



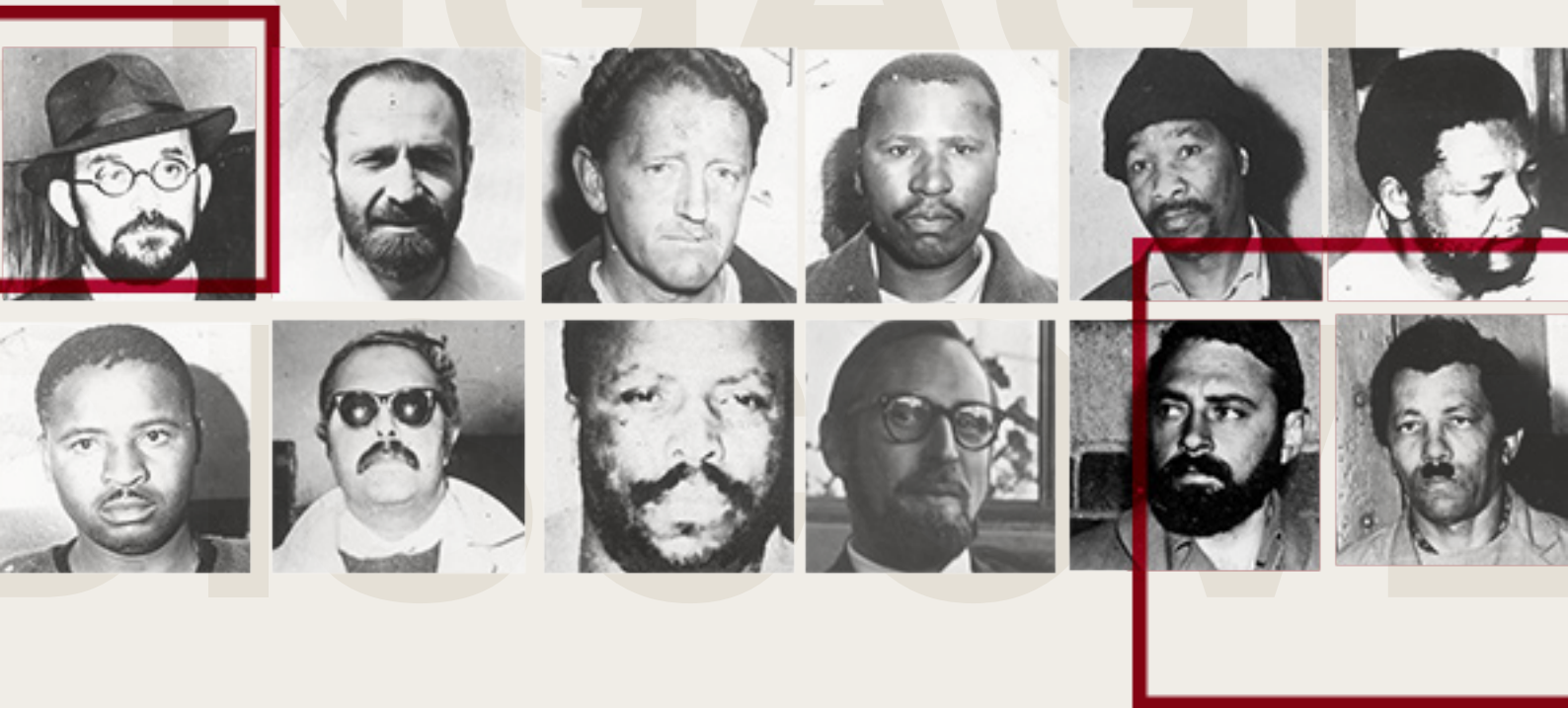
Liliesleaf

A PLACE *of* LIBERATION

Grade 4

**Learning from Leaders:
The Rivonia Trialists**

ENGAGE



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THE DREAM TEAM

In 1963 the men in the pictures above went on trial in a court case that famously became known as the Rivonia Trial. They were charged with committing acts of sabotage against the state. The white media called them terrorists. But to the majority of people in South Africa they were heroes. They were leaders of the liberation struggle. Although it is true that they were plotting acts of sabotage, they were doing this after more than fifty years of trying to talk to the white government about equal rights for all non-white people in South Africa.

