We’re giving this lesson away for FREE to honor the extraordinary life of Nelson Mandela.

Share this lesson with your class and with the world!

NELSON MANDELA

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LESSON PREVIEW – In this lesson, you will read a short biography of Nelson Mandela. You will practice new vocabulary and talk about Mandela’s sense of optimism. We hope you’ll join our *Anything Is Possible* challenge!

B. WARM-UP QUESTIONS ★

1. What is Nelson Mandela famous for?
2. Do you know the meaning of “apartheid”?
3. Do you know why Nelson Mandela went to prison? Take a guess how long he spent in jail.
4. Why do you think Nelson Mandela won the Nobel Peace Prize?
5. What will Nelson Mandela be remembered for?

PRE-READING

A. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

Match the words on the left with the correct meanings on the right.

____ 1. vote  
   a. a government chosen freely by the people

____ 2. famous  
   b. a very small town

____ 3. protest  
   c. to express your choice in an election

____ 4. suffer  
   d. to stop working at a job, usually because of age

____ 5. allow  
   e. very well known

____ 6. democracy  
   f. to have pain or great difficulty

____ 7. retire  
   g. to permit, to let

____ 8. village  
   h. to show you do not support something

____ 9. economy  
   i. to cause someone to do or make something

____ 10. inspire  
   j. the money and resources of a nation or area

QUICK FACTS

Name: __________________
Nationality: ______________
First ____________________
Best known for: 
_________________________
Quote: "It always seems impossible until it’s done.”
- Nelson Mandela
Nelson Mandela

1. Nelson Mandela was born in South Africa in 1918. Until about 1992, South Africa had a political system called apartheid. This meant that black people had to live apart from white people. For example, they could not go to the same schools as white people or eat in the same restaurants. Most blacks had no jobs, were very poor, and could not vote in elections.

2. Mandela grew up in a village. When he was a young man, he left his village to study law. He wanted to help free black people from apartheid. He became a lawyer in 1952 and worked in Johannesburg, a large city in South Africa.

3. Mandela joined the African National Congress (ANC) in 1944. The ANC led many protests against the government’s apartheid policy. From 1952 to 1960, Mandela was arrested and jailed twice for being a leader of the ANC. In 1960, the government killed many black people for protesting against apartheid. Mandela was a peaceful man, but after these killings, his protests became more violent.

4. In 1963, the government sent Mandela to prison for life because of his work against apartheid. But, even though he was in prison, he became a famous example of how black people suffered under apartheid. People from all over the world asked the South African government to release him from jail.

5. Mandela was released in 1990. He had spent 27 years in jail. In 1991, he became president of the ANC. He and the South African president then agreed that South Africa would end apartheid and become a democracy. They won the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize for this.

6. In 1994, an election was held. Black people were allowed to vote, and Mandela became the first black president of South Africa. When he was president, he worked to improve the economy, especially for black people. He also worked to bring peace to his country after many years of violence between blacks and whites.

7. In 1999, Mandela retired as president, and began helping other countries solve their problems. In 2004 he retired from public life. He continued to inspire many people to fight for peace and equality. Nelson Mandela died on December 5th, 2013. He was 95 years old.

COMPREHENSION 📖

A. TRUE OR FALSE
Read the statements below. If the statement is true, write T beside the sentence. If it is false, write F. If it is false, correct the information.

1. Nelson Mandela was born in South America.

2. Mandela grew up in Johannesburg.

3. When Mandela was a child, black and white children could not go to the same schools.


5. Mandela became the first president of South Africa.

6. When Mandela retired, he stopped helping people.
COMPREHENSION Continued

B. Practice asking and answering the following questions with your partner. Then write the answers in complete sentences.

1. When and where was Nelson Mandela born?
2. What kind of political system did his country have until 1992?
3. Explain apartheid.
4. Why did Mandela decide to study law?
5. What group did Mandela join? What did this group do?
6. What happened in 1960?
7. Why did the government send Mandela to prison?
8. What did Mandela try to do for his country when he became president?

VOCABULARY REVIEW

A. What are the meanings of the underlined words? Circle the correct answer.

1. In the apartheid system, black people and white people had to live apart.
   a. together         b. separately  c. in a village
2. The ANC lead many protests against the government apartheid policy.
   a. rule or principle b. police       c. prison
3. Mandela was arrested for being leader of the ANC.
   a. election         b. stopped       c. taken to jail
4. Mandela spent 27 years in prison.
   a. jail             b. government    c. village
5. He was released in 1990.
   a. suffered         b. elected       c. set free
6. Mandela worked to improve his country.
   a. lead             b. make better   c. protest

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What kind of political system do you have in your country? Who can vote? How old do you have to be to vote?
2. Who are the most famous political heroes in your country? Why are they famous?
3. Do you think it is possible to make big changes in a political system peacefully?
4. Can you name any other famous people who protested peacefully and made big changes in their countries?
5. What characteristics do heroes share? Identify and describe your own personal hero.
ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE Classroom Challenge

Nelson Mandela will always be remembered for these famous words:

"It always seems impossible until it's done."

A. It Used to Be Impossible...

Look at the “It Used to Be Impossible” poster (page 6 and 7), and talk about it with a partner or in small groups. When and how did these things become possible? What other discoveries or inventions would you add to this poster? Can you think of 10 more?

B. One Day It Will Be Possible...

1. Work together as a class to come up with a list of at least 10 things that seem impossible now, but that could one day be possible. Brainstorm a big list of ideas on the board.

2. Choose 10 ideas from your class list of things that seem impossible now and share them with ESL-Library. You can share your list on our blog, on our Facebook page, or by email. We need your inspiration for an Anything Is Possible poster in honor of Nelson Mandela.

