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FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Who is Nelson Mandela?**

See his [biography](#) page

2. **Can you supply a brief history of Mr Nelson Mandela's life?**

See our [Chronology](#) page

3. **How can I contact Nelson Mandela?**

Nelson Mandela retired from public life in 2004. You can, however, send him a message through the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory on nmf@nelsonmandela.org

4. **When is Nelson Mandela's birthday?**

18 July

5. **How old is Nelson Mandela?**

Mr Mandela turned 95 on 18 July 2013

6. **What were the names of Nelson Mandela's parents?**

His father was Nkosi (Chief) Mphakanyiswa Mandela and his mother was Nosekeni Mandela

7. **When did Nelson Mandela's parents die?**

His father died in 1930 when Mr Mandela was 12 and his mother died in 1968 when he was in prison

8. **What does the name 'Madiba' mean?**

Madiba is the name of the Thembu clan to which Mr Mandela belongs. It gets its name from a 19th century chief. All the members of this clan can be called Madiba. Mr Mandela is called Madiba as a sign of both respect and affection

9. **How many brothers and sisters does Nelson Mandela have?**

Mr Mandela's father had four wives and a total of 13 children. With Mr Mandela's mother he had four children, Mr Mandela and three

daughters. Mr Mandela had three full sisters, three half brothers and six half-sisters.

10. How tall is Nelson Mandela?

1.84m

11. Who are Nelson Mandela's biological family?

Mr Mandela has a big family. He has two daughters and two sons with his first wife, Evelyn Mase, and two daughters with his second wife, Nomzamo Winnie Madikizela. Only three of his children are still alive, his daughters Makaziwe, Zenani and Zindzi. He also has 17 grandchildren and 12 surviving great-grandchildren. He has four step-children from his marriage to Graca Machel

12. How many marriages has Nelson Mandela had and to whom?

Mr Mandela has been married three times. He was first married to Evelyn Ntoko Mase in 1944. They separated in 1955 and divorced in 1958. She died in 2004. They had two daughters and two sons. Their baby daughter Makaziwe, died at the age of nine months. Their eldest son, Madiba Thembekile (Thembi), was killed at the age of 24, in a car accident in 1969 while Mr Mandela was in prison. He was not allowed to attend the funeral. Their second son, Makgatho Lewanika, died of an AIDS-related illness in 2005. In March 1958 Mr Mandela and his wife divorced. In June 1958 Mr Mandela married Nomzamo Winifred Zanyiwe Madikizela. They had two daughters, Zenani and Zindziswa. They divorced in 1996. On his 80th birthday in 1998 Mr Mandela married Graca Machel who brought two children and two step-children into the marriage.

13. What was apartheid?

Apartheid was the official policy of the National Party which became the governing party of South Africa in 1948. Apartheid which means 'separateness' was the practice of official racial segregation in every aspect of life. Under apartheid, everyone in South Africa had to be classified according to a particular racial group. This classification determined where someone could be born, where they could live, where they could go to school, where they could work, where they could be treated if they were sick and where they could be buried if they died. Only white people could vote and they had the best opportunities and the most money was spent on their facilities. Apartheid made others live in poverty. Black South Africans lives were strictly controlled. Many thousands of people died in the struggle to end apartheid.

14. What was Nelson Mandela's vision during the apartheid era?

Mr Mandela vision during the apartheid era was for the eradication of racism and for the establishment of a constitutional democracy. He envisioned a South Africa in which all its citizens had equal rights and where every adult would have the right to vote for the government of his or her choice

15. What beliefs and actions influenced Nelson Mandela as a leader?

Mr Mandela was driven by an unshakeable belief in the equality of all people and his determination to overthrow the system of apartheid in South Africa. He helped to organize and to lead many peaceful campaigns, but after violent disruptions by the state and its outlawing of the opposition organisations, it became clear to him and his comrades that peaceful protest was impossible. In 1961 they decided to turn to an armed struggle and established Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), also known as MK – as an army for freedom fighters.

16. Which organisations did Nelson Mandela establish?

Mr Mandela helped to found the African National Congress Youth League in 1944. He also helped in 1961 to establish Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the African National Congress and was its first Commander-in-Chief. When he was President of South Africa he started the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund and donated one-third of his salary every month to the organisation. In 1999 after he stepped down as President he stated the Nelson Mandela Foundation as a post-presidential office and charity to assist in various causes. In 2003 he founded the Mandela Rhodes Foundation to assist post-graduates students from throughout Africa to further their studies. He also established the Mandela Institute for Education and Rural Development

17. What were the details of Nelson Mandela's prison time?

Mr Mandela was arrested on several occasions and stood trial four times. On 30 July 1952, he and 19 of his comrades were arrested for their role in the Defiance Campaign. They stood trial and were found guilty on 2 December 1952 of 'statutory Communism', which the apartheid regime used against people who opposed its laws. You did not have to be a Communist to be convicted of 'statutory communism'. They were sentenced to nine months in prison with hard labour, suspended for five years.

