

# Uncovering Apartheid:

## *a history lab*

### **Overview:**

This lesson developed from an exploration of the trove of primary sources at the South African Government's site for Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. Student groups use news reports on cases that came before the TRC to investigate the violence that was inherent in Apartheid. Students produce short writings that function of assessments of their historical thinking.

### **Hook:**

Some possibilities, depending on when and how the unit is used: an Apartheid era segregation sign; anti-Apartheid posters; image of anti-apartheid protest; anti-apartheid song; beginning [to credit sequence](#) in *Cry Freedom* list, listing deaths in detention under Apartheid and with "Nkosi Sikelel'i Afrika" in soundtrack

### **Question:**

How was violence an aspect of South African Apartheid?

### **Context:**

Students need familiarity with meanings of Apartheid and Truth Reconciliation Commission; [This presentation](#) is a text- and image-heavy overview to Apartheid, its consequences, and its fall. The context could easily be "flipped" outside of class using this presentation, with or without the addition of teacher voice over.

### **Investigation:**

- Students actively read in groups of four, each group needs
  - 6-7 [short news articles](#) from the South African Press Association reporting on cases that came before the TRC in 1996.
  - Group or individual copies of South African Apartheid vocabulary list
- Students read and marked up one article at a time and put it back in the middle of group.
  - Students read multiple articles
  - Differentiates work by reading speed
- Students generate conclusions about Apartheid
  - record claims that can be supported by multiple pieces of evidence
  - groups share out with class, allowing for teacher formative assessment
  - discuss strengths and weaknesses of using SAPA articles as a news source
  - record sourcing analysis

### **Formative assessment:**

Teachers can use observation of small-group and whole-class discussions; or teacher can collect

students' preliminary claims, evidence, and sourcing analysis to gauge progress before students move on to creating projects.

### ***Basic Product:***

Individual student paragraphs on the violent nature of Apartheid. Students make a claim supported by a critical use of at least two pieces of evidence. Rubric assessment for evidence, sourcing, and corroboration. Teachers could also require students a certain number of Apartheid specific terms.

### ***Possible Extensions:***

- More sources: Add one of the shorter amnesty application transcripts, such as Adriaan Smuts's. Mr. Smuts admits to a revenge attack on random black bus passengers in response to reports of Pan-African Congress attack on white people at a beach.
- Deeper discussions: this activity can lead into a deeper discussion of the Truth and Reconciliation process, perhaps with comparison to Gacaca in Rwanda
- More sophisticated presentation: stories or quotations from the articles could be part of museum exhibit or documentary on South African Apartheid

Specific links to SAPA articles suitable for the activity:

1. [Motherwell Bomber](#)
2. [Murder Charge](#)
3. [Police Officer Released](#)
4. [Police Violated Rights](#)
5. [Leader Nearly Set on Fire](#)
6. [Former MK Commander](#)
7. [Toasters Gang](#)
8. [Police Beating of MK Leader](#)

## South African vocabulary used in the articles

[African National Congress](#) (ANC)-Political party and activist organization that worked against imperialism and Apartheid in South Africa since 1912; included an armed wing, the "Spear of the Nation"; party of Nelson Mandela, which still exists and is the largest party in South Africa

Amnesty-removing punishment for a crime; Truth and Reconciliation Commissions could grant amnesty for crimes committed against or defense of Apartheid; according to the South African Press Association in 1996: "[amnesty can only be granted if there is full disclosure of the crimes committed and if a genuine political motive can be shown](#)"

[Homeland](#)-area reserved for people classified as Black African under Apartheid; economic development was very limited in these areas and most residents were unemployed, migrated to other areas to work for white businesses, or worked for the Homeland government (i.e. Black Africans who cooperated with Apartheid in order to earn a living and/or possess limited political power, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi of the IFP was most prominent such person)

[Inkatha Freedom Party](#)- founded by Zulu Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi this political party organized Black South Africans who worked within the Apartheid system; Buthelezi was a political leader of Homeland; IFP was and still is a major rival of the ANC

Pretoria-capital of South Africa; refers to the national government

Rand-South African money, abbreviated "R" (ex. R10=ten Rand); in July 2014 one Rand was worth approximately ten cents

Township-areas usually on the edges of major cities reserved for people not classified as White under Apartheid; often crowded, poor, lacking sanitation and other public services, and violent

Umkhonto we Sizwe (abbreviated MK)-- "Spear of the Nation" in Zulu; armed group of the African National Congress; fought against South African police and military; occasionally bombed government targets; bases outside of South Africa in neighboring countries

Vlakpaas--farm near Pretoria in South Africa; headquarters of the branch of the national police that attacked anti-apartheid activists and revolutionaries during white rule in South Africa; South Africans use the name of the place to represent the people and activities of this branch of the police; After Apartheid the Republic of South Africa closed the police station at Vlakpaas