

## South Africa

### Y12 Bridging Work

**Research and write definitions for the following key terms.**

- Great Trek
- Boer War(s)
- Afrikaans: a language
- Apartheid
- Pass Laws

Create a biography for three key individuals in our story:

1. Walter Sisulu
2. Oliver Tambo
3. Nelson Mandela.



**Name:**

**Background:**

**Role/impact in the anti-Apartheid movement:**

In pairs you will be given an information pack about the different groups that have historically made up the South African Population.  
Read the information and complete the grid.

Group	When they arrived	Lifestyle	Areas of reasons for conflict with other groups
Khoi and San			
Other African peoples in SA			
Enslaved people (until the mid-19 <sup>th</sup> century)			
'Coloured S.A'/ Indians			
British			
Dutch/ Afrikaner			

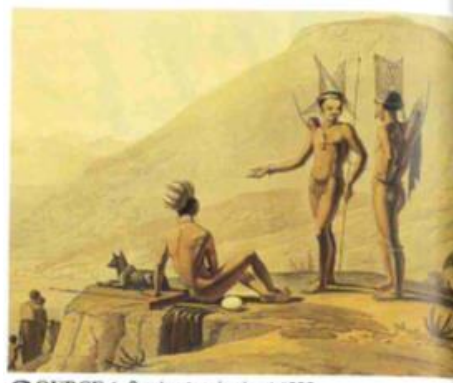


## Who are the black people of South Africa?

### 1. The San and the Khoi

The original inhabitants of what we now call South Africa were living in the Cape area 5,000 years ago. There were two groups: the **San** (called 'bushmen' by whites), who were hunter-gatherers, and the **Khoi** (called 'Hottentots' by whites from their language which includes clicking sounds). The Khoi were herders of goats and sheep.

The San were hunted down by whites and are now extinct in South Africa. There was a serious Khoi uprising from 1799 to 1805, but most fell victim to white diseases and became little more than slaves on white farms.



**S**OURCE 1 San hunters in about 1830

### 2. Black Africans

Between about AD500 and AD1000, black people from further north in Africa arrived in the east and north of South Africa. They were more technologically advanced than the San and Khoi, with the ability to make iron tools, gold jewellery, pottery and other items. They belonged to different ethnic groups with different languages, but there was a network of trading links between them across Africa. They herded cattle and goats, but also grew crops. They had enough to live on. The land was owned collectively, rather than by individuals. In fact, they believed that the land, like the air, could not be parcelled up and owned.

Life in their villages, or *kruals*, was governed by complex rules of behaviour. There were clearly defined roles for men and women: women grew crops, made pottery and looked after the children; men hunted and looked after the herds of animals. They had a word, *ubuntu*, which means that an individual is important within the group.

There were perhaps 3.5 million black South Africans in 1900.

It wasn't necessarily an idyllic life: there were fierce wars between rival groups. Rules could be harsh. Drought produced famines in which many died. Sources 2–5 describe life in black African villages before they were much influenced by contact with whites.



**S**OURCE 3 A nineteenth-century photograph of a Xhosa woman and child from Cape Colony

### Africans

The original inhabitants of South Africa were San or Bushmen people, hunters and gatherers with a profound knowledge of the natural world who left a rich legacy of rock paintings. Around 2,000 years ago black African farming people migrated into the region. Some San adopted their livestock farming practices and became identified as Khoikhoi. Africans gradually formed larger and more powerful chiefdoms or kingdoms and many of the San and Khoikhoi were displaced or absorbed into these units.

In the first half of the 19th century the Zulu became the largest African kingdom. This process left a deep legacy. Although Britain conquered the Zulu kingdom between 1878 and 1885, Zulu identity remained a significant force in the 20th century and Zulu language was the most widely spoken first language in this linguistically diverse country. The Sotho, Pedi, Tswana, Xhosa, Mpondo and Thembu also became centralised states in the 19th century with distinct languages and cultures. Although they shared many social features, the difference between the Zulu and Tswana language, for example, was as wide as between French and Spanish. A major challenge facing African nationalists during the 20th century was to create a common African identity.

By the time of the 1951 census, at the beginning of the apartheid era, Africans numbered 8.5 million.

### Slaves

Like European colonists all over the world, the Dutch settlers had slaves. They enslaved the San and Khoi, but also brought in slaves from other parts of the Dutch empire: Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

As in other parts of the world, slaves were kept in their places by vicious punishments: whipping and branding. From the 1760s slaves had to have a 'pass' to show who owned them. This was the beginning of the system which caused so much grief to black South Africans in the twentieth century.

Some of the enslaved people were Muslim. They bought their freedom and used their skills as carpenters, tailors and stonemasons to make a living. They built most of the typical 'Dutch-style' Cape houses of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They established a Muslim community in Cape Town, with their own mosque and imam. With the Muslim respect for learning, they were the most literate community in the country: the first book in the Afrikaans language was written by a Muslim. They were fierce in defence of their rights and religious freedoms.

## 2. The British

By the late eighteenth century Britain's Industrial Revolution was well under way and the British Empire in India was growing. A glance at the map showed the British that Cape Colony could be important to securing their route to India. The first British occupation took place in 1795 and it became a British possession in 1806.



