

TSSMTM
Creating VCE Success

ENGLISH TEXT SUMMARY NOTES
PAIRED COMPARISONS
Invictus / Ransom

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SAMPLE

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TEXT 1
Invictus

DIRECTOR NOTES

Clint Eastwood, a celebrated director with more than thirty films in his repertoire, first made his name as a film and TV actor and is best known for his roles in 'spaghetti westerns' (low budget westerns made in Europe with Italian directors); on his return to America he starred as the off-beat and moody policeman Dirty Harry which made him a household name. Other famous roles include Philo Beddoe with his orang-utan sidekick in *Every Which Way But Loose* and its sequel *Any Which Way You Can*. He was born in San Francisco in 1930 and pursued acting from the time he left school at 19.

Eastwood's first foray into directing began with *Bird* in 1988 about the life of acclaimed bop saxophonist Charlie Parker. He went on to gain two Oscars for directing *Unforgiven* in 1992 and *Million Dollar Baby* in 2004. Other well-known films of Eastwood's are: *The Bridges of Madison County* in 1995 and *Mystic River* in 2003, *Letter from Iwo Jima* in 2006, *Gran Torino* in 2008, *Invictus* in 2009 and *Jersey Boys* in 2015.

Eastwood was drawn to the Nelson Mandela's story because of his admiration for Mandela as a person and for the creative way he sought to unify a country that could well have been on the verge of civil war by using rugby as an avenue to bring people together. Eastwood was also inspired by John Carlin's 2008 book, *Playing the Enemy: Nelson Mandela and the Game That Made the Nation..* Both Eastwood and Carlin focus on how Mandela used what had been the divisive sport of rugby and the national Springbok team to unit post-apartheid South Africa.

Invictus can be considered historical fiction. It is based on events that occurred after Nelson Mandela was released from prison in 1990. He was then elected President of South Africa in 1994, during the first election where both blacks and whites were allowed to vote. The film format compresses this four year time period in order to focus on the impact of Mandela's decision to utilise the game of rugby as a tool to bring about his vision of a 'Rainbow Nation'. Director Clint Eastwood has also taken some liberties with the facts. For example, in the film, Nelson Mandela gives Francois Pienaar a copy of the poem 'Invictus', whilst in reality, he gave Pienaar an extract from Theodore Roosevelt's, 'The Man in the Arena' speech from 1910. While some documentary footage and re-enactments of news reports are shown, the instability, high crime rate and other social problems of the time period are somewhat glossed over. There is no doubt however that Mandela's renunciation of violence and his personal determination that anger over the crimes of the past, including his 27 years as a political prisoner, should not motivate future laws and actions changed the course of history in South Africa and this is very clearly illustrated in the film.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

It is important that students understand the historical context of this film in order to grasp fully the importance of the events depicted. Therefore, we will consider some of these concepts below.

APARTHEID

Apartheid was a policy in South Africa which began after the 1948 general election, and which restricted the rights of black people. Laws were put in place to ensure that white people's rights and luxuries were protected and black people were unable to interfere in this. All members of the population were required to be classified according to race, and it was this classification that determined their rights. Public areas, services, vehicles, schools, shops, and all facilities were segregated by race, and non-white members of society were not provided with equal facilities and opportunities. In 1953, a law was passed which allowed for a separate educational system to be developed for blacks. Instead of receiving a standard education, black people were to be trained to prepare them for menial jobs. It was claimed that black people were not allowed to take jobs of higher status and, therefore, did not need the same level of education as white people. Black people were unable to own land and were often displaced without notice, because the area where their homes were situated had been re-allocated as a white area.

In 1952, a peaceful resistance to apartheid was initiated by the African National Congress (the ANC). They began breaking laws that they believed were wrong. For example, black people would sit on benches marked for use by white people only. Another example of peaceful protesting was when black people stayed out in the city after a curfew that had been set for them. Not surprisingly, the authorities did not like these rebellions and banned the ANC. The ban was not lifted until 1990 by President Frederick Willem de Klerk, who assisted Nelson Mandela in ending apartheid.

Apartheid caused much heartache and many deaths. Many countries were horrified to see the terrible treatment that the black residents of South Africa were subjected to, so much so that South Africa was expelled from the United Nations. They were not reinstated as a part of the UN until apartheid officially ended in 1994.

NELSON MANDELA

Nelson Mandela was born on July 18, 1918, and died on December 5, 2013. He was the first black president of South Africa and helped to end apartheid. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts. Mandela became involved in the anti-apartheid movement and joined the ANC in 1942. He led many peaceful, non-violent protests against the South African government's racist policies and joined forces with Oliver Tambo to found a law firm, providing cheap, or even free, representation to blacks. In 1956, Mandela and many others were arrested and charged with treason for their activities in the ANC. These charges were unsuccessful and they were all acquitted. The ANC began to lose momentum and support due to another group, the Africanists, who believed that the non-violent protests were ineffective. Eventually, Mandela began to lose faith in the pacifist method of protest and began to consider the merits of an armed approach. As a result he co-founded MK, an armed branch of the ANC, which used war tactics and sabotage in an attempt to end apartheid. In 1952 the government passed a law, which saw all African males over 16 being made to carry a 'reference book' outlining all their personal details and employment history. The ANC led a series of protests and marches against this system. The government declared a state of emergency in 1960 and the ANC was declared illegal.

In 1961 Mandela led a workers' strike and was unsuccessfully persecuted for treason. In 1961, disheartened by the lack of social change, he formed the militant group Umkhonto we Sizwe and led a campaign against the white rule. He was subsequently arrested in 1962 and sentenced to five years imprisonment. One year later, Mandela and some other ANC leaders were brought to trial again for sabotage and other offences and sentenced to life in prison. In his defence at his trial Mandela gave his famous 'I Am Prepared to Die Speech' in which he stated:

During my lifetime I have dedicated my life to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons will live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal for which I hope to live for and to see realised. But, My Lord, if it needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

— *Nelson Mandela*, at the conclusion of his 'I Am Prepared To Die Speech 20/04/64'

He remained in prison on Robben Island for 18 of his 27 years in prison. The care he received there was rudimentary, due to his race. Despite these handicaps, Mandela managed to earn a law degree by studying via distance education at the University of London.

Mandela stuck to his principles even when offered release in return for renunciation of armed struggles. The government experienced increasing pressure to release him, but this did not occur until Frederik Willem de Klerk became president of South Africa and announced Mandela's release on February 11, 1990. Mandela was elected president of the ANC in 1991, and worked at negotiating for black people to be allowed to vote. Balancing these negotiations and addressing the ensuing political pressure created by demonstrations and armed resistance supported the ANC's efforts to end racist laws in South Africa. In recognition for their work towards abolishing apartheid, Mandela and President de Klerk were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Mandela was then elected the country's first black president, in South Africa's first multiracial elections in 1994.

Mandela used sports to support reconciliation between the blacks and whites of South Africa. This is the main focus of the film, *Invictus*. He worked to encourage black Africans to embrace the hated white Springbok team which improved enough to win the Rugby World Cup.

Mandela retired from politics in 1999, but continued to work to improve racial and social problems in South Africa. He also took some time to publish a number of books about his life. These include: *No Easy Walk to Freedom*, *Nelson Mandela: The Struggle is my Life*, and *Nelson Mandela's Favourite African Folktales*.

Mandela died on December 5, 2013, at the age of 95 in his home in Johannesburg. He is acknowledged worldwide as a symbol for peace due to his role in ending apartheid.