

Grade 8 Life Orientation Worksheet

Violation of Human Rights

Reading and class discussion about violation of human rights

When we discuss blatant violations of human rights, it is hard to ignore the impact that Apartheid has had on our country and the abuse of human rights that was closely associated with the Apartheid regime. There were many campaigners and freedom fighters striving for democracy. Some of them paid with their lives.

Here is the story of Steve Biko – political activist, freedom fighter and leading founder of South Africa's Black Consciousness Movement.

Biko was detained and interrogated four times between August 1975 and September 1977 under Apartheid-era anti-terrorism legislation. On 21 August, 1977, Biko was arrested at a police roadblock under the Terrorism Act No 83 of 1967 and held in Port Elizabeth. From the Walmer police cells he was taken for interrogation at the security police headquarters. On 7 September "Biko sustained a head injury during interrogation, after which he acted strangely and was uncooperative. The doctors who examined him (naked, lying on a mat and manacled to a metal grille) initially disregarded overt signs of neurological injury."

By 11 September Biko had slipped into a continual semi-conscious state and the police physician recommended a transfer to hospital. Biko was, however, transported 1,200 km to Pretoria – a 12-hour journey which he made lying naked in the back of a Land Rover. A few hours later, on 12 September, alone and still naked, lying on the floor of a cell in the Pretoria Central Prison, Biko died from brain damage.

The police claimed his death was the result of an extended hunger strike. He was found to have massive injuries to the head, which many saw as strong evidence that he had been brutally clubbed by his captors. Then journalist and now political leader, Helen Zille, exposed the truth behind Biko's death.

Because of his fame, news of Biko's death spread quickly, opening many eyes around the world to the brutality of the apartheid regime. His funeral was attended by over 10,000 people, including numerous ambassadors and other diplomats from the United States and Western Europe. The liberal white South African journalist Donald Woods, a personal friend of Biko, photographed his injuries in the morgue. Woods was later forced to flee South Africa for England, where he campaigned against apartheid and further publicised Biko's life and death, writing many newspaper articles and authoring the book, *Biko*. On hearing the news of Steve Biko's death in police custody, South African Minister of Justice, Jimmy Kruger, simply declared in a speech that the incident "left him cold".

Grade 8 Life Orientation Worksheet

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was created following the end of minority rule and the apartheid system, reported in 1997 that five former members of the South African security forces had admitted to killing Biko and were applying for amnesty.

Activity 1

- Have a class discussion about the above story about Steve Biko.
- Pay particular attention to the underlined words in the passage in your discussion.
- Say why this situation was a blatant violation of human rights.
- What rights were violated in this instance?

Your teacher will assess your participation in the class discussion using the checklist below.

Checklist for observation of group discussion			
Name:		Date:	
	Criteria: Does the learner:	Yes	No
1	Wait for a pause before s/he interrupts a speaker?		
2	Interrupt a speaker politely?		
3	Show evidence of having understood the concept of violation of human rights?		
4	Keep to the topic under discussion?		
5	Cover all the points listed above?		
6	Give reasons to support alternative points of view?		
7	Make points clearly using appropriate vocal volume?		
8	Make eye contact when speaking?		
9	Use body language appropriately?		
10	Make notes when applicable to remember points made by others?		
2 marks for every 'yes' answer: 20 total			

Grade 8 Life Orientation Worksheet

Suggested Solutions

Question number	Possible marks	Solution
1	20	See checklist in Appendix of Assessment Tools.

Appendix of assessment tools

Checklist to assess participation in a group discussion

Name:		Date:	
	Criteria: Does the learner:	Yes	No
1	Wait for a pause before s/he interrupts a speaker?		
2	Interrupt a speaker politely?		
3	Show evidence of having understood the concept of violation of human rights?		
4	Keep to the topic under discussion?		
5	Cover all the points listed above?		
6	Give reasons to support alternative points of view?		
7	Make points clearly using appropriate vocal volume?		
8	Make eye contact when speaking?		
9	Use body language appropriately?		
10	Make notes when applicable to remember points made by others?		
2 marks for every 'yes' answer: 20 total			