

Select and explain  
the most important  
turning points of  
nelson mandela's life



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Throughout Nelson Mandela's life there were a few key events that led to his success and achievement, for example, his sheer determination and loyalty to the fight against apartheid and oppression of the Africans.

The first time he was really exposed to politics and the problems with racism was when he joined Heald Town Methodist College. His peers introduced him to not only local politics but national politics as well. This was a marginally significant event as it gave Nelson Mandela his first real glimpse into the deep-rooted injustice of the government. In 1943 after earning his BA, Nelson joined the ANC although, just over a year later, he decided that the ANC was too staid and created the ANC youth league, which he planned to be a more activist organisation. This gave him more respect in the anti-racism circle.

In 1948 the nationalist party came to power led by Dr. Daniel Malan, their main policy was apartheid and they implemented new laws of racial discrimination and prohibition of mixed marriages. This sparked the ANC youth party to hold many protests and boycotts making them grow more unpopular to the government. Also in 1951 Nelson Mandela became president of the ANC youth party this was a major turning point in his life as he now had more authority and could take a more active role in the fight against apartheid rule. One year after the ANC launched the Defiance Campaign, Nelson was arrested and charged with the violation of the suppression of communism act and got a 9-month suspended sentence.

This was a major setback for Nelson as this meant he was thought of as a criminal, also in September 1952 he was banned from attending all meetings

and gatherings meaning meetings would be a lot more difficult to organise as they would have to be 'underground'. During the annual ANC meeting in December, Mandela became its deputy president and he drew up a plan to continue working underground (The M plan). In December 1956 he encounters another major problem when he is put on trial for high treason, this was one of the most significant events as it could have meant the end of his fight. On March 21, 1960 the Sharpeville massacre took place, this ragged Nelson and the ANC youth party and made them even more determined in the fight against oppression. Although when he was found not guilty in the 'treason' trial things started to look up, this gave a real boost to the ANC but the victory wasn't sustained for long, as on August 1962 Mandela was arrested again and sentenced to 5 years imprisonment and was held on Robben Island. This was a major turning point as many people became worried and paranoid, therefore initially less people protested.

Between 1962 and 1985 many protests were held to try and free Mandela, even some famous musicians helped. When he was told he would be set free if he renounced violence, but he declined, showing his morality. Gradually things started looking up, many people were starting to realise that apartheid was wrong. In November 1985 the Minister of Justice Kobie Coetsee visits Nelson when he was hospitalised with prostate cancer, although only a social call this marked a major turning point and showed that the government was gradually buckling. In June 1986 the government declared a state of emergency and banned the, this shows that the government were. During the next few years Mandela was moved to new accommodation and had many meetings with state officials.

On February 2nd 1990 De Klerk announced that all the bans were to be lifted from the ANC this is one of the most important turning points in Nelson Mandela's life it shows that people are starting to realise that his cause was worthy. On February 11, 1990 Nelson Mandela was released from prison, I think this was the most important event in his life as it gave him the confidence to go on campaigning. In December 1993 Nelson was awarded the noble peace prize this showed that all his sacrifices were worthwhile. May 10th 1994 marked an amazing day and against all odds Nelson Mandela became president.

Through out his life he had many ups and downs but inevitably it all paid off. The major turning points were when he was put in prison and how he gradually worked his way out. Support for him was tremendous and many celebrities helped in the 'free Mandela campaign'. Explain the part played by external pressure in the fight against apartheid and minority rule in South Africa. External pressure from the United Nations and other major sources played a large part in the breakdown of the African government, which inevitably led to the end of apartheid.

During the 1960's many countries, including the USA, grew to despise apartheid and held protests to show their disapproval, many said they would impose sanctions on South Africa unless the government ended the apartheid state. In 1952 the United Nations publicly condemned apartheid. Later in 1962 the UN recommended the use of economic sanctions on South Africa, initially this put a lot of pressure on the South African government but mysteriously not long after there was worldwide condemnation, South African exports to Europe, America and Asia rapidly rose by up to 300%.  
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Many loans were cancelled and firms like Esso and Barclays withdrew a lot of investment from South Africa and the United Kingdom boycotted loans to South Africa. As South Africa's wealth had increased due increased prosperity they gradually became more self-sufficient and inevitably overcame the economic sanctions. Therefore they didn't really play much of a large role in the breakdown of apartheid but they did show that many countries were against their policies and determined to change the racist and unethical government initiative.

1963 saw the Olympic games committee refuse entrant into the games for any racially segregated teams. Also in 1970 the UK cricket tour was cancelled, as the British didn't want racists playing on their land, in 1961 South Africa left the British Commonwealth because of strong criticisms of its policies. As the Government despised their exclusion (A bit like the black Africans!) this was an important factor in the break down of the government as it left South Africa paranoid and isolated from the rest of the world. Although international isolation from sport and economic sanction did play big role in the fight against apartheid there was many other important factors in the fight against minority rule. For example: The black consciousness had a major role in the deterioration, as did the fear put into the government by the violent protests in South Africa. Therefore I think that although external pressure did help in the fight against minority rule and apartheid, it wasn't the most important factor.

As the population of black Africans grew so did the threat, which inevitably overthrew the government by sheer volume of people. Who was more important in bringing about the end of apartheid and minority rule in South

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Africa, Nelson Mandela or President de Klerk? Both Nelson Mandela and President de Klerk played a very significant role in the fight against apartheid. Nelson Mandela was more of an idealistic symbol of protest, whereas De Klerk was a figure of authority that could actually legally abolish apartheid. President de Klerk was more important in a legal sense as it couldn't have been done without him although, I think Nelson Mandela was really more important as he devoted his life, even his freedom trying to end apartheid. Nelson Mandela held many protests and meetings to try and end minority rule, one of which persuaded President de Klerk to lift the ban on the ANC, this meant more people joined it as the fear of being arrested was lifted. After his release Nelson Mandela and his ANC colleagues immediately started negotiating a final political settlement with the white government.

Although President de Klerk was the person that officially changed the laws it was Nelson Mandela that fought to have them considered and tried to persuade others of the need for change. Some people see him as an unimportant westernised cult figure that was only an inspirational speaker but personally taking all evidence into consideration i. e. the fact that he still campaigns for equality now, I feel this is an unsupported assertion. When Nelson Mandela said, “..

. you recognize us as human beings, but in South Africa we are registered not as human beings but as blacks.” It showed his sheer disgust at the apartheid policies. Nelson Mandela was important as his sheer determination sparked many people to follow his lead and protest.

President de Klerk was important in some respects as he tried to end apartheid, although unlike Mandela, his incentive was firstly political and secondarily ethical. In 1989 President F. W. de Klerk initiated a series of reforms to effectively dismantle apartheid. On 2nd February 1990, he made many major changes to the law, for example: 30 bans were lifted on anti-apartheid organisations, newspapers could report freely and the death sentence was stopped.

These changes dramatically affected the break down of apartheid and played a large role in the end of minority rule as it showed ' blacks' that their protests were worthwhile. In 1991 de Klerk called a referendum on whether the nation wanted to continue towards true democracy and 70% voted in favour, this was very important as it showed that, unlike in previous years, everyone's opinion was valid. President de Klerk once said, " We desire to create a society in which all people are victors, instead of one consisting of winners and losers...

" which showed him to be an ethical and essential member in the fight against apartheid. Inevitably both Nelson Mandela's and President de Klerk's roles in the fight against apartheid were completely different, Nelson was very important as he was an idol and an amazing campaigner he gave up his life for the cause and this made others fight against apartheid too, whereas De Klerk was the person that actually passed the laws and actually ended apartheid. All things considered, even though De Klerk was the person that actually legally ended apartheid I think that it was Nelson Mandela that was the most important person as he fought all his life and was a symbol of hope and idolization to all other protesters.

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