



ABHM Book Club Discussion

June 3rd, 2021

Long Walk to Freedom by Nelson Mandela (1995): Parts 1-6

How to Use this Guide:

[America's Black Holocaust Museum](#) staff created this guide to assist in reading and discussion of Nelson Mandela's memoir. Please feel free to print a copy and keep it with your book as you lend to friends and others who are interested. Do not expect to get through all of the questions during the upcoming meeting nor in one sitting. Perhaps consider them as conversation starters or an invitation to reflect more deeply about Nelson Mandela's life.

Suggested Questions for Discussion:

1. Before reading his memoir, how much did you already know about Nelson Mandela's childhood and upbringing? What surprised you? **How does he describe the system of apartheid and what it was like to grow up in this oppressive system?** What is apartheid, specifically? When and how did it begin, and how did it affect black Africans and other non-white people? See pages 95, 111, 121-122.
2. On page 22, Nelson Mandela describes the Great Place. What did he learn about democracy there? **How would you describe Mandela's leadership style?** How was his philosophy on leadership developed in his early life? See pages 10, 20, 22.
3. On page 14, Nelson Mandela reveals that his early education indoctrinated him to believe that British culture and institutions were superior and taught him that there was no such thing as African culture. **How did British colonial schools in South Africa work hand-in-hand with the system of apartheid?** What impact did this kind of education have on Mandela later in life? See pages 14, 24, 30, 37. 44.

4. For those of you who have read *A Time of Terror*, the memoir of ABHM's founder Dr. James Cameron, how were his experiences of growing up and experiencing "whiteness" and interacting with white people similar to Nelson Mandela's? **How else might we compare and contrast the lives of Nelson Mandela and Dr. James Cameron, particularly as leaders who fought against the systems of racial oppression in their respective countries?** To learn more about Dr. Cameron and *A Time of Terror*, please view [this recording](#) of the last ABHM Book Club meeting.
5. What specific policies did the South African government use to enforce apartheid and to suppress resistance to this system? What similar policies did we have here in the United States? **What parallels can we draw between apartheid South Africa and Jim Crow America?** To learn more about the two systems, please watch [Evil Twins: Histories of Apartheid and Jim Crow](#).
6. On page 38, Mandela writes the "hold of tribalism" that had been imprisoning him was loosened and he began to see himself as an African, "not just a Thembu or even a Xhosa." **How do the tensions between Mandela's tribal identity and the shared purpose of all black people in Africa affect him as a man and as a leader in the anti-apartheid movement?** See pages 83-85, 89, 99.
7. How does Nelson Mandela view the principles of nonviolence and nonviolent protest within the anti-apartheid movement? How does his opinion of this change over time or does it? **How does Mandela's perspective on nonviolence compare to Ghandi's, Dr. James Cameron's, Martin Luther King Jr.'s, and that of other civil rights activists across the world?** See pages 128, 158, 270.
8. **How does Nelson Mandela's attitude towards and role within the African National Congress (ANC) change throughout his lifetime?** What were the different tensions/factions within the ANC and within the anti-apartheid movement? What tactics did the ANC use and how did these change over time? How does the ANC compare to civil rights organizations in the United States? See pages 86, 96, 113.
9. Throughout his memoir, Nelson Mandela describes the toll that being a leader in the anti-apartheid movement had on both his career as a lawyer and on his life family life. **How did "banning" and imprisonment impact his law practice and his personal relationships?** See pages 87, 115, 119, 147, 181, 199.
10. For those of you who have had the chance to visit [Mandela: The Official Exhibition](#) at the Milwaukee Public Museum, how did the exhibit complement your reading of Nelson Mandela's memoir and vice versa?