The wealth of Africa
South Africa

Students’ worksheets

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Front cover image: Zulu shield made of fur, South Africa, 1850–1927.
SHEET 1: HOW FAR WAS THE TURMOIL IN SOUTHERN AFRICA IN THE 1800s THE WORK OF SHAKA AND THE ZULUS?

Around 1800 there began a period of great turmoil in South Africa. British and Dutch settlers were moving up from the Cape, and slave traders at Delagoa Bay in Mozambique began gathering victims from further inland. Periods of drought made farming in the area unsustainable. At the same time the Zulu nation became more warlike and powerful. Historians have debated which of these was the real cause of the turmoil (known to some as the *Mfecane*), and what Shaka’s role was in it.

**Source 1**

[Shaka] introduced the assegai (a short thrusting spear) and trained the army to encircle the enemy in a shield-to-shield formation so that rival warriors could be stabbed at the [centre]... Shaka’s wars resulted in the merging of some 300 formerly independent chiefdoms into the Zulu kingdom.

Deflem 1999: 377

**Source 3**

History perhaps does not furnish an instance of a more despotic and cruel monster than Shaka.

Francis Farewell (a British trader), quoted in Chanaiwa 1980: 4

**Source 5**

The system of terror went completely out of control after Shaka’s mother died. Subjects not showing sufficient grief were slaughtered, and Shaka proclaimed that no cows were to be milked, and no crops were to be planted for a period of one year.

Deflem 1999: 377–378

**Source 6**

The Zulus and Shaka were certainly involved in violent warfare... But the Zulus were just one of several groups that were consolidating themselves at this time... They were not the barbaric war-machine stereotyped in the literature; nor was their rise the product of dynamic, heroic nation-building. Shaka did lead an intensely militaristic nation; he was a brutal despot, but he was not the ‘motor’ driving the developments which convulsed southern Africa in the first half of the 19th century.

Reader 1997: 467

**Source 7**

By making Shaka the motor of the *Mfecane*, white writers were able to ignore or cover up the devastating impact of white penetration into South Africa in the early 19th century. This included the effects of a massive demand for labour in the form of slaves from both the Cape Colony in the south, and from Delagoa Bay in the north, an increasingly important slaving port in the 1800s.

Julian Cobbing’s ideas, discussed in Hamilton 1992: 38

**Questions**

1. What evidence is there that Shaka was a powerful man?
2. What evidence is there that the Zulus were an aggressive nation?
3. Was the turmoil in southern Africa at this time the fault of the Zulus?
During the 1870s the British expanded their territory in South Africa. They took over Natal, and Transvaal which had been under the control of Dutch settlers (called Afrikaners or Boers). This brought them up against the powerful Zulu nation. See what happened next.

Source 1
Like so many imperial conflicts of the period, the Zulu War was not started from London. Instead, Benjamin Disraeli’s government... made every effort to avoid a fight. Sir Bartle Frere [British High Commissioner] had other ideas, however. He exaggerated the threat posed by the Zulus, and took matters into his own hands in December 1878 by presenting the Zulu king, Cetshwayo, with an unacceptable ultimatum. This required, among other things, the disbandment of the Zulu Army, and war was the inevitable result.
David 2009

Source 3
In the 1870s the Zulu kingdom was by far the most powerful African state south of the River Limpopo.
Thompson 1971: 261

Source 4
If Cetshwayo really wanted peace he would have complied with our demands or he would have negotiated in good faith to get the terms reduced.
Sir Bartle Frere, quoted in Bowman 2004: 124

Source 5
During the second half of the 19th century, the British were interested in Zululand for several reasons, including their desire for the Zulu population to provide labour in the diamond fields of Southern Africa, and their plan to create a South Africa federation in the region (thereby destroying self-ruling African states).
Encyclopedia Britannica 2010

Source 6
Frere failed to mention in this report the numerous attempts that Cetshwayo had made to extend the deadline of the ultimatum before the war broke out, and the attempts he made during the war to discuss a peaceful settlement.
Bowman 2004: 124

Questions
1. Study source 2. What image is Cetshwayo trying to get across in this picture?
2. How could the British use this picture to serve their purposes?
3. What reasons are given for the outbreak of the Zulu war?
4. Which do you think was the most important reason?
5. Whose fault was the war?
6. How could war have been avoided?
**SHEET 3: WHY DID THE BRITISH LOSE AT ISANDLWANA?**

The British force at Isandlwana was almost completely wiped out by the Zulu army in one of the most humiliating defeats in Britain’s colonial history. What had gone wrong? Or were the Zulus simply too strong?

