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South Africa - Now and then

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South Africa – Now and then

by Carmen Müntzenberg

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Südafrika gilt als die „Wiege der Menschheit“ – doch was wissen Ihre Schüler eigentlich über dieses Land? In dieser Unterrichtseinheit erhalten die Lernenden einen Überblick über geografische, politische, historische und kulturelle Aspekte von *South Africa*. Anhand von Sachtexten, einer Kurzgeschichte, Videomaterial, Cartoons und einem Song erarbeiten sich die Schüler die verschiedenen Facetten des Landes und setzen sich auch mit aktuellen Themen und Herausforderungen wie AIDS oder der *water crisis* auseinander. Hierbei trainieren sie insbesondere ihr Leseverstehen sowie das Verfassen von *summaries*.

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Competences and skills:

By working with several informative texts and a short story, students enhance their **reading comprehension competence**. They also improve their **writing skills** by summarising the texts and commenting on various questions related to the topic. Additionally, students demonstrate their **viewing competences** by answering questions on a video and practise their **listening competences** by working with a song. Students increase their **speaking skills** when they participate in a simulated talk show. Finally, they exercise **interpretative** and **analytical skills** by analysing a cartoon and a poem.

Overview:

List of abbreviations:

A Analysis

D Discussion/debate

M Mind map/visualising

R Research

V Vocabulary work

C Comment

G Group work

P Working with a picture/cartoon

RC Reading comprehension

W Writing

CT Creative Task

LC Listening comprehension

T Working with a text/video

Topic	Material	Methods/Skills
1: Where, what, and who is South Africa?	M1–M9	CT, G, M, RC, T, V
2: Segregation in South Africa – a geographical, literary and factual approach	M10–M12	A, C, CT, D, P, R, RC, T, W
3: Environmental challenges in South Africa	M13–M14	CT, M, T
4: Made in South Africa	M15–M19	D, G, RC
Exam: AIDS in South Africa		A, D, LC, P, RC, W

South Africa – Now and then

Facts

While Great Britain, the USA and Australia are frequently used as settings in schoolbooks, other English-speaking areas of the world and even members of the Commonwealth are mostly neglected. Consequently, students know little about their people, history and traditions. That is why this edition attempts to arouse interest among students, as well as teachers, in South Africa, which is seen as the cradle of humankind, as the evolutionary development of humans is scientifically located just 50km northwest of Johannesburg. Due to very early settlement and its location at the very south of the continent, South Africa has been used as a stop-over by early sailors and traders dating back to the 17th century. Even then, some form of globalisation had started, and people were voluntarily or involuntarily migrating to and from South Africa. These newcomers influenced local traditions like bead making, as well as local architecture and language. But just like today, these early forms of globalisation also had negative side effects. One of them was the system of apartheid which was enforced step by step starting in the year 1948. This meant that non-white citizens had to live in separate areas. Even before that, in 1913, the Land Act had limited the rights of black farmers and led to the first steps of territorial segregation. Over time, the laws of the system forbade such things as interracial marriages as well as non-white participation in the government. These laws, and especially the fact that most non-white residents were expropriated, led to severe poverty among these ethnic groups. Consequently, people started to resist either non-violently in demonstrations and strikes, or in armed fights. People taking part in these protests were oftentimes arrested and tried for treason. This also happened to the later president Nelson Mandela. Just like many others, he was sentenced to death, but due to his international fame, his penalty drew international attention. As a result, his sentence was first changed into a lifetime prison sentence, and later he was released. The system of apartheid finally came to an end in 1973. Many countries had imposed economic sanctions on South Africa to put international pressure on the government, which finally forced the government to enact a new constitution. In the end, it took until 1994 to officially end the system of apartheid.

