

“Glory and Hope”: Nelson Mandela

Introduction

Nelson Mandela delivered this speech after having been elected president in South Africa’s first multiracial election in 1994. Knowing that the injustices of apartheid would be hard to overcome, Mandela asked the people to work together for peace and justice.

Primary Source

Today, all of us do, by our presence here, and by our celebrations . . . confer [give] glory and hope to newborn liberty.

Out of the experience of an extraordinary human disaster that lasted too long must be born a society of which all humanity will be proud.

Our daily deeds as ordinary South Africans must produce an actual South African reality that will reinforce humanity’s belief in justice, strengthen its confidence in the nobility of the human soul and sustain all our hopes for a glorious life for all. . . .

Determine Meaning What does Mandela mean by “an actual South African reality”?

Draw Conclusions What is the “extraordinary human disaster” of which Mandela speaks?

- A. the poverty of South Africans
- B. the institution of apartheid
- C. the country’s independence movement
- D. the presidential election

The time for the healing of the wounds has come. . . .

The time to build is upon us.

We have, at last, achieved our political emancipation [freedom from bondage or control by others]. We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people from the continuing bondage [slavery] of poverty, deprivation [lack of materials necessary for survival], suffering, gender and other discrimination. . . .

We have triumphed in the effort to implant [insert] hope in the breasts of the millions of our people. We enter into a covenant [binding agreement] that we shall build the society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity—a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world. . . .

Summarize What freedoms does Mandela call for in this passage?

Analyze Style and Rhetoric Why does Mandela use the first person plural in this speech, repeating the words *we* and *us*? What effect does this usage have on his audience?

We understand it still that there is no easy road to freedom.

We know it well that none of us acting alone can achieve success.

We must therefore act together as a united people, for national reconciliation [a settling of differences that results in harmony], for nation building, for the birth of a new world.

Let there be justice for all. Let there be peace for all. Let there be work, bread, water, and salt for all. . . . The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement!

Paraphrase In one or two sentences, write in your own words how Mandela concludes his speech.

Determine Central Ideas What is the glorious human achievement Mandela envisions?

Explain an Argument When apartheid ended, there was a danger of a backlash by blacks against whites who supported apartheid. How does Mandela's speech respond to that danger?

Determine Author's Point of View How would you describe the tone of Mandela's speech? How does this tone reflect Mandela's view of his country and its future?

Determine Author's Purpose Why do you think Mandela talks about building a new world, not just a new South Africa?

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