

# The Story of Nelson Mandela, a Real-Life Superhero

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Ever heard of a real-life superhero for the African community named Nelson Mandela? Well, every year on July 18th, we celebrate Mandela Day, honoring this amazing man and his extraordinary life. Nelson Mandela was a fighter for human rights who stood up against apartheid, a system of severe racial segregation in South Africa. In this article, we will dive into [the story of Nelson Mandela](#).

“Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful country will once more suffer the tyranny of one over another!” Nelson Mandela proclaimed these words in 1994 during his first speech as President of South Africa. He became a shining beacon for those fighting for fairness and freedom around the world.

But what did he actually do?



Originally, our hero was named Holilala, a name from the Xhosa language of Africa, meaning “troublemaker”. Holilala was born in 1918 in a humble village in Africa. His

father was the village leader. Watching his father's excellent leadership, the boy learned how important it is to take good care of those who trust you.

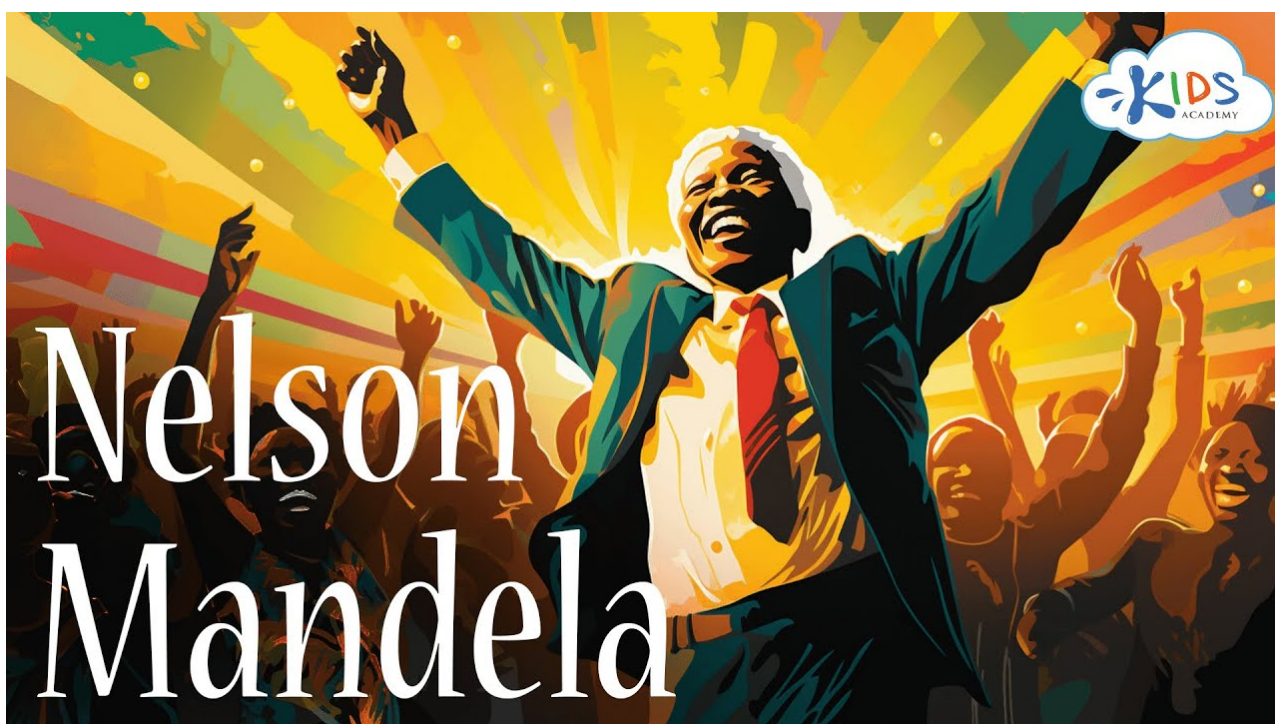
When Holilala was just a kid, he'd hear stories about how Africans had suffered under the control of Europeans who had traveled there by sea. These tales touched his heart deeply.

Holilala was the first in his family to be schooled, at a missionary institution where he was given a new English name – Nelson.

Though the days of slavery were long past, non-white people in Africa were still being unfairly treated. Many people from India, China, Malaysia, and especially Black Africans couldn't live happily due to segregation, a system that separated people based on their skin color and ethnic background. In South Africa, this separation was known as "apartheid".

The principal apartheid laws were as follows. Non-white folks couldn't live where they wanted – they were given homes with no electricity or running water. They weren't allowed to go to any school they wanted – only to specific ones. They couldn't work where they wanted – the best jobs were kept for white folks, while people of color were given hard, low-paid work. They even couldn't marry who they wanted – because the law said black and white people couldn't marry each other.

The world Nelson Mandela lived in was not the one he dreamt of. He yearned for a world in which everyone, regardless of their skin color, would have equal rights and opportunities.



Believing in the incredible power of learning, Nelson Mandela studied a lot. He [studied English](#), psychology, philosophy, politics, and law. He later said, "Education is the most powerful tool you can use to change the world."

In 1943, Mandela took part in his first big protest, a 9-day march against hiking bus ticket prices. It was successful. From then on, the young man was really involved in his country's politics. He traveled a lot, giving speeches to encourage people who felt oppressed to fight for their rights. In 1952, with his friend Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela started a law firm to help black people defend their rights in court for free.

In the same year, Nelson Mandela spearheaded a big protest known as The Defiance Campaign. Thousands of people, all different colors and races, marched in the streets of South Africa. They wanted better houses, fair wages, the right to vote, and an end to apartheid. Sadly, the government, which was run by white people, wouldn't listen.

In 1964, for standing up against apartheid, Nelson Mandela was sent to prison for life. He was only 46 years old.

Life in prison was really tough: Mandela spent a lot of time alone, slept on a cold floor, and had to do hard work. But Mandela didn't let this break his spirit. He kept studying and earned a degree of Bachelor of Laws from the University of London. He fought for and got better living conditions for himself and his fellow inmates. He also wrote a lot of letters to activists – people who were fighting against apartheid.

At the same time, people all over the world were fighting for Mandela's freedom. They held protests and demanded that he be let out of prison. But it wasn't until February 11, 1990, that Nelson Mandela was finally released from prison, after being there for 27 years!

This big event was shown on TV and celebrated all over the world!

For his strong will and dedication to helping people, Mandela was given the Nobel Peace Prize.

In 1994, Mandela won the first democratic election where everyone, no matter their skin color might have been, could vote equally. He became the first black president of the Republic of South Africa. He stopped apartheid and worked really hard to make South Africa a country where everyone was treated equally.

Nelson Mandela once said, “It’s effortless to tear down and demolish. The real heroes are those who foster peace and construct.” And Nelson Mandela was a true hero. He lived to be 95 years old and died surrounded by his big family, from whom he had been away for so many years.

Ready to dive deeper and have some fun? We have an exciting challenge! It’s our special [Black History worksheets](#). This isn’t just a game; it’s a chance to discover more about such outstanding leaders as Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr.

