

**Lesson
Three**

Journey to Freedom

Aims

By the end of this lesson you should be able to:

- understand that some groups of people can be treated unfairly because of their characteristics
- look at racial injustice and discrimination
- consider the blue eye/brown eye study and its findings
- discuss anti-Semitism and the Holocaust
- explore apartheid in South Africa
- discuss the fact that individuals can challenge unjust systems and create fairer societies by exploring Nelson Mandela's struggle against apartheid

Context

This lesson continues the theme of journeys and pilgrimage.



Oxford Home Schooling

Stereotyping and Prejudice

In the previous lesson we discussed the issue of how stereotypes can lead to discrimination. Stereotyping is a generalized and simplistic mental idea of a group, which is usually negative. Prejudice is the belief that some people are inferior or superior (for instance) without even knowing them and discrimination is to act on the basis of prejudice.




Life as a Pilgrimage


Life itself can be thought of as a pilgrimage: a journey with meaning. Things happen along the way – good and bad – that shape the people we become. Some people’s journey through life is more unusual and challenging than others. This lesson focuses on the experiences of Nelson Mandela who became South Africa’s first black president in 1994. Both Nelson Mandela and the country of South Africa experienced a great transformational journey. Mandela’s journey to freedom involved him facing time in jail due to his firm disapproval of discrimination.

Activity 1

What makes groups of people different to other groups?

List as many examples as you can. Here are two to start you off.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Age/generation
---	--

<h2>Activity 2</h2>	<p>How would you define the following types of discrimination?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racism • Sexism • Ageism • Anti-Semitism <p>Have you ever experienced or witnessed any of these types of discrimination?</p>
	

In the UK it is against the law to discriminate against someone because of their colour, race, nationality, or ethnic origin. However, in the UK at present, racism is prevalent, and affects many people every day. The police believe that in the past year, the number of racist assaults reported in the UK has more than doubled, and that non-white people were more than three times as likely to be victimised by groups of four or more perpetrators than white people.

Racism can have many effects on people. Some may experience direct racism as verbal or physical abuse. For young people this often happens at, or on the way to, school or college and can have a major impact upon a young person's educational attainment. Outside school and for adults, it can result in social isolation, as people's fears prevent them from going out.

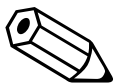
Indirect racism is a lot harder to identify, and can have wide-ranging effects on individuals. Some people in positions of power make decisions about education, employment or housing which have the effect of racism.

Activity 3

Read the following examples and decide what advice you would give each person if you were a counsellor.

Michelle, 13, is being called racist names due to the colour of her skin. She is too scared to tell her teacher as she doesn't want the bullying to get worse. She thinks if she ignores the name-calling it will eventually stop.

Sebastian, 11, is teased as he is Polish and is behind the rest of the class with his reading and writing. He has to have extra English classes to help him understand the language. He dreads going to school.



There now follow three examples, which demonstrate discrimination and how it can be cruel and irrational, producing devastating effects. The first is a psychological experiment by a woman called Jane Elliot, the next two

examples are real-life situations. The first is anti-semitism, which ultimately resulted in the Holocaust. The final example discusses apartheid in South Africa.

Blue Eye/Brown Eye

This was an experiment conducted by Jane Elliott in 1968 with the aim of demonstrating to her third grade class what prejudice was.

Her method involved splitting the class into two halves – those with blue eyes and those with brown. She then told them that the children with blue eyes were inherently superior to the children with brown eyes. The brown-eyed children were denied access to play equipment, they were told they were stupid, and they were not allowed to socialize with members of the ‘superior group’. The next day the roles were reversed, with the brown-eyed children treated as better.

The idea behind the experiment was to show the children first-hand what prejudice was like. In this it was a success: on days when students were part of the inferior group, they showed lower test scores, less enthusiasm, and more hostility towards activities in the classroom.

Elliott said that blue-eyed people were stupid and lazy and should not be trusted. To ensure that the eye colour differentiation could be made swiftly, Elliott handed out strips of cloth that fastened at the neck as collars. The brown eyes affixed the cloth-made shackles on their blue-eyed counterparts.

Next Elliott withdrew her blue-eyed students’ basic classroom rights, such as drinking directly from the water fountain or taking a second helping at lunch. Brown-eyed kids, on the other hand, received preferential treatment. In addition to being permitted to boss around the blues, the browns were given an extended recess.


