

Quickly look over the pictures, their captions, and the quotations. What do you predict this section will be about?



**O**N THE DAY OF THE INAUGURATION, I was overwhelmed with a sense of history. In the first decade of the twentieth century, a few years after the bitter Anglo-Boer War and before my own birth, the white-skinned peoples of South Africa **patched up their differences** and erected a system of racial domination against the dark-skinned peoples of their own land. The structure they created formed the basis of one of the harshest, most inhumane societies the world has ever known. Now, in the last decade of the twentieth century, and my own eighth decade as a man, that system had been overturned forever and replaced by one that recognized the rights and freedoms of all peoples regardless of the color of their skin. **4**

That day had come about through the unimaginable sacrifices of thousands of my people, people whose suffering and courage can never be counted or repaid. I felt that day, as I have on so many other days, that I was simply the sum of all those African patriots who had gone before me.

That long and noble line ended and now began again with me. I was pained that I was not able to thank them and that they were not able to see what their sacrifices **had wrought**.

The policy of apartheid created a deep and lasting wound in my country and my people. All of us will spend many years, if not generations, recovering from that profound hurt. But the decades of oppression and brutality had another, unintended effect, and that was that

I was simply the sum  
of all those African  
patriots who had  
gone before me.



**4 Word Choice**

Think about the purpose for using words like *bitter* and *inhumane*. How are these words meant to make you feel about South Africa's old government?

**In Other Words**

**patched up their differences** ended their argument  
**had wrought** had created

**Historical Background**

The **Anglo-Boer War** of 1899–1902 was fought between British colonists and the Boers (South Africans whose ancestors were Dutch colonists). Each side wanted total control of South Africa. Great Britain won the war and made a peace treaty with the Boers.



“From these comrades . . .

I learned the meaning of courage.”



**Oliver Tambo**

Cofounded the Youth League of the African National Congress with Nelson Mandela



**Chief Albert John Luthuli**

First African awarded a Nobel Prize for peace (1960)



**Yusuf Dadoo**

Revolutionary leader of the South African Indian Congress



**Walter Sisulu**

Political mentor of Nelson Mandela



**Bram Fischer**

Defended members of the African National Congress



**Robert Sobukwe**

Founder of the Pan Africanist Congress



it produced the Oliver Tambos, the Walter Sisulus, the Chief Luthulis, the Yusuf Dadoos, the Bram Fischers, the Robert Sobukwes of our time—men of such extraordinary courage, wisdom, and generosity that their like may never be known again. Perhaps it requires such depth of oppression to create such heights of character. My country is rich in the minerals and gems that lie beneath its soil, but I have always known that its greatest wealth is its people, finer and truer than the purest diamonds. **5**

It is from these **comrades** in the struggle that I learned the meaning of courage. Time and again, I have seen men and women risk and give their lives for an idea. I have seen men stand up to attacks and torture without breaking, showing a strength and **resiliency** that defies the imagination. I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. I felt fear myself

#### **5 Analogy**

To what does Mandela compare his people? What effect does his analogy have on your feelings about the people?

#### **In Other Words**

**comrades** friends  
**resiliency** toughness

#### **Historical Background**

**Apartheid**, which means “apartness” in the Afrikaans language, was a system of laws enacted by the white South African government to segregate South Africans by race and ethnicity. It was officially in effect from 1948 to 1994.



more times than I can remember, but I hid it behind a mask of boldness. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear. **6**

I never lost hope that this great transformation would occur. Not only because of the great heroes I have already cited, but because of the courage of the ordinary men and women of my country. I always knew that deep down in every human heart, there is mercy and generosity. No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite. Even in the grimmest times in prison, when my comrades and I were pushed to our limits, I would see a glimmer of humanity in one of the guards, perhaps just for a second, but it was enough to reassure me and keep me going. Man's goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished. **7**

We took up the struggle **with our eyes wide open**, under no illusion that the path would be an easy one. As a young man, when I joined the African National Congress, I saw the price my comrades paid for their beliefs, and it was high. For myself, I have never regretted my commitment to the struggle, and I was always prepared to face the hardships that affected me personally. But my family paid a terrible price, perhaps too dear a price for my commitment.

In life, every man has twin obligations—obligations to his family, to his parents, to his wife and children; and he has an obligation to his people, his community, his country. In a civil and humane society, each man is able to

I never lost hope  
that this great  
transformation  
would occur.



**6 Word Choice**

In this paragraph, what word choices does Mandela use to inspire his audience?

**7 Form Generalizations**

The viewpoint expressed in this sentence ties together many ideas Mandela just expressed. What are those ideas?

**In Other Words**

**with our eyes wide open** fully aware  
of all the danger involved



fulfill those obligations according to his own **inclinations** and abilities. But in a country like South Africa, it was almost impossible for a man of my birth and color to fulfill both of those obligations. In South Africa, a man of color who attempted to live as a human being was punished and isolated. In South Africa, a man who tried to fulfill his duty to his people was inevitably ripped from his family and his home and was forced to live a life apart, a **twilight existence** of secrecy and rebellion. **8**

I did not in the beginning choose to place my people above my family, but in attempting to serve my people, I found that I was prevented from fulfilling my obligations as a son, a brother, a father, and a husband.

In that way, my commitment to my people, to the millions of South Africans I would never know or meet, was at the expense of the people I knew best and loved most. It was as simple and yet as incomprehensible as the moment a small child asks her father, “Why can you not be with us?” And the father must utter the terrible words: “There are other children like you, a great many of them . . .” and then one’s voice trails off.

**8 Word Choice**  
What is the persuasive effect of the repetition of the phrase “in South Africa” in this paragraph?



Before 1994, the country’s beaches were segregated. Many of the better beaches were off limits to black South Africans.

#### Key Vocabulary

**inclination** *n.*, liking, preference

#### In Other Words

**twilight existence** hidden life



#### Monitor Comprehension

##### Confirm Prediction

How accurately did you predict what the section would be about? Explain.