For fifty years the ANC and other liberation organisations had tried to bring about change peacefully. It was not working. In 1963, black, coloured and Indian South Africans could not vote. They could not live where they wanted to, they could not move around freely, their schools were much worse than those of white children. They were discriminated against by law and in everyday life. The men in these pictures wanted to change all that.



From left to right:

Top Row: Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Denis Goldberg, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada

Bottom Row: Lionel Bernstein, Raymond Mhlaba, James Kantor, Elias Motsoaledi, Andrew Mlangeni

They were working for a free, democratic South Africa where all people were equal. They believed that South Africa belonged to all who lived in it, regardless of their skin colour or beliefs or language. But the judge found them guilty and sentenced them to life in jail. In the end they each spent between 22 and 27 years in prison before freedom was finally won.

Four years after Nelson Mandela was released, he became president of South Africa. Some of the other Rivonia trialists continued to do important work to make South Africa a better place for all.

You will find more information on the Rivonia trialists at Liliesleaf and on the Liliesleaf website:

www.liliesleaf.co.za

Think about this:

Did Nelson Mandela punish the people who put him and his comrades in jail?
Was he angry with white people for supporting the old government?
Was he bitter about the time he spent in jail?

Some more thoughts about Mandela:

- He believed that all people were born equal
- He believed that apartheid was a very unfair system
- He loved South Africa and wanted all people to be free
- He was prepared to go to prison for what he believed in
- He respected other people
- He was able to forgive people who had done him wrong
- He wanted to make life better for people who struggle
- He was able to get people to love and respect him

Can you add to this list?

QUESTION 1

In a group, discuss the following questions about Nelson Mandela:

1. What were some of the most important events in Mandela's life?
2. How do you think it felt to be in prison for 27 years?
3. What do you think was the happiest moment of Mandela's life?
4. Why is he an example of a good leader?
5. Is it always easy to be a good leader?
6. Are leaders always popular?
7. Are leaders always perfect?
8. How can ordinary people follow the example of good leaders?
9. What will you remember about Nelson Mandela in 20 years' time?
10. If you had had the opportunity of meeting Mandela, what would you have said to him?

QUESTION 2

Write down all the things you can think of that made Nelson Mandela and the other Rivonia trialists good leaders.

QUESTION 3

The Dream Team Exercise

Read the following thoughts on leadership by Nelson Mandela and then do the exercise:

"It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things happen. You take the front position when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership."

"A good leader can take part in a debate or argument honestly and freely, knowing that at the end he and the person or people on the other side must be closer, and stronger. You don't have that idea when you are full of your own importance and haven't bothered to find out what the facts of a matter are."

“As I have said, the first thing is to be honest with yourself. You can never make a difference to others if you have not changed yourself... Great peacemakers are truthful, honest and reliable – but humble.”

Quotes adapted from Nelson Mandela

Even the most important leaders in the world have a team of people around them to help plan and make decisions. Imagine that you have been asked to put together a team to lead your school to achieve great things and to fix the things that need fixing.

Working in groups of between four and six people, you are going to assemble a dream team.

1. Your team first needs to decide how many people will be in the Dream Team. Try to not make it too big. You can choose any person, living or dead (but not a character from a book, film or television), from your own community or even someone famous from anywhere in the world.
2. Will the members of the Dream Team have the same strengths, or do you want people with different strengths and skills (for example a good speaker or someone who is organised and efficient)?
3. Write a short paragraph about each person you select to briefly explain who they are and why you have selected him or her to be on the Dream Team.
4. Who will be the team leader and write a short paragraph explaining why.

When you are complete, present your Dream Team to the rest of the class. Your class then has to select the Ultimate Dream Team by choosing one person from each group. Who will be elected as the leader of your final dream team – and why? If you are unable to reach a decision you must vote.