**Source 1**

If Pulleine [the officer in charge], on first hearing of the Zulu attack, had taken down his tents and concentrated all his available troops in a tight defensive formation... he might well have saved the camp. Instead he did almost the opposite, sending out infantry companies in small groups, and deploying the rest of his command along a huge defensive perimeter away from the camp.

David 2004: 129

**Source 2**

We left camp proceeding over the hills... The enemy in small clumps retiring before us for some time, drawing us over five miles from the camp when they turned and fell upon us, the whole [Zulu] army showing itself from behind the hills in front where they had evidently been waiting.

Lt Charles Raw, quoted in David 2004: 125

**Source 3**

Cetshwayo revitalised the army... conscription was enforced on all the young men, who lived in regimental barracks under strict discipline. The warriors were confident and assertive.

Thompson 1971: 261–262

**Source 4**

Paul Kruger [later President of Transvaal] had recommended that the British should always carry out reconnaissance and should always entrench their camps; and Chelmsford had done neither of these things.

Thompson 1971: 264

**Source 5**

The danger of an attack... was increasing with each passing day, but no steps were now taken to fortify the new site... only the native Pioneer Corps carried a few shovels, and the ground in any event was too stony to dig.

Morris 1965: 329–330

**Source 6**

Scouts had been out early and had returned to report to the leaders that the White people were scattered about on the hills around the camp like a lot of goats out grazing and that they were convinced that the ‘spirits’ of the Zulu nation had put them into their hands to be killed.

Unnamed Zulu, quoted in David 2004: 124

**Task**

Make a list of all the reasons for the British defeat. Decide which were the most important reasons.
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SHEET 4: WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD AND DIAMONDS?

The discovery of huge diamond deposits at Kimberley in 1867 was followed by that of gold on the Rand in Transvaal in 1884. Suddenly South Africa became a magnet for prospectors and large corporations, and significantly more attractive to the British government. Some of the changes caused by these minerals are shown here.

Source 1
The discovery of diamonds created huge new demands for labour. This led to a great increase in the number of black migrant workers. Between 1871 and 1875 an estimated 50,000 Africans arrived every year at the diamond mines; and nearly the same number left each year.
Callinicos 1980

Source 4
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>£ value of gold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>10,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>7,667,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>16,028,883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>31,973,123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gold mined on the Rand, from Gilbert 1933: 558

Source 5
A number of methods were used to force Africans to become migrant labourers. These methods included taking advantage of internal conflicts within African kingdoms, and going to war against them.
Callinicos 1980

Source 6
Diamond-mining provided a new source of wealth which dramatically altered the pattern of economic life by offering well-paid employment, other than in agriculture, to people of all races.
Houghton 1971: 12

Source 7
After a period of service on the mines, young men were treated with new respect as m’gaiza, those who have returned from the mines with some wealth to show for it. Red coats, smoking jackets, hats and trousers bought on the mines were symbols of their new status.
Callinicos 1980

Source 9
Between 1895 and 1898, there was a net outward migration of 75,500 UK citizens to South African ports. Johannesburg supported a white population of 25,000 in 1889, a figure which nearly quadrupled in the following decade.
Richardson & Van Helten 1984: 320

Task
List the changes under the headings: economic, social, political, and other. Which changes do you think were the most important?
SHEET 5: WHAT WERE CONDITIONS LIKE IN THE GOLD AND DIAMOND FIELDS?

There was a need for unskilled labour to mine the gold and diamonds, but African people did not want to do the hard and dangerous work. Mine bosses did not want to spend money on high wages and comforts, but were still desperate to stop their workers leaving before the end of their contracts. See how they tried to achieve this balancing act.

**Source 1**
We must have labour. The mining industry without labour is as if you could get milk without cows.
President of the Chamber of Mines, quoted in Callinicos 1980

**Source 3**
Taxes had to be paid in money and no longer in cattle. Africans had to pay a hut tax of 1 Rand per year... a man who worked on the mines for three months could earn enough money to pay the hut tax. Another form of tax was the labour tax... [of] 1 Rand. However, they did not have to pay this tax if they proved that they worked for wages for at least three months of the year.
Callinicos 1980

**Source 4**
Wages went unpaid; workers who had completed a contract were not allowed to return home; workers who had been told that there was no work when they volunteered at the recruiting centres in the morning were rounded up at noon as vagrants and put to work...
Moeti 1986: 280

