

Lesson Two: Exploring Resistance to Apartheid

Summary

Students learn about the different ways people resisted the laws of early apartheid.

Duration

One 50-minute class period

About this Lesson

This lesson is focused on helping young people understand the different ways South Africans organised against and resisted the laws of early apartheid. They begin reflecting on what resistance to oppression can look like, before learning about the non-violent civil disobedience of the Defiance campaign, the Women's Charter and the Congress of the People. The lesson culminates with them creating a short poem or image about resistance.

Guiding Questions

- What is resistance and what can it look like?
- How did people resist early apartheid?

Learning Objectives

- To understand what resistance to oppression is and how it can look.
- To be able to explain how people in South Africa resisted early Apartheid.

Notes to Teacher

1. Lesson Preparation

Apartheid can be a challenging topic to discuss in the classroom.

We recommend that you revisit your classroom contract before teaching this lesson. If you do not have a class contract, you can use [Teach for Tomorrow's contracting guidelines for creating a classroom contract](#) or another procedure you have used in the past.

We also recommend that you teach the first two lessons in the Teach for Tomorrow unit [Discussing Race and Racism in the Classroom](#): Preparing to Discuss Race in the Classroom and Introducing the Concept of Race.

2. Jigsaw Activity

The texts used in the [jigsaw](#) activity are not at the same level – some are more advanced than others with more complex vocabulary and sentence structure. It is important to think about this when you are deciding which groups students should work in. You may choose to ensure groups are made of mixed-ability students, or that some groups are given shorter excerpts or the texts that are easier to understand. Ideally, the groups would be divided in such a way as to ensure that they all finish reviewing their given text and the connection questions at the same time. If possible, print at least enough copies of each reading for sharing one between two.

3. Exam Style Questions

This resource can be used and adapted by those teaching Apartheid at GCSE and A-level. To this end, we have included a range of exam style questions in the extensions section of each lesson, which are intended as discussion prompts, extension activities and/or homework tasks rather than formal examination questions. They are designed to encourage students to engage with second-order historical concepts and assessment objectives commonly assessed across GCSE and A-level History specifications, including causation, consequence, change and continuity, significance, source analysis and historical interpretations. Teachers can select and adapt the questions that are relevant to their teaching and their students.

4. Classroom-ready PowerPoint Slides

Each lesson in this unit includes a PowerPoint of student-facing slides. The PowerPoints are intended to be used alongside, and not instead of, the lesson plans because the latter include important rationales and context that teachers should familiarise themselves with before teaching each lesson. The PowerPoints include basic content and student-facing prompts from the lesson plans but are minimally designed because we anticipate teachers will adapt them to fit the needs of their students and class.

Materials

1. **PowerPoint:** [Lesson Two: Exploring Resistance to Apartheid](#)
2. **Handout:** [Resistance to Early Apartheid](#)
3. **Handout:** [Quotations on Change and Resistance](#)
4. **Handout:** [The Call to the Congress of the People \(full text\)](#)

Activities

1. Reflect on Resistance

Inform students that they will be learning about different acts of resistance to apartheid in South Africa. Before doing so, ask them to reflect on the following questions in a [journal](#) response.

1. What does it mean to resist?
2. What are the different ways in which people can resist oppression and stand up against injustice?
3. What examples of resistance against oppression:
 - Happened in the past?
 - Are happening now?
4. Why do you think people engage in acts of resistance?

Invite students to share their reflections in pairs before leading a short class discussion.

2. Learn About Ways Apartheid Was Resisted

Explain to students that in this part of the lesson, you will be using the [jigsaw teaching strategy](#), which contains two key steps:

1. First, students will be divided into 'expert' groups and each group will be given a different text about resistance to apartheid. These 'expert' groups will review and discuss the assigned materials together.
2. Students will then be divided into 'teaching groups', in which they will give an overview of what they learnt in their 'expert' group, and discuss new questions to consolidate their learning.

Divide the class into 'expert' groups of four to five students (there are five separate readings). Then pass out a different reading contained in the **Handout: [Resistance to Early Apartheid](#)** to each 'expert' group.

Explain to students that each 'expert' group will read their group's assigned reading together out loud, taking it in turns to read, and will then briefly discuss and respond to the connection questions in their books. Let the students know how much time they have for this first task and circulate around the room to check in with groups as they are reading and discussing the questions together.

Then divide the class into new 'teaching' groups. All of the members of each 'teaching' group should have read a different reading in their 'expert' groups.

Project these 'teaching' group prompts on the board:

- Briefly summarise 2–3 key findings of your 'expert' group to your 'teaching' group (take it in turns).
- What forms did resistance to apartheid take in South Africa?
- What do these articles teach us about resistance against oppression and standing up against injustice?
 - What can we learn from the tactics used by those fighting against early apartheid?
- What, if any, parallels do you see between the acts of resistance during apartheid and acts of resistance used today?
- What most resonates with you from the articles and the ideas discussed?
- How is this history relevant to the world today?

Invite groups to share key ideas and insights from their discussions with the class.

3. Reflect on the Lesson

Finally, ask students to draw a picture or write a short poem that captures their understanding of resistance and what it can look like.