One day it will be possible...

to prevent all kinds of cancer
ANSWER KEY

**Lesson Description:** Students read a brief bio about Nelson Mandela. In addition to comprehension questions, a vocabulary review, and discussion questions, they can join ESL-Library’s *Anything is Possible* challenge.

Tags: apartheid, racism, protest, Nelson Mandela, Famous People, African American

**VOCABULARY PREVIEW**
1. c 2. e 3. h 4. f 5. g
6. a 7. d 8. b 9. j 10. i

**WARM-UP QUESTIONS**
Discuss as a class, in pairs, or in small groups.

**COMPREHENSION**

**A. True or False**

**B. Written Answers**
1. He was born in South Africa in 1918.
2. Up until 1992, South Africa had a system of apartheid.
3. Apartheid meant that black people had to live apart from white people; black people could not go to the same schools as whites, they could not eat in the same restaurants, and they could not vote.
4. Mandela decided to study law because he wanted to help free black people from apartheid.
5. Mandela joined the African National Congress, which led many protests against the government’s apartheid policy.
6. In 1960, the South African government killed many black people who were protesting against apartheid.
7. The government sent Mandela to prison because of his work against apartheid.
8. When Mandela became president, he tried to improve the economy and he tried to bring peace to his country.

**Spelling Note:** This lesson shows the American spelling of the words *License*, *Reentry*, *Honor*, and *Coworker*. Most other English-speaking countries spell these words this way: *Licence*, *Re-entry*, *Honour*, and *Co-worker*. Make it a challenge for your students to find these words in the text and see if they know the alternate spellings.

**QUICK FACTS**

Name: Nelson Mandela
Nationality: South African
First black president of South Africa
Best known for: Helping bring an end to apartheid.

**VOCABULARY REVIEW**
1. b 2. a 3. c 4. a 5. c 6. b

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**
Have a class discussion using these questions. You could also use one of these questions as a writing prompt.

**ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE CHALLENGE**

Look at the poster of possibilities and discuss the accomplishments that humans have had in recent history.

Work together to create a list of things that seem impossible now, but that could happen in the future.

Share your “Anything is Possible” list with ESL-Library. Leave a comment on our blog or Facebook page, or send us an email. We will create a new poster based on the ideas we receive from students around the world.

ESL-Library.com/Mandela
Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela was born in South Africa in 1918. Until about 1992, South Africa had a political system called apartheid. This meant that black people had to live apart from white people. For example, they could not go to the same schools as white people or eat in the same restaurants. Most blacks had no jobs, were very poor, and could not vote in elections.

Mandela grew up in a village. When he was a young man, he left his village to study law. He wanted to help free black people from apartheid. He became a lawyer in 1952 and worked in Johannesburg, a large city in South Africa.

Mandela joined the African National Congress (ANC) in 1944. The ANC led many protests against the government’s apartheid policy. From 1952 to 1960, Mandela was arrested and jailed twice for being a leader of the ANC. In 1960, the government killed many black people for protesting against apartheid. Mandela was a peaceful man, but after these killings, his protests became more violent.

In 1963, the government sent Mandela to prison for life because of his work against apartheid. But, even though he was in prison, he became a famous example of how black people suffered under apartheid. People from all over the world asked the South African government to release him from jail.

Mandela was released in 1990. He had spent 27 years in jail. In 1991, he became president of the ANC. He and the South African president then agreed that South Africa would end apartheid and become a democracy. They won the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize for this.

In 1994, an election was held. Black people were allowed to vote, and Mandela became the first black president of South Africa. When he was president, he worked to improve the economy, especially for black people. He also worked to bring peace to his country, after so many years of violence between blacks and whites.

In 1999, Mandela retired as president, and began helping other countries solve their problems. In 2004 he retired from public life. He continued to inspire many people to fight for peace and equality. Nelson Mandela died on December 5th, 2013. He was 95 years old.
IT USED TO BE IMPOSSIBLE...

TO CHAT WITH FRIENDS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD
TO KNOW THE EXACT TEMPERATURE OUTSIDE
TO SEE YOUR BONES AND TISSUES ON A SCREEN
TO TRAVEL UNDERNEATH THE SEA
TO CHANGE YOUR HAIR COLOUR
TO HAVE A BABY IF YOUR SPOUSE WAS INFERTILE
TO GET AN ARTIFICIAL LEG
TO READ AFTER THE SUN WENT DOWN
TO TELL THE REST OF THE WORLD ABOUT AN INJUSTICE
TO MAKE SICK PEOPLE FEEL COMFORTABLE
TO WATCH TV WHILE YOUR OVEN CLEANS ITSELF
TO PROVE YOUR INNOCENCE BASED ON YOUR DNA
TO KNOW THE GENDER OF YOUR UNBORN CHILD
TO SEE THE STARS CLOSE UP
TO KNOW THE EXACT TEMPERATURE OUTSIDE
TO MARRY YOUR SAME-SEX PARTNER
TO TRAVEL TO SPACE
TO DRIVE ACROSS THE COUNTRY
TO SELF-PUBLISH YOUR BOOK
TO BE A WORLD LEADER IF YOU WERE FEMALE
TO PUT A MAN ON THE MOON
TO RECONNECT WITH A LONG LOST HIGH SCHOOL PAL
TO CALL YOUR MOM
TO CORRECT POOR EYESIGHT
TO HOVER IN AN AIRCRAFT
TO DETECT A LIE
TO LISTEN TO MUSIC IN THE CAR
TO TEXT YOUR TEEN
TO REWIND

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