**Background Essay:**

The first people to inhabit the area now known as South Africa were the San people who arrived nearly 30, 000 years ago. About 2,000 years ago, the Khoikhoi people moved in from the north. Most black people in South Africa today are ***descendants*** of a third group of people known as the Bantu. Only 350 years ago the first white people arrived in South Africa from Holland. Conflict between the whites and blacks began immediately. Though whites have always been a ***minority*** in South Africa, the black ***majority*** experienced fewer freedoms under white governmental control.

The government of South Africa limited the freedoms of non-whites through a policy called ***apartheid***. ***Apartheid*** was a system of laws from 1948- 1994 that kept races separate. These included laws that ***restricted*** the voting rights of non-whites, ***prevented*** blacks from buying land, and banned people from marrying outside their race. Non-whites were also prevented from attending good schools, or holding good jobs.

***Pass laws***, laws requiring citizens to carry identification, restricted the movement and freedom of non-white ethnic groups. All non-white groups were subject to travel restrictions and were required to carry passbooks with them at all times. South African protest of pass laws began in the 1960’s. Thousands of blacks were arrested for failing to carry their passbooks. In 1960, protests in Sharpville resulted in the police ***massacring*** 69 people. Pass laws were finally repealed or removed in 1986.

Steve Biko, a medical student at the University of Natal in South Africa, organized students to ***oppose*** apartheid. He wanted them to be proud of their culture and heritage. His growing fame alarmed the white government in South Africa. He was arrested several times between 1975 and 1977, and tortured by police. He eventually died in prison at the age of 30. Because of his tragic death, he is remembered as a martyr for anti-apartheid movements.

In 1975, the government of South Africa ordered that classes be taught in Afrikaans, the language of the white minority. Blacks opposed the measure because it would make education more difficult, and they saw it as an effort to ***impose*** white culture on blacks. Very few services, such as hospitals and schools, had been provided for this population. In general, conditions were very bad for blacks in Soweto, an area of Johannesburg, but the requirement to teach classes in Afrikaans was the spark that ignited an uprising in 1976. Around 20,000 Soweto students marched in the streets in opposition to the new law. Nearly 600 students died in violent clashes with police. The event marked a shift in the history of apartheid in South Africa; the students ***demonstrated*** that they would not tolerate oppressive or difficult conditions.

Nelson Mandela was one of the early leaders of youth organizations that formed to oppose apartheid. He was the secretary of the African National Congress Youth League, which organized strikes, boycotts, and acts of civil disobedience. The organization was outlawed in 1960, and Mandela was arrested for treason, of which he was ultimately ***acquitted***. Frustrated because peaceful efforts to reform the government had failed, Mandela formed a military group to fight the government. He was arrested again, found guilty, and sentenced to life in prison for trying to overthrow the government. He was released from Prison in 1990, when South Africa began reversing its old apartheid ways. Out of jail, Mandela continued to work for freedom. He admitted that many of his military tactics were wrong, but never apologized for working for the black people of South Africa. His election to president in 1994 marked the first time non-whites could elect a national leader.

F.W. De Klerk, president of South Africa from 1989 to 1994, brought the apartheid system of racial segregation to an end and negotiated a transition to majority rule in his country. He released political prisoners including Nelson Mandela had lifted the ban on the African National Congress and other antiapartheid groups. He met with black leaders and in 1991 his government passed legislation that ended discrimination in housing, education, public services, and health care. In 1992 he called a referendum in which 69 percent of the country’s voters endorsed his reform policies. That same year undertook ***negotiations*** with Nelson Mandela and other black leaders over a new constitution that granted the black majority voting rights and led to all-race national elections. De Klerk and Mandela jointly received the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize for their collaboration to establish nonracial, equal democracy in South Africa.

**Background Essay Study Guide:**

1. Black South Africans are descendants of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. The first white people arrived 350 years ago from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. Although Black Africans were not treated equally, it was a system of laws started in 1948 called \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that severely limited their freedom.
4. Black Africans were kept separate by restricting \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ rights, not allowing them to buy \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, or marrying outside their own race.
5. PASS Laws required black citizens to carry \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, at all times or face jail time and possible torture in police custody.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Massacre of 69 people was caused by Blacks protesting the Pass Laws at a police station. The laws were finally \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in 1986.
7. A medical student at University of Natal, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ organized student protests of Apartheid. His fame grew and he was taken to jail where he was tortured and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at age 30, a martyr to the cause.
8. In 1975, the Government ordered school to be taught in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the language of the white minority. Blacks saw this as another way whites imposed their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on them.
9. In June 1976, students in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ marched in the street to protest. Nearly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ died in the violent clashes with police. It was a turning point.
10. Nelson Mandela started as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ leader who led strikes, boycotts, and acts of civil \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The organization was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in 1960 and Mandela was arrested for treason, but found not guilty. Frustrated, Mandela formed a military group that used bombing and other violence.
11. Mandela was arrested and given Life in prison for trying to violently \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the government in 1962.
12. \_\_\_.\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, president of South Africa from 1989-1994, released Mandela and helped bring the Apartheid system to an end. He worked with Mandela and others to end \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in housing, education, public services, and health care. He negotiated with Mandela and other black leaders to write a new \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to give all races their voting rights.
13. Mandela and DE Klerk shared a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in 1993 for their work together creating a democracy in South Africa.
14. Mandela was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the first black \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of South Africa in 1994. He served one 5 year term.
15. Every year, April 27 is celebrated as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_, remembering the day when all South Africans could vote for their representatives and leaders.