On 5 December 1956 Mr Mandela and scores of others were arrested on charges of High Treason. They were released on bail about two weeks later. At the end of the four-and-a-half year trial, the last 28 remaining accused were acquitted.

During the Treason Trial the African National Congress was outlawed and at the end of the trial Mr Mandela began operating secretly. Later that year, Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the ANC was formed with Mr Mandela as its commander-in-chief. He left the country secretly at the beginning of 1962 for military training and to gather support for the armed struggle. He was arrested in South Africa on 5 August 1962 about two weeks after he returned to the country. He was charged for leaving the country without a passport and inciting workers to strike. He was convicted and sentenced on 7 November 1962 to five years in prison. He started serving his sentence in Pretoria Local Prison but was sent to Robben Island on 27 May 1963. He was transferred back to Pretoria about two weeks later. On 9 October 1963 he was brought to stand trial for sabotage in what became known as the Rivonia Trial. Most of the accused in that trial had been arrested at Liliesleaf farm in Johannesburg on 11 July 1963. On 11 June 1964 eight of the nine remaining accused were convicted of sabotage and the next day they were sentenced to life imprisonment.

18. On what day was Nelson Mandela sentenced to life imprisonment?

12 June 1964

19. **On what day was Nelson Mandela released from prison?**

11 February 1990

20. **Where can I find quotes by Nelson Mandela?**

Contact the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory at nmf@nelsonmandela.org for authenticated quotations. You will also find his speeches in the database section of our website. They are searchable by word

21. **Is the quote about 'your deepest fear' something Nelson Mandela said?**

No. This is a quote by the American author Marianne Williamson and it has been **incorrectly attributed to Mr Mandela**.

22. **How do you pronounce Graca Machel?**

Gra-ss-ah Ma-shell

23. **Who is the head of the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory?**

The Chief Executive of the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory is Mr Sello Hatang

24. **How many people did Nelson Mandela free?**

The liberation movements freed all the people of South Africa

25. **How many awards has Nelson Mandela received?**

Mr Mandela has received more than 1 000 awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize and the US Congressional Medal. He also has scores of honorary degrees, honorary citizenships and honorary memberships of organisations. Many streets and buildings have been named after him.

26. **How many streets, boulevards, avenues, bridges and highways have been named after Nelson Mandela?**

More than 125

27. **How many stadiums, squares, plazas, parks, gardens, trails and areas have been named after Nelson Mandela?**

More than 83

28. **How many halls, buildings, housing developments and structures have been named after Nelson Mandela?**

More than 41

29. **How many schools, universities and other educational institutions have been named after Nelson Mandela?**

More than 43

30. **How many bursaries, scholarships and foundations have been named after Nelson Mandela?**

More than 15

31. **How many awards and events have been named after Nelson Mandela?**

More than 38

32. **How many sports-related honours and awards have been given to Nelson Mandela?**

More than 43

33. **How many student union honours and awards have been given to Nelson Mandela?**

More than 8

34. **How many honorary degrees have been conferred on Nelson Mandela?**

More than 138

35. **How many civic honours, freedoms of cities/towns, and honorary citizenships have been given to Nelson Mandela?**

More than 170

36. **How many musical and theatre tributes have been conferred on Nelson Mandela or have been dedicated to him?**

More than 33

37. **How many statues, sculptures, art works and monuments have been given to, or dedicated to Nelson Mandela?**

More than 101

38. **How many patronages are held by Nelson Mandela?**

More than 91

39. **In total, how many tributes and awards has Nelson Mandela received?**

More than 1 340

40. **What books about Nelson Mandela are suitable for children?**

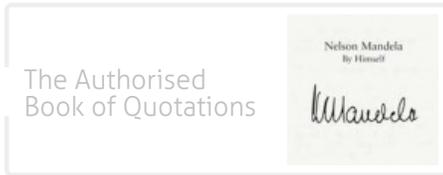
The Illustrated Long Walk to Freedom

Long Walk to Freedom (Children’s Version) abridged by Chris Van Wyk

Nelson Mandela: The Authorised Comic Book available in English, American English, French and Dutch

41. **How many books has Nelson Mandela authored?**

Three. His autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom* published in 1994; *Conversations with Myself* published in 2010 and *Nelson Mandela By Himself: The Authorised Book of Quotations* published in 2011



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