

GlobalTribe Educational Curriculum

South Africa Lessons

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www.pbs.org/globaltribe

GlobalTribe is a PBS series that combines the spirit of travel with a meaningful exploration of the global issues that affect us all. On our journeys to remote corners of the world, we seek to understand in human terms the universal struggles of our planet: from healing racial wounds to saving the environment to improving the lives of the poorest among us. Our quest is also to find solutions and to meet the unsung heroes in every country who offer us hope and a path to a better tomorrow.

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Introduction / Pre-viewing

1. Before viewing GlobalTribe:
 - Ask students to describe apartheid. What was it? When and where did it occur?
 - Who is Nelson Mandela? Why is he important?
 - Other than apartheid and Nelson Mandela, what other associations do students have with South Africa?

Robben Island: Prisoner Nelson Mandela

Objective: Students will familiarize themselves with part of Nelson Mandela’s biography pertaining to his experience on Robben Island. They will better understand some of the emotional aspects of Mandela and others who are imprisoned for political reasons by devising human statues of some aspect of their reading.

Time: 2 to 4 hours of in-class time.

Grade Level: 9-12

1. Tape off an 8-by-8-foot space in the classroom, the size of a cell in the Robben Island prison.

Over the next 10-15 minutes, ask students to write in their journals about what they think it might be like to live in this space every day for 26 years. Encourage students to sit in the space for part of the time. Afterward, ask for volunteers to share what they wrote.

2. Divide students into four or five small groups and assign each group to read one of the excerpts about Robben Island from Nelson Mandela’s autobiography that can be found at this site: <http://archives.obs-us.com/obs/english/books/Mandela/Mandela.html>

This may be assigned the day before.

3. After students have read their excerpts, have them meet with their group members to discuss the passage. Provide them with the following questions to focus their discussions:
 - What is happening in this excerpt? Most of the excerpts have one or two main vignettes; summarize the ones that appear in your reading.
 - What emotions does Mandela convey in this excerpt? List the various emotional reactions he has to his imprisonment.
 - What greater truth about being a political prisoner does the passage illustrate? Although Mandela’s experience is specific to late 20th century South Africa, much of what he describes, such as missing one’s family, must be true for most political prisoners, despite geography or historical time.
4. Ask each group to form a “statue” based on their excerpt. This is a silent activity in which group members form a motionless statue that encapsulates an emotion or experience, such as “shame.” Groups work together to consider various poses that best sum up their message (talking is necessary at this time), and then perform them for others. The pose should be something that not only illustrates an important part of Mandela’s experience on Robben Island, but also the deeper

experience of political prisoners everywhere. You may want to take pictures of each statue to post in the classroom.

Assessment

As each group performs its statue, the rest of the class should attempt to interpret its meaning. Then the performing group should reveal what they were attempting to communicate and why they formed the statue the way they did. Ask them to cite passages from Nelson Mandela’s autobiography that influenced their statue. Afterward, have students reflect on the cumulative message of the statues.

Extending

1. Re-enact scenes from Mandela’s biography.
2. Read and discuss Mandela’s Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech:
http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/Articles_Gen/Nobel_Award_15212.html
3. Have students write an essay based on Ahmed Kathrada’s comment to Amy Eldon: “A prisoner never gives up hope.”

Resources

Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela, by Nelson Mandela
Letters from Robben Island: A Selection of Ahmed Kathrada's Prison Correspondence, 1964-1989, by Ahmed Kathrada

Robben Island Museum
<http://www.robben-island.org.za/>

The Long Walk of Nelson Mandela
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/mandela/>

Standards

Understands the historical perspective
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=3&StandardID=2>)

Uses acting skills
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=12&StandardID=2>)

Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=7&StandardID=6>)

Works well with diverse individuals and in diverse situations
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=22&StandardID=3>)

Applies decision-making techniques
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=21&StandardID=6>)

Robben Island: Political Prisoners Across Borders and Time

Objective: Students will become familiar with political prisoners from different geographic and chronologic periods, finding similarities in their experiences and characters.

Time: Lesson can be adapted to 3-8 in-class hours.