In the same year, Nelson Mandela became president and tried to focus on forgiveness and unification between the different ethnic groups. Since then, many things have changed for the better, although segregation is still part of South Africa's society, which becomes obvious in the distribution of races throughout the country, the existence of gated communities, and the economic divide between whites and non-whites. Moreover, infection rates with the HIV-virus differ between ethnic groups and just add up to more injustice in the country. Nonetheless, South Africa has become a popular tourist destination. Its landscapes are breathtaking, and being located in the southern hemisphere, it promises a great warm-weather vacation during our winter months. Wildlife and vegetation offer great experiences, too. In addition, travellers can taste characteristic food prepared by tribal cultures, as well as shop for unique souvenirs. Consequently, this issue offers a variety of geographic, political, historical and cultural aspects on South Africa.

Notes on the material

The material is divided into four topics and there is an exam at the end of the section. **Topic 1** provides general information on South Africa. Students play a living memory game by first reading a text and then finding matches in the classroom while talking to other students about their text. That way, students practise summarising texts and conversation on the one hand and learn about South Africa on the other hand. After they have found matches, students work together and form small groups (depending on the size of a class there may be several students with the same text). Each group reads out a summary of its text to ensure that each student hears all the results. Then the class develops a mind map that includes all the memory cards. Finally, students are asked to create a flyer for a tourist company that depicts as many aspects of the mind map as possible. **Topic 2** focuses on segregation in South Africa. There are three core themes which show segregation from different viewpoints. First of all, there is the geographical approach which asks students to work with maps showing the distribution of ethnic groups throughout South Africa. There are also some numbers on life expectancy or unemployment rates that underline these disparities. The second approach is a literary one. Students read a short story by Nadine Gordimer which deals with gated communities. A creative writing task asks students to

write an alternate ending to the story and they are expected to analyse a cartoon. The third theme focuses on the historical and political background of the system of apartheid. In this section, students perform online research to create a lap book which includes the benchmark data of political segregation in the 20th century. A last part focuses on today's segregation in South Africa. Several different roles are assigned to students that should lead to a lively discussion about equality.

Topic 3 relates to a recent South African problem: the water crisis of 2018. In order to have an idea of the situation during the water crisis of Cape Town, students start out by watching a short video on *YouTube*. After they have explained the reasons for the crisis and its consequences for the city, students compare the information from the film with the information given in a poem by Abigail Green. In order to link all the pieces of information, students then develop a concept map that illustrates facts, hopes and future prospects. As climate change and waste of resources also matter in our everyday lives, a creative section asks students to create a poster that shows ways of sustainable water usage. These ideas may either focus on their daily lives or/and on life in South Africa. **Topic 4** chooses the "World Café" strategy, which involves students in different small group discussions. By moving around the classroom, they learn about different traditional or/and homemade products from South Africa. They also evaluate the influences of globalisation on each particular product. Finally, they use wood bricks of different sizes, paper cut outs or Lego bricks to weigh these arguments in an open discussion in the classroom and try to evaluate the role of tourism on South Africa's culture. As scales students can simply use a long ruler balanced on a rubber. Alternatively, the teacher may provide a poster divided into pro and con areas. Students then use adhesive dots to express their opinions.

The **exam** at the end of the unit completes the act of getting acquainted with South Africa by focusing on HIV (human immunodeficiency virus). It consists of a written and an oral part, which can also be used separately. Students read a text and sum up the development of the AIDS crisis in South Africa. They also analyse a cartoon that supports the facts given in the text. In a next step, students listen to the song *What's going on* and focus on the message conveyed by several famous artists. In the oral part of the exam, they discuss whether a song like that can make a difference.

Topic 1: Where, what, and who is South Africa?

M1 Worksheet – Memory cards

Each of you will receive a memory card showing a picture and giving you information about South Africa.

Reading comprehension



1. Read the text and note the most important information. If you are not familiar with some of the vocabulary, look it up in a dictionary.



2. Listen to the signal given by your teacher. Walk around in class and talk to your classmates about what they have found out about South Africa. Find students who read the same text as you and form pairs or small groups.



3. Write a summary of your text together with your group members and appoint someone to read it to your class.

Working with the texts

4. While you are listening to your classmates, write down keywords (e.g. famous people) to use in a mind map. Then add up all the topics of the memory cards to a big mind map.

Creative task



5. Form groups and use the mind map to design a flyer that informs about South Africa.



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