

Reading B2

You are reading a newspaper article on the life of Nelson Mandela. Answer the questions below on the basis of what you are reading. Give short answers. There is an example already done for you.

Remembering Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)

Rolihlahla Mandela was born into a strange world: descendant of a powerful 18th century Thembu chief, he had the rank to become a royal councillor to his tribe but spent his early childhood as the vast majority of African children do: living in a mud hut and tending cattle and goats. His birth name was given by his father means “troublemaker” in Xhosa, his native language and seems to have foretold his role as activist and political prisoner. Definitely regarded as a troublemaker by the apartheid regime, he acted as a powerful peacemaker after his release from prison in a country suffering so long from injustice.

Mandela’s life changed for ever at the age of 7, when his father agreed to send the clever child to school. He was the first person in the family to attend school and Rolihlahla not only had to exchange his normal clothes (a blanket wrapped around one shoulder with a pin at the waist) for school clothes (a cut-off pair of his father’s trousers tied with string at the waist), but he was also given a new name by which he would become well-known all around the world. In those days African children were given English names by the teacher and the curriculum followed the colonial British model.

When Nelson’s father died two years later, the high chief of the Thembu offered to be his guardian and ensured he had a good education. In his autobiography, *Long walk to freedom*” he remembers realising that “*I had to make my way on the basis of my ability, not my heritage. Most of my classmates could outrun me on the playing field and outthink me in the classroom, and I had a good deal of catching up to do.*” He went to South Africa’s only black university but was expelled for rebelling against authority. In 1941 he left his homeland for Johannesburg to avoid the marriage his guardian arranged for him.

In the next decade he lived in difficult circumstances, joined the African National Congress (ANC) on 1944 and got married. He studied law and devoted more and more time to politics. In 1952 he set up the country’s first law firm. He was not deterred from working against the Apartheid despite being arrested several times.

In March 1960 sixty-nine protesters in Sharperville were shot dead by the police and the government banned the ANC. It was then that the organisation formed a military wing, led by Mandela, who realized that his previous plan of peaceful protest would not bring the Apartheid to an end. In 1962 he was arrested and tried to leave the country illegally, then charged with sabotage and sentenced to life in 1964 and jailed on Robben Island.

27 years in prison could not break Mandela physically or mentally, despite living in a cell that he described as overlooking “*the courtyard and had a small eye-level window. I could walk the length of my cell in three paces. When I lay down, I could feel the wall with my feet and my head grazed the concrete at the other side.*” The former heavy-weight boxer kept fit and survived lonely prison life, bad food, cold and illness while working in the limestone quarry. He managed to write his autobiography in secret, the was smuggled out in pieces and printed overseas. It became a global best-seller, raising awareness of South African problems.

The world took notice: international businesses as well as governments increasingly boycotted South Africa during the 1980’s. “Free Mandela” concerts, attracting large crowds became popular. Very slowly, the Afrikaner leadership started negotiations with Mandela in prison

and was released in 1990. The next year, Mandela was elected ANC president at the party's first national conference. During and after his presidency (1994-99) he was South Africa's highest-profile ambassador, campaigning against HIV/Aids until his retirement from public life in 2004.

Complete the sentences on the basis of the text

- 0. In his childhood his accommodation was*a mud hut*.....
- 1. His original name predicted his fate as
- 2. His traditional life turned up-side-down as.....
- 3. He became famous by
- 4. However good education was provided for himfrom the others.
- 5. He had to leave the uni because
- 6. He became active in politics and his life became even more complicated and
- 7. Being disillusioned by the peaceful protest he
- 8. His life completely changed when
- 9. During the long prison years he could write his memoir
- 10. For the sake of his release