Elliott recalls, *“It was just horrifying how quickly they became what I told them they were.”* Within 30 minutes, a blue-eyed girl named Carol had regressed from a *“brilliant, self-confident carefree, excited little girl to a frightened, timid, uncertain little almost-person.”*

The brown-eyed children excelled under their newfound superiority. Elliott had seven students with dyslexia in her class that year and four of them had brown eyes. On the day that the browns were “*on top*,” those four brown-eyed boys with dyslexia read words that Elliott “*knew they couldn’t read*” and spelled words that she “*knew they couldn’t spell*.”^{**} Seeing her brown-eyed students act like “*arrogant, ugly, domineering, overbearing White Americans*” with **no** instructions to do so proved to Elliott that racism is learned. Prior to that day in 1968, her students had expressed neither positive nor negative thoughts about each other based on eye colour.

That day, Elliott discovered that “*you can create racism. And, as with anything, if you can create it, you can destroy it.*”

Adapted from: Horizon: People and Possibilities *The Eyes of Jane Elliott*: <http://www.horizonmag.org>

Anti-semitism

Activity 4	Is it morally acceptable to exclude a group of people on grounds of race/religion?
	

The history of Jews in Germany is nearly two thousand years old. The earliest evidence of Jewish settlements in the German provinces can be traced all the way back to the Roman Empire. While the first several centuries were a period of relative peace and prosperity, the period between the Crusades and World War II were often marked with persecution and discrimination starting with the massacre of hundreds of Jews in 1096 and ending with the Final Solution which sought to exterminate the Jewish people.

During the latter part of the 18th century, Jewish life in Germany achieved a level of stability for a number of years. On July 3, 1869, the North German Confederation declared that “all existing limitations on civil rights derived from a difference in religious persuasion are hereby eliminated.” Two years later, Otto von Bismarck, united all German lands under the leadership of Prussia. The new German Reich finally granted Jews the equality they had sought for so long. Once emancipated, Jews were allowed to move to cities, establish shops, and take part as elected officials in parliament.

Just a few years following emancipation, anti-semitism became a political movement, which found wide support among the German middle class and rural population. This movement held Jews responsible for the economic failures of the time. Anti-semitism continued alongside the advances made after the unification of Germany. Although first coined in 1879, the term “anti-semitism” is now generally used to refer to the discrimination against or persecution of Jews throughout history because of their religious beliefs or race.



In 1923, Hitler proclaimed that “the Jew is a race, but not human.” Holding Jews responsible for Germany’s social and economic problems,

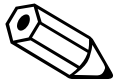
Jews were forced to wear the star of David so people knew that they were Jews. Jewish shops had signs telling people not to shop there. In 1938 the Nazis told people to go around and smash up Jewish shops. This was called Kristallnacht (Crystal Night- the night of broken glass).

Hitler systematically removed all of the civil, social, and economic rights they had gained just 50 years earlier and embarked on a path toward a Final Solution.

In a series of meetings between 1941-2 leading Nazis met and decided the 'Jewish problem' needed to be solved. They decided that every Jew in Europe should be killed, around 11 million people. Jews were taken from their homes and forced to live in concentration camps. They were then killed. This was called the Holocaust: the extermination of the Jews.

Activity 5

In the UK there is a requirement for you to learn about the Holocaust. Why is what happened so important for every person to know about?

**Apartheid**

South Africa used to have a system of institutionalized racial discrimination. Between 1948 and 1994 there was a system called apartheid in South Africa. Apartheid meant that people had to live separately just because of the colour of their skin. This system was very unfair and many people suffered during this time. "Apartheid," literally means "apartness" in Afrikaans, a language spoken in South Africa.


The rules of apartheid meant that non-white people couldn't use libraries, beaches, parks and toilets reserved for white people. Look at the images below.



Black and mixed race people were not allowed to go to school together, black Africans were not allowed to vote, whilst minority whites voted for all of South Africa.

Non-whites had to have a special 'pass' if they wanted to travel. The Land Act prevented black people from owning land except in reserved areas, and meant that many black parents were forced to work in the cities and towns as labourers and servants, living away from their children.



Activity 6	<p>How do these pictures make you feel?</p> <p>How do you think you would feel experiencing this atmosphere over many years?</p>
	

A freedom fighter is a person who thinks his native ethnic group is not free and is working to achieve freedom for his group. This often means that a freedom fighter wants his/her people to have their own nation and independence.

