The Rainbow Nation

Apartheid

In the past South Africa was famous for all the wrong reasons. It was a country of Apartheid law. These laws separated black and white people in all areas of life. There was segregation in schools, hospitals and on public transport. Black people couldn’t even vote or get a good job.
This all changed in 1994 when the country had its first democratic election and Nelson Mandela became the first black president. Today, South Africa is the ‘Rainbow Nation’, a place where everyone can live in peace and harmony.

People

In 1980 there were 30 million people living in South Africa. Today, there are 50 million people and the population is continuing to grow. South Africa has three official capital cities: Pretoria, Bloemfontein and Cape Town, but Johannesburg, with a population of nearly four million people, is the ‘business’ capital.

Languages

South Africa has eleven official languages. This is because the country has so many different cultures. But English and Afrikaans are the two dominant languages. The other nine languages are African languages from different parts of the country and the language most people in South Africa speak is Zulu. However, English is the language of government and business.
**Tourist attractions**

**South Africa is very popular with tourists.** Many tourists visit Cape Town and go up Table Mountain. You can walk up the mountain or you can go up in a cable car. The view from the top is amazing. Near Cape Town you can also visit Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was a prisoner from 1962 to 1982. It’s an island in the Atlantic Ocean about 5 km from the coast. Today, it’s a museum, not a prison. People also come to South Africa to visit its vineyards and South Africa is famous for its great wine.

![Leopards in a tree](image)

**But most people visit South Africa to go on safari.** There are about 20 National Parks in South Africa. The most famous is the Kruger National Park in the north-east of the country. It’s about the same size as Belgium! Tourists go to Kruger Park to see and photograph the Big Five: lion, leopard, elephant, buffalo and rhino. You can stay in a luxury hotel or you can sleep in a tent.