Extensions

1. Engage with Quotations on Change and Resistance

Project some/all of the following quotations¹ – or share the handout: [Quotations on Change and Resistance](#) – and invite students to read them and select two to three of their favourites and discuss them using the questions in groups or pairs:

1. What is this quotation saying about change and/or resistance against oppression?
 2. How far do you agree with it?
- Dripping water hollows out stone, not through force but through persistence – Ovid
 - It's the action, not the fruit of the action, that's important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that there'll be any fruit. But that doesn't mean you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result – Mahatma Gandhi

¹ Many of these quotations are taken from Soken-Huberty, E. "15 Quotes about Activism." Human Rights Careers, 28 July 2022, www.humanrightscareers.com/issues/quotes-about-activism/.

- The world is a dangerous place to live; not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it – Albert Einstein
- It is important to take action and to realise that we can make a difference, and this will encourage others to take action and then we realise we are not alone and our cumulative actions truly make an even greater difference. This is how we spread the Light. And this, of course, makes us all even more hopeful – Jane Goodall
- When people ask me how do I draw hope, how do I stay encouraged, how do I continue to show up? The answer is that I look back. I look back and I look at how my existence here today is owed entirely to the courage of people who came before me. And so, what do I owe myself in that moment and to those who come after me? To exercise courage in this moment – Bree Newsome Bass
- I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept – Angela Davis
- Waiting until everything looks feasible is too long to wait – Rebecca Solnit
- Every crisis, actual or impending, needs to be viewed as an opportunity to bring about profound changes in our society. Going beyond protest organizing, visionary organizing begins by creating images and stories of the future that help us imagine and create alternatives to the existing system – Grace Lee Boggs
- I'm convinced of this: Good done anywhere is good done everywhere. ... As long as you're breathing, it's never too late to do some good – Dr. Maya Angelou
- I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples – Mother Teresa
- The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any – Alice Walker
- In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends – Dr Martin Luther King Jr
- If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality – Archbishop Desmond Tutu
- Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope – Robert F Kennedy

Once students have engaged with the quotations, lead a short class discussion inviting students to share their thoughts on these quotations and how, if at all, they have furthered their understanding of resistance.

2. Analyse the Call to the Congress of the People

Distribute the **Handout:** [The Call to the Congress of the People \(full text\)](#) or use the shortened version contained in the Handout: Resistance to Early Apartheid (pages 3 & 4) and divide students into groups, asking students to analyse the call.

If desired, use the following questions to guide them:

- Which groups of people is the call addressed to?
 - Why do you think this is the case?
- What is the aim of this call?
 - Do you think it succeeds in its aim?
- In the opening seven paragraphs, different living and working conditions are described in detail.
 - What effect does this have on the reader?
 - What does it reveal about the societal issues facing many South Africans?
- How does the style of writing in the leaflet impact the reader?
 - Which words, phrases or sentences most resonate with and/or move you? Why?
 - Why do you think the phrase 'LET US SPEAK TOGETHER OF FREEDOM' is repeated? What is the impact of this?
- What do you think it would feel like to read this call if you were from one of the groups addressed? Explain your answer.
- Draw an image to accompany this call.

3. GCSE Style Questions

Lesson Two Specific Questions

- Describe the methods and activities used to resist early apartheid.
- Outline the different elements of the Defiance Campaign.
- Outline the role women played in resisting apartheid.
- Describe the work of the ANC.
- Describe the changes in the ANC that impacted the movement's resistance to apartheid.
- What was the purpose of the:
 - Women's Charter?
 - Call to Freedom?

- Defiance Campaign?
- The Congress of the People?
- Which of the sources is most useful to historians studying resistance against apartheid?

Cross-Lesson Historical Enquiry Prompts

- Describe
- Outline ...
- Use source ____ and your own knowledge to describe the events that / the role of...
- Describe the impact of changes in...
- Explain why/how...
- How useful are the sources for investigating... ?
- What was the purpose of... ?
- Which of the sources is most useful to a historian studying... ?

4. A-Level Style Questions

Lesson Two Specific Questions

Historical Concepts and Enquiry (AO1)

- How did methods of resistance to apartheid change in the period c.1945–55?
- To what extent was the Defiance Campaign a turning point in resistance to apartheid?
- Assess the reasons for the growth of mass resistance in the 1950s.
- How far did the ANC Youth League transform the aims and methods of the ANC?
- Assess the effectiveness of non-violent resistance in challenging apartheid in the 1950s.

Working with Sources (AO2)

- How far do the sources support the view that non-violent resistance posed a significant challenge to the apartheid state?
- What additional evidence would a historian need in order to assess the success of the Defiance Campaign?

Working with Interpretations (AO3)

- Some historians view the Defiance Campaign as the beginning of mass resistance to apartheid. Others argue that its practical achievements were limited. Which interpretation is more convincing?

Cross-Lesson Questions

These questions can be used alongside any lesson.

Historical Concepts and Enquiry (AO1)

- Assess the relative importance of different factors in shaping...
- To what extent was ... a turning point?
- How far do you agree with the view that...
- Assess the significance of...

Working with Sources (AO2)

- To what extent does the evidence support the view that...
- Assess the strengths and limitations of the sources for understanding...
- How useful are the sources for investigating...

Working with Interpretations (AO3)

- Why might historians disagree about...
- Which interpretation is more convincing and why?
- How and why have interpretations changed over time?

View the next lesson in the Exploring the Freedom Charter resource: **Lesson Three: Reflecting on the Freedom Charter**