**Source 6**
The housing accommodation consists, for the most part, of compounds. These are usually barracks built in a hollow square... When in the compound the 'boys' are effectively locked up, while undesirable visitors are equally kept out.
Johnston 1904: 235

**Source 7**
The crowded mining barracks at least provided a controlled diet and some recreational and hospital facilities, but from 1903 to 1920 some 5,000 African miners died every year from accidents and disease as tuberculosis spread rapidly.
Walshe 1986: 552

**Questions**

1. What techniques did mine owners and the government use to get workers?
2. What techniques did they use to keep them?
3. What were conditions like for miners?
SHEET 6: WHY DID THE ANGLO-BOER WAR BREAK OUT IN 1899?

The discovery of gold in Transvaal coincided with the granting of self-government, though not full independence, to that territory. British settlers and prospectors flocked to the goldfields, and demanded that the British government help them. Try to judge from these sources whether the British government encouraged war as a way of getting control of the gold.

Source 1
Uitlanders [foreign residents of Transvaal] had to carry passes, similar to those required to be carried by the coloured native population.
Imperial South African Association 1900: 8

Source 2
Whereas in Cape Colony, Dutch and English language are equal, in the Transvaal Dutch alone is the official language of the Courts and Public Offices, though not understood by a third of the people.
Imperial South African Association 1900: 7

Source 3
The boundaries of Swaziland are not now respected by certain of the Transvaal Boers, armed parties of whom are in the habit of crossing the border, demanding taxes, and upon being refused, of seizing and carrying off cattle and children.
Imperial South African Association 1900: 18

Source 4
There has undoubtedly been for many years past a movement for the expulsion of the British Crown from South Africa, and the conversion of the entire country into an Independent Dutch Republic.
Imperial South African Association 1900: 31

Source 7
This huge influx of foreigners and foreign capital (most of it British) was seen by the Transvaalers as a threat to their independence and their traditional way of life. They believed that the British, and Cecil Rhodes in particular, had set jealous eyes upon their wealth.
Houghton 1971: 14

Source 8
Rhodes believed he could overthrow the Boer government and make the Transvaal a British colony that would support the interests of the mine owners. In 1895 he helped to plan an attack on the Transvaal - the Jameson Raid. But it was failure and Rhodes had to resign as Prime Minister of the Cape.
Callinicos 1980

Questions
1. Sources 1–4 are from an official British document complaining about the treatment of British migrants to the Transvaal. Does this affect how reliable they might be?
2. What reasons for the war are shown in sources 7 and 8?
3. Why didn’t the Imperial South African Association mention these reasons?
The second half of the war saw resistance by the Boers in small, isolated groups called commandos. With help from the local population they proved hard to track down, leading to British frustration. Even though the British army was regarded as one of the best in the world it was not equipped for this type of warfare.

**Source 1**
To be a good horseman was second nature to most Afrikaners [Boers]. To a man they were mobile – a significant factor that secured them tactical mobility superior to that of the British.
Gooch 2000: 90

**Source 2**
Every farm is to [Boers] an intelligence agency and a supply depot so that it is almost impossible to surround or catch them.
British Commander Kitchener, quoted in Krebs 1992: 41

**Source 5**
The Boer’s most important weapon was his rifle. Thanks to the hunting culture with which most Afrikaners grew up they developed an almost unequalled marksmanship and horsemanship... shooting at a hidden or moving target came naturally... One of the most important characteristics of the Boers’ tactics was accurate rifle fire from well-selected defensive positions.
Gooch 2000: 89

**Source 6**
As the Boers wanted each rifle shot to count...they did not like to engage in battle at night. They did, however, use the dark as cover to take up sound positions; in fact, they would generally launch an attack at first light. However, during the guerrilla phase the Boers also became particularly effective in carrying out night attacks...
Gooch 2000: 89

**Source 7**
Kitchener’s strategy was to divide the country into small areas by fortified lines preventing the Boers from crossing from one area to the next... over 8,000 blockhouses were constructed. Some 50,000 men were deployed to guard them. Blockhouses were at first put up at 2.5km intervals on the main railway lines.... Barbed wire fortifications were placed between adjacent blockhouses.
Hanslow

**Source 9**
It was impossible for the slow-moving British columns with their guns and their wagons to overtake them.
Conan Doyle 1902: chapter 35
One British tactic to beat the Boers, though ultimately successful, caused an uproar. The idea was to deny the commandos access to food and support by burning their farms. Their families were then moved into concentration camps. This was intended as a humanitarian measure to protect them, but mismanagement turned this into a disaster.

Source 1
By the end of the war, 28,000 whites, mostly women and children, had died in the Boer camps – more than twice the number of men on both sides killed in the fighting. The death rates were even higher in the African camps; 14,000 died, of a total of 115,000 internees.
Krebs 1992: 41

Source 2
Imagine the heat outside the tents and the suffocation inside!... the sun blazed through the single canvas, and the flies lay thick and black on everything. Mrs M.... has six children in camp, all ill, two in the tin hospital with typhoid, and four sick in the tent.
Hobhouse 1901

Source 4
The strange spectacle was frequently seen of Boer snipers killing or wounding the drivers and stokers of the very trains which were bringing up food upon which Boer families were dependent for their lives. It is really inexplicable that the British authorities did not place hostages upon the trains. A truckload of Boers behind every engine would have stopped the practice for ever.
Conan Doyle 1902: chapter 4

Source 5
Even at the best of times, and especially if anyone is sick in the tent, the Boer woman has a horror of ventilation; any cranny through which fresh air could enter is carefully stuffed up, and the tent becomes a hot-bed for the breeding of disease germs... It is, therefore, no wonder that measles had raged through the camps and caused many deaths...
Milicent Fawcett (1901) in Krebs 1992: 47

Questions
1. In what ways could Britain have been accused of abusing human rights?
2. What would British generals say in their defence?
### SHEET 9: WHY WAS APARTHEID INTRODUCED?

The policy of separate development (apartheid in Afrikaans) was formally introduced by the National Party in 1948. These sources might reveal that it was not a completely new idea. See if you can work out from the laws the real reasons for apartheid.

**Source 1**

Slaves at the Cape had been forced to carry passes since 1709. This made it easier for their owners and the local authorities to control their movements.

South African History Online

**Source 2**

[The Native (Urban Areas) Act, 1923] prohibited all people classified as 'Bantu' from remaining in any urban area for more than 72 hours unless they were born there or worked there.

Du Toit 1981: 20

**Source 3**

[The Pass Law of 1952 was]... a hated law which forced Black South Africans to carry a pass book, including a photograph, place of birth, employment records, tax payments and criminal records, and enabled the government to further restrict their movement. It was illegal to be without a Pass, the penalty for which was arrest and jail.

South African History Online

**Source 4**

The Pass Laws show no respect for marriage – men are forcibly separated from their wives because one of them cannot obtain the permit to reside in the same area. A child above the age of 16 needs a special permit to live with its parents outside the Bantustan reservation.

Mwakikagile 2008: 49

**Source 6**

It is unlikely that Apartheid would have happened were it not for the expansion of industry during the Second World War... This resulted in a massive influx of African work seekers who came to be seen as posing a major threat to the privileged position of largely Afrikaans-speaking unskilled and semi-skilled urban workers... [It also seemed to pose] a new challenge to white power from urban Africans.

Dubow 1992: 211

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**Questions**

1. What racial laws had been passed before 1948?
2. How did things change after 1948?
3. Why do you think these laws were passed?
SHEET 10: HOW WAS APARTHEID DEFEATED?

As might be expected, apartheid was bitterly opposed even from the earliest days by Africans, many of whom did everything they could to destroy it. Increasingly, the international community joined in with sporting and trade boycotts. Protests became focused around Nelson Mandela, one of the jailed African leaders.

Source 1
In May 1918 Black workers across the country went on strike against low wages, poor housing and passes for men. Many of the protesters were arrested and imprisoned.
South African History Online

Source 2
On 21 March 1960, PAC [Pan Africanist Congress] supporters were to voluntarily leave their passes at home and offer themselves up for arrest at the nearest police station. The police panicked at the sight of thousands of protesters at Sharpeville and shot into the crowd. They killed 69, and injured 180 people.
South African History Online

Source 3
During the period 1916 to 1984 over 17,745,000 Africans have been arrested or prosecuted under pass laws.
Savage 1986: 181

Source 4
During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to the 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 live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.
Nelson Mandela speaking at his trial in 1964, quoted at South African History Online

Source 7
The sports boycott was the first public action to force the arrogant white regime in South Africa to bend and make adjustments in its policy of rigid racial separation, however cosmetic they were. It showed that massive international pressure can be effective in promoting the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa.
African National Congress

Task
Each source shows events, actions or images that led to the collapse of apartheid in 1990. Draw up a table in which you identify these events, and next to each one suggest why it was a setback for apartheid.
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