

MEET HER

A new African woman. A new story. A new reason to remember.

GROWN-UPS: We'll add one short, child-friendly profile each month. Read it together, then let the child complete page 2. Print a fresh copy for every featured woman.

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Nomzamo Winifred Zanyiwe Madikizela (also known as Winnie Mandela)

COUNTRY: South Africa

KNOWN FOR: Anti-apartheid activism, social work and political leadership

BORN: 26 September 1936, Mbongweni near Bizana, Eastern Cape

SAY HER NAME: Ma-di-ki-ze-la Man-de-la

BEFORE YOU READ

Look at her name, country and achievement. What do you predict you will discover?

HER STORY

Imagine being told that you could not attend meetings, travel freely or have your words printed in a newspaper, simply because you spoke against an unfair system. Winnie Madikizela-Mandela faced all of this, yet she continued to make her voice heard.

She was born **Nomzamo Winifred Zanyiwe Madikizela** on 26 September 1936 in Mbongweni, near Bizana in South Africa's Eastern Cape. Her parents were teachers, and she grew up valuing education. When Winnie was nine, she and her family went to a celebration marking the end of the Second World War. At the town hall, they were told the event was "for whites only". Experiences like this helped her recognise the injustice around her.

Winnie moved to Johannesburg to study social work. She finished at the top of her class and was offered a scholarship to study in the United States. Instead, she chose to remain in South Africa and became the first qualified Black medical social worker appointed at Baragwanath Hospital. Through her work, she saw how poverty and apartheid harmed Black families.

Winnie was already interested in politics before she married lawyer and activist Nelson Mandela in 1958. When Nelson was imprisoned, the apartheid government tried to silence her too. She was arrested, banned from gatherings and kept in solitary confinement for many months. In 1977, she was banished to Brandfort in the Free State, far from her Soweto home. There, instead of giving up, she helped establish projects including a soup kitchen, gardening group, mobile health unit, day-care centre and sewing club.

Her story also has a difficult chapter. In the late 1980s, members of a group connected to her were involved in serious violence. Winnie was convicted of kidnapping, although her prison sentence was later reduced to a fine. Years later, South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission found her politically and morally responsible for serious human-rights abuses committed by the group. She acknowledged that things had gone terribly wrong and apologised to affected families.

After apartheid ended, Winnie served in Parliament, became Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture and led the ANC Women's League. Many supporters called her "Mother of the Nation" because she remained a visible voice of resistance while other leaders were imprisoned or exiled.

Winnie died in Johannesburg on 2 April 2018, aged 81. Her life reminds us that history can hold courage, service, pain and serious mistakes in the same story, and that remembering someone honestly means looking at the whole picture.

WORDS TO KNOW

WORD

CHILD-FRIENDLY MEANING

Apartheid

A system of laws that separated South Africans by race and denied Black people equal rights.

Activist

Someone who takes action to help change something they believe is unfair.

Banishment

Being forced by those in power to leave your home and live somewhere else.

A DETAIