

# Descriptive essay: i am african

Business



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In 1996, when Nelson Mandela was president and Thabo Mbeki vice-president, Mbeki made a speech in Cape Town to honour the passing of the Constitution of South Africa. That speech was entitled, “ I am an African” and the depth and poetic cadence showed he is a gifted public orator, but it was his ability to touch and awaken what is the tender part of the psyche of South Africans that brought tears to our eyes. That speech took us further than our own borders because it reminded us that our history and our daily struggles are not that different from the rest of Africa.

Our sorrows, joys, shortcomings and achievements go hand-in-hand with the rest of our African brothers and sisters. We have to continue the struggle for equality, fairness and opportunity in all areas of our own country so our immediate neighbours could also benefit and extend those benefits further afield until Africa thrived. The soaring speech encouraged us but never said it would be easy. It is hard to define what makes anyone African because the continent is overflowing with diversity. Is it because you are born in Africa? Is it because you have citizenship of an African country? Is it because you own property in Africa? Is it because you have African ancestry or roots? You could satisfy one, all or none of those questions. I say I am African because my future is here.

I see the beauty, potential and wealth but I also see the corruption, greed and poverty. It is believed that most of Africa’s natural wealth has still to be discovered. Right now, the continent is harvesting only a fraction of woods, petroleum, bauxite, uranium, iron, diamonds, tropical fruits, cocoa beans, copper, silver, iron, oil and cobalt. This already represents enormous wealth and there is no reason for Africans to continue living in poverty. If you want

to call yourself African then speak against poverty and find out where the wealth is going.

There are still areas of conflict due to the resistance of democracy by one side or ethnic and/or religious divisions like the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan. I am African so it is my duty to spread tolerance by respecting other Africans I interact with. It is easy to love Africa because of the open spaces, big sky and natural wonders but no matter where you go, or what problems there are, you will always find Africans who are friendly, generous and helpful. Many are poor and some are wealthy and I see them every day. Living in South Africa is seeing people from North Africa all the way down south.

I am South African but I am constantly reminded that I am African because I meet Africans of every description in my own neighbourhood and city. Many have fled war and the terrible crimes of war and have nothing but their willingness to work alongside South Africans for a better future. It is them and my fellow countrymen who bring Mbeki's speech to life and remind me that I am an African, this is my place in the world and these are my people, from the largest country of Algeria to the tiniest of Seychelles.