

The Republic of South Africa is the southernmost country in Africa. It is Africa's richest country because it has many valuable minerals, including gold and diamonds. The largest city is Johannesburg. In 1994 Nelson Mandela became the first black African president of South Africa. This ended apartheid (racial discrimination).

Early history

The ancestors of most black South Africans arrived about 1600 years ago. In 1652 the Dutch built a settlement at the Cape, which the British took over in 1815. There were fierce wars between the Europeans and the black people, especially the Zulus.

South Africa is a land of deserts, high mountains and grasslands, where elephants, lions, zebras, giraffes and other animals still roam. The climate is warm, with hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters. Farmers grow maize (corn), fruit, wine and other foods.

South Africa became self-governing in 1910, and an independent country in

1961. Only whites could vote, or join the government. In 1948 the ruling whites passed apartheid laws, which were even more unfair to blacks. The ANC (African National Congress) fought apartheid.



Apartheid - before 1994.



Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)

The leader of the ANC, Nelson Mandela, was imprisoned in 1962. He was released in 1990 and continued his political activities.

The Nobel Peace Prize 1993 was awarded to Nelson Mandela and Frederik Willem de Klerk, the white president of South Africa „for their work for the peaceful termination of the apartheid regime, and for laying the foundations for a new democratic South Africa“.

Nelson Mandela won South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994. As president he tried to reconcile all South Africans.

Nowadays, all ethnic and linguistic groups have the same political rights. South Africa is often called "Rainbow Nation" because of its multicultural diversity. Its economy is the second largest in Africa. However, poverty and economical inequality remain. About a quarter of the population of about 50 million are unemployed.



Kruger National Park

The country has three capitals: Pretoria, Capetown and Bloemfontein.

Look for the opposites:

(You may find them in the text)

north	<i>south</i>
poor	
small	
the last	
to begin	
low	
dry	
to leave	
less	

to imprison	
to stop	
black	
to lose	
different	
seldom	
monotony	
disappear	
employed	