Grade: 9-12

1. Provide students with a list of political prisoners from various points in history and parts of the world. Consider the following as a starting list, but invite students to add others: Galileo Galilei, Martin Luther King, Jr., Kim Dae-jun, Bobby Sands, Emma Goldman, Socrates, Mahatma Gandhi, Aung San Suu Kyi, Aleksander Solzhenitsyn
2. Working individually or in small groups, students should locate information about the listed political prisoners. For each person they should find the following:
 - Dates of birth and death
 - Country where imprisoned (note if different than country of origin)
 - Reason imprisoned
 - Activities while in prison
 - Achievements before and after imprisonment
 - Photo (from the web if possible)
3. Create a single class chart of bulletin board-size on which students can compile their findings.
4. Next, tell students that there are many political prisoners in the world today. Ask each student to find a prisoner whose story they would like to share with the class. Amnesty International, which features three victims of human rights violations every month as well as others through their ongoing campaigns, is an excellent starting point. Students might also find ideas through local churches which are often connected with various human rights campaigns.
5. Have students create a dossier about the person they have chosen. It should include:
 - Biographical information
 - A synopsis of the present political situation in the person's home country
 - Newspaper articles about the country, especially the political situation

Assessment

Have students write a reflection about what they've learned about political prisoners. Their writing should include connections between past and present prisoners and basic human rights issues which most of them face.

Extending

1. Ask students to write a short compare-contrast essay (three pages maximum) identifying similar characteristics in the people on the chart, the political prisoners of Robben Island, and the contemporary prisoners. What goals do they share in common? How do they behave both in and outside of prison? What characteristics do these people share that makes many view them as heroes?
2. Encourage students to write a letter to their prisoner and to start a campaign in his or her behalf, raising consciousness about this person's situation and the political issue(s) for which he or she stands.

Resources

Amnesty International
<http://www.amnesty.org/>

Amnesty International's Worldwide Appeals
<http://web.amnesty.org/web/wwa.nsf>

Amnesty International's Human Right's Links
<http://web.amnesty.org/web/links.nsf>

Standards

Understands and knows how to analyze chronological relationships and patterns
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=3&StandardID=1>)

Understands the historical perspective
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=3&StandardID=2>)

Understands long-term changes and recurring patterns in world history
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=6&StandardID=46>)

Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=7&StandardID=7>)

Truth and Reconciliation

Objective: Students will better understand the purpose of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission by debating whether a similar proceeding would be useful in the United States for resolving issues evolving from slavery.

Time: Lesson can be adapted to between 3 and 7 in-class hours.

Grade level: 9-12

1. Copy the main body of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act for the students (the chapters are not necessary) (<http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/legal/act9534.htm>). This is the legal document that outlines the goals of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Based on this document and what they saw in GlobalTribe, ask the students to explain the purpose of the commission? What were the benefits and drawbacks of the procedure it went through?
2. Ask the students if they know of any similar tribunals to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Use some of the links in the resource center to inform them of the Nuremberg Trials, the legal proceedings against German Nazis at the end of World War II which created a model for future generations. More recently, the UN-created International Court of Justice has undertaken war crime tribunals relating to events in Yugoslavia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda. You might ask the students to research some of the issues at stake in these cases.
3. These were all wars, however, whereas what happened in South Africa was ongoing abuse by the people in power against others, based mainly on race and ethnicity. Tell the students that it's been suggested by some African American leaders that similar hearings should occur in our country in order to openly discuss the roots of American racism.

Working in two groups, have students formulate a case for and against having such a proceeding in the US regarding slavery. Encourage them to refer again to South Africa's Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act and to consider the benefits and drawbacks of such a proceeding. They might consider similarities and differences between the situation in the US and South Africa. After providing students with a class period or more to prepare, hold a debate between the two groups.

Assessment

After the debate, the students should reflect in writing about what they learned via the debate. Perhaps they were assigned to a side of the debate that didn't reflect their true views; did they come to have empathy for both sides of the argument? Their responses should reflect a deeper understanding of the complexities that face a nation after a period of violence and great injustice.

Extending

1. If possible, find a member of your community who has lived in South Africa, Rwanda, Yugoslavia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, or Nazi Germany. Ask them to talk with your class about their experiences.
2. Have students read specific cases from the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission's proceedings and write plays based on their stories. These cases can be very violent and all are emotionally distressing so you may want to choose the cases yourself and also discuss some of the emotional ramifications of reading them; but also talk about the need to understand history, even when it is difficult.

Resources

Truth and Reconciliation Commission home page
<http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/>

Facing the Truth with Bill Moyers
<http://www.pbs.org/pov/tvraceinitiative/facingthetruth/>

Global Policy Forum's International Justice page
<http://www.globalpolicy.org/wldcourt/>

International Court of Justice
<http://www.icj-cij.org/>

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's War Crimes page
<http://www.ushmm.org/topics/article.php?ModuleId=10005140>

The Nuremberg Legacy: Pinochet and Beyond: A Talk at The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
<http://www.ushmm.org/conscience/index.utp?content=events/pinochet/pinochet.php>

Standards

Understands the historical perspective
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=3&StandardID=2>)

Understands the causes of the Civil War
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=5&StandardID=13>)

Understands long-term changes and recurring patterns in world history
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=6&StandardID=46>)

Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes
(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=7&StandardID=8>)

