book. What do you know about Nelson Mandela?
- 2 Nelson Mandela was the president of South Africa. What was his job like, do you think?
- 3 Read the definition of the word “fair” on page 61. What is fair in your life? Is anything not fair?
- 4 What is important to you in your life?



*Definitions of words in **bold** can be found in the glossary on pages 61–63.

CHAPTER ONE

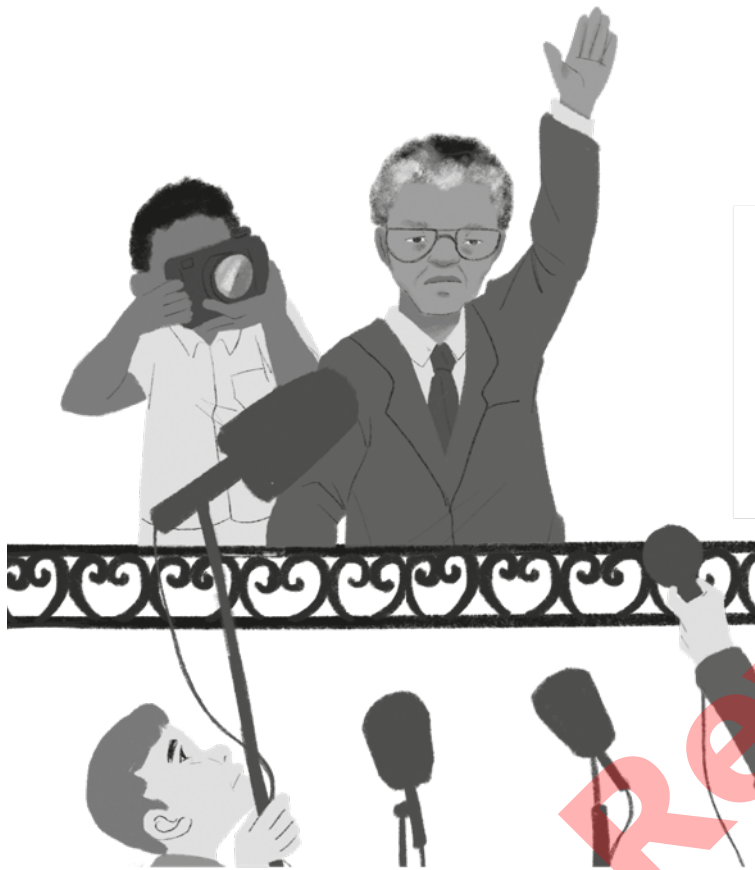
Who was Nelson Mandela?

Nelson Mandela **was born** on 18th July 1918 in a small village in South Africa. He was the **leader** of the ANC (African National Congress) and the **president** of South Africa from 1994 to 1999. His ideas about **freedom** and **equality** made him famous around the world.

Nelson Mandela fought **against** apartheid in South Africa for more than fifty years. In South Africa, the **lives** of black people and white people were not **equal**. There were **laws** to keep white people and black people separate – they could not use the same places. Nelson wanted the **government to treat** black people and white people the same. But Nelson had to go to prison for fighting against these laws.

In 1964, he went to a prison called Robben Island. Here, the guards treated Nelson badly. **Life** was hard, but Nelson did not stop trying to learn new things. In prison, he started to write his own life story, *Long Walk to Freedom*.





Apartheid began to **end** in 1991. Three years later, the people of South Africa chose a new president. For the first time, *everyone* in South Africa could **vote**. Nelson Mandela got the most **votes**, and he **became** the first black South African president.

Nelson was in prison for a long time. But people in South Africa **continued** to fight against apartheid. Many people died in this fighting.

In 1990, after twenty-seven years, Nelson came out of prison. He was 71 years old.