**SOURCE 10** A map showing the position of the Cape on the route to India

The impact of British rule on the Boers from 1806 was two-sided. Many Boers benefited from links with the British trading empire and became prosperous sheep farmers. There is evidence that many of those who set out on the Great Trek, were poorer farmers, unable to benefit from British connections. Certainly Piet Retief was deeply in debt and, for him and those like him, the Great Trek was a way of making a clean start. Only about 15,000 Boers left the Cape between 1834 and 1850.

Nor did they find 'empty' land. Some areas may well have been underpopulated as a result of the *difaqane/mfecane*, but that was only temporary. Black settlers soon moved into the land claimed by the trekkers and farmed alongside them. Some trekkers tried to come to an arrangement with Xhosa chiefs to settle on their lands by agreement. In other places trekkers were driven out by black settlers.

The whites who spoke English as a first language in South Africa were descendants of British colonists who arrived after the Cape became part of the British Empire in 1806. Irish, Jewish and other minorities joined them, especially after the discovery of valuable minerals in the late 19th century. Numbering about one million in the 1951 census, they tended to be wealthier and more highly educated than other groups, and dominated business and the professions.

Somerset's glowing description was quite wrong. The first 120 settlers, in 1820, had to deal with drought, locusts and crop diseases. The plan, to grow crops in market gardens, was ill thought out: the nearest market for fresh food was 900 km to the west in Cape Town. By 1825 only a third of the original settlers were left. The survivors turned to business or trade – or began to move inland.

This brought them into conflict with the black Africans of the interior. The British fought almost continuous frontier wars against the Xhosa and other peoples from 1819 to 1853. In the end, with horses, guns and trained soldiers, the British were bound to win. A new British colony in Natal was founded in 1843. At first the British agreed that the Zulus should have the land to the north, but later they decided to seize Zulu lands. Although Chief Cetshwayo inflicted a famous crushing defeat on the British at Isandhlwana in 1879, the Zulus were broken by 1897.

## Indians

British settlers in Natal found that sugar-cane grew well there, but they needed workers for the plantations. From 1860 to 1911 a total of 152,000 Indian labourers were brought to South Africa. When their contracts were over, about half of them decided to stay, so forming the ancestors of the South African Indian community.

## Cape Coloureds

Most whites arriving in the Dutch colony in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were single men. Despite their racial views about black peoples, they had sexual relations with them. The children produced were called COLOURED. They spoke Afrikaans and worked as servants and labourers. Many worked in the vineyards, where it was customary to pay part of their wages in wine, with the result that alcoholism was common.

## Coloured and Indian people

By the beginning of the 20th century most of those in the Cape Colony who were not classed as white or African were called Coloured. They included the descendants of the San and Khoikhoi, of slaves brought from South East Asia and other parts of Africa by the Dutch, and of relationships between whites, Africans and others. Coloured people numbered roughly 1.1 million people in 1951, nine percent of the population. They were largely based in the Western Cape and were mostly Afrikaans-speaking.

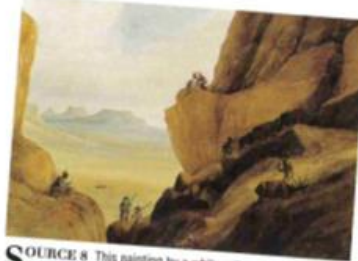
For fifty years, settlers in Natal imported indentured Indians, many of them Tamils from south India, to work on the sugar plantations. Some Indian traders, largely from Gujarat, were also allowed into the country; they formed another significant minority, three percent of the total population, mostly based in Natal and Transvaal, who became English-speaking.

## Who are the white people of South Africa?

### 1. The Dutch

You have already read about the arrival of the Dutch settlers in 1652 (see page 10). Their leader, Jan van Riebeck, was an educated man, but many settlers were tough, poorly educated ex-soldiers. Their treatment of the San and Khoi peoples of the Cape area was often brutal. When the Africans complained that the Dutch settlers were creating farms on their traditional grazing lands many were simply hunted and shot.

The Dutch settlers were joined by other Europeans: Germans, Scandinavians and, in the 1680s, French Protestant refugees.



**SOURCE 8** This painting by a white artist shows Khoi people, who have taken cattle, being hunted by whites

You have read, too, about the 'Trekboers' who moved inland with their cattle in the eighteenth century. The land was not, in fact, 'empty': it was used as grazing ground by black Africans. They presented tougher resistance to the Boers than the San and Khoi of the Cape had done. The first wars between whites and Xhosas took place in 1779. Nor did these Africans fall victim to European diseases, as the San and Khoi did.

## Whites

Those classed as whites in South Africa came from a variety of backgrounds. The two most dominant groups were the Afrikaners and those of British descent. South Africa's Afrikaner population, roughly 60 percent of whites or around 1.6 million in the 1951 census, was descended largely from the Dutch, French and German settlers who came to South Africa in the 17th and 18th centuries. During the 19th century, they achieved some shared identity and spoke a local version of Dutch but remained politically divided between those in the British Cape and those in two separate **Boer** republics in the interior.