Many people protested about the system of apartheid and one of these protestors was Nelson Mandela. He was arrested in 1962 because the government did not want him to fight against apartheid.

Long Walk To Freedom

This extract is from Nelson Mandela's autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom*. He writes about his rural African upbringing; his struggle against apartheid; his imprisonment and finally his election as President of South Africa.

This extract is from the section entitled 'Robben Island: the dark years'. In this section he describes his prison life. Robben Island is a prison just off the South African coast near Cape Town. Nelson Mandela was imprisoned there between 1964 and 1982. He was a political prisoner with a life sentence.

The fourth morning we were handcuffed and taken in a covered truck to a prison within a prison. This new structure was a one-storey rectangular stone fortress with a flat cement courtyard in the centre, about one hundred feet by thirty feet. It had cells on three of the four sides. The fourth side was a

twenty-foot-high wall with a catwalk patrolled by guards with German shepherds.

The three lines of cells were known as sections A, B, and C, and we were put in section B, on the easternmost side of the quadrangle. We were each given individual cells on either side of a long corridor, with half the cells facing the courtyard. There were about thirty cells in all. The total number of prisoners in the single cells was usually about twenty-four. Each cell had one window, about a foot square, covered with iron bars. The cell had two doors: a metal gate or grille with iron bars on the inside and a thick wooden door outside of that. During the day, only the grille was locked; at night, the wooden door was locked as well.

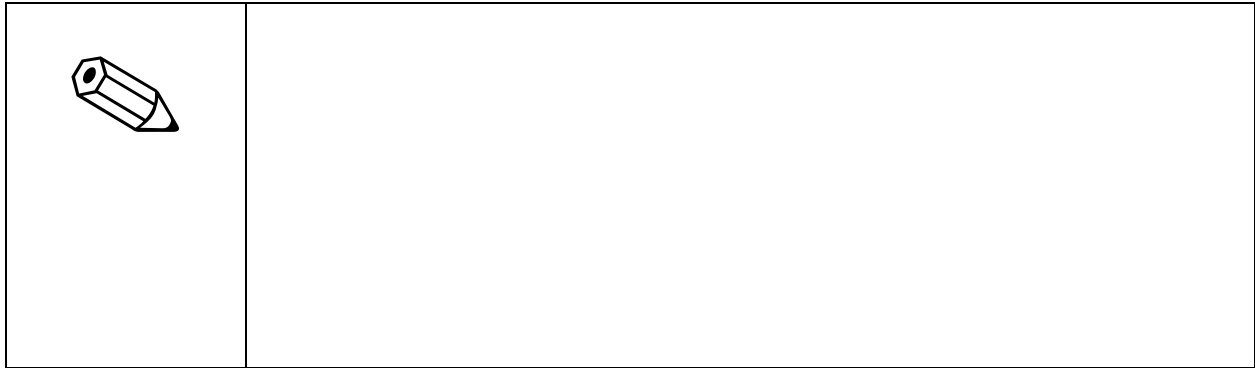
The cells had been constructed hurriedly, and the walls were perpetually damp. Many mornings, a small pool of water would have formed on the cold floor overnight. When I raised this with the commanding officer, he told me our bodies would absorb the moisture. We were each issued three blankets so flimsy and worn they were practically transparent. Our bedding consisted of a single sisal, or straw, mat. Later we were given a felt mat, and one placed the felt mat on top of the sisal one to provide some softness. At that time of year, the cells were so cold and the blankets provided so little warmth that we always slept fully dressed.

I was assigned a cell at the head of the corridor. It overlooked 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 width was about six feet, and the walls were at least two feet thick.

Each cell had a white card posted outside of it with our name and our prison service number. Mine read, "N Mandela 466/64," which meant I was the 466th prisoner admitted to the island in 1964.

Activity 7

Mandela's cell was 3 metres long and 2 metres wide. How would you feel in that space? Can you imagine spending 18 years in this tiny space?



In the midst of breakfast, the guards would yell, “Val in! Val in!” (Fall in! Fall in!), and we would stand outside our cells for inspection. Each prisoner was required to have the three buttons of his khaki jacket properly buttoned. We were required to doff our hats as the warder walked by. If our buttons were undone, our hats unremoved, or our cells untidy, we were charged with a violation of the prison code and punished with either solitary confinement or the loss of meals.

After inspection we would work in the courtyard hammering stones until noon. There were no breaks; if we slowed down, the warders would yell at us to speed up. At noon, the bell would clang for lunch and another metal drum of food would be wheeled into the courtyard. For Africans, lunch consisted of boiled mealies, that is, coarse kernels of corn. The Indian and Coloured prisoners received samp, or mealie rice, which consisted of ground mealies in a souplike mixture. The samp was sometimes served with vegetables whereas our mealies were served straight.

For lunch we often received phuzamandla, which means “drink of strength,” a powder made from mealies and a bit of yeast. It is meant to be stirred into water or milk and when it is thick, it can be tasty, but the prison authorities gave us so little of the powder that it barely colored the water. I would usually try to save my powder for several days until I had enough to make a proper drink, but if the authorities discovered that you were hoarding food, the powder was confiscated and you were punished.

After lunch we worked until four, when the guards blew shrill whistles and we once again lined up to be counted and inspected. We were then permitted half an hour to clean up. The bathroom at the end of our corridor had two seawater showers, a saltwater tap, and three large galvanized metal

buckets, which were used as bathtubs. There was no hot water. We would stand or squat in these buckets, soaping ourselves with the brackish water, rinsing off the dust from the day. To wash yourself with cold water when it is cold outside is not pleasant, but we made the best of it. We would sometimes sing while washing, which made the water seem less icy. In those early days, this was one of the only times that we could converse.

Precisely at 4:30, there would be a loud knock on the wooden door at the end of our corridor, which meant that supper had been delivered. Common-law prisoners were used to dish out the food to us and we would return to our cells to eat it. We again received mealie pap porridge, sometimes with the odd carrot or piece of cabbage or beetroot thrown in — but one usually had to search for it. If we did get a vegetable, we would usually have the same one for weeks on end, until the carrots or cabbage were old and moldy and we were thoroughly sick of them. Every other day, we received a small piece of meat with our porridge. The meat was usually mostly gristle.

For supper, Coloured and Indian prisoners received a quarter loaf of bread (known as a katkop, that is, a cat's head, after the shape of the bread) and a slab of margarine. Africans, it was presumed, did not care for bread as it was a "European" type of food.

Typically, we received even less than the meagre amounts stipulated in the regulations. This was because the kitchen was rife with smuggling. The cooks — all of whom were common-law prisoners — kept the best food for themselves or their friends. Often they would lay aside the tastiest morsels for the warders in exchange for favours or preferential treatment.

At 8 P.M., the night warder would lock himself in the corridor with us, passing the key through a small hole in the door to another warder outside. The warder would then walk up and down the corridor, ordering us to go to sleep. No cry of "lights out" was ever given on Robben Island because the single mesh-covered bulb in our cell burned day and night. Later, those studying for higher degrees were permitted to read until 10 or 11 pm.

Activity 8

1. Describe what Mandela's prison meals were like.
2. What punishments were enforced on the prisoners?
3. Why do you think the South African government gave Nelson Mandela a life sentence when he hadn't killed anyone?

**What happened afterwards ...**

It took a long time, but eventually, Nelson Mandela was released from prison in 1990. In 1993 he won the Nobel Peace Prize and in 1994 he became President of South Africa.

NM: "I greet you all in the name of peace, democracy and freedom for all. I stand here before you not as a prophet but as a humble servant of you, the people. Your tireless and heroic sacrifices have made it possible for me to be here today."

Under Mr Mandela, South Africa developed into the rainbow and cohesive nation he envisioned from his prison cell.

Self-assessment Test

- 1) How would you define the term discrimination?
- 2) What is anti-semitism?
- 3) What is apartheid?

- 4) Imagine how a South African might have felt under the rules of apartheid. Write a brief diary extract/descriptive writing piece focusing on your feelings during apartheid.
- 5) Read the following poem and try to write your own poem based on a type of discrimination that has been discussed in this lesson.

Poem by unknown author:

When I born, I Black,
When I grow up, I Black,
When I go in Sun, I Black,
When I scared, I Black,
When I sick, I Black,
And when I die, I still black...
And you White fellow,
When you born, you pink,
When you grow up, you White,
When you go in Sun, you Red,
When you cold, you blue,
When you scared, you yellow,
When you sick, you Green,
And when you die, you Gray...
And you calling me colored?

- 6) Research Nelson Mandela's life. Write about why his story can be classed as an emotional journey.