

L'Afrique du Sud

Fiche

1. Basic facts

Capital city	Pretoria (executive power)
Largest cities	Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban
Population	50.5 million
Area	1,219,912 km ²
Official languages	11 official languages, including English, Afrikaans, Sesotho, Setswana, Xhosa and Zulu.

2. Key concepts

Apartheid	The system implemented by the all-white government from 1848 to 1992 separating people of different races and denying black people political rights, forcing them to live in townships outside the cities.
Rainbow Nation	Term used to refer to South Africa's racial diversity. Black South Africans represent 75% of the population, with a large number of Coloureds (people of mixed origins) + Europeans + Indians

3. Key dates

18th century	European immigrants (especially Dutch protestants) arrived in important numbers
1795	The British conquered the colony. The Afrikaaners (earlier Dutch settlers) rebelled against this domination by the British.
1899-1902	The Boer Wars: between the British and the Afrikaaners → British victory.
1948-1992s	The system of apartheid with an all-white government in spite of the Black majority in the population: separation of people into different races. The Blacks had no political rights and had to live in townships. The whites used violence and imprisonment to impose apartheid.
1960	The country was forced to leave the Commonwealth because of apartheid.
1980s	The country suffered economic sanctions from the international community.
1992	Prime Minister Frederick de Klerk led the dismantling of apartheid and called for general elections.
1994	Nelson Mandela became the first democratically elected black President of South Africa in the first all-race elections

4. National hero: Nelson Mandela

- Nelson Mandela (1918-) dedicated his life to the fight for racial equality in South Africa.
- As qualified lawyer, he joined the African National Congress (ANC) in 1942 and fought against the apartheid regime.
- 1964: arrested for sabotage and sentenced to life imprisonment. Was incarcerated at Robben Island Prison.
- 1990: released, after 26 years in prison.
- 1993: awarded the Nobel Peace Prize *for laying the foundations of a new democratic South Africa*.
- April 1994: became the first democratically elected black President of South Africa in the first all-race elections after negotiating the dismantling of apartheid.
- 1999: retired from political life and devoted his energy to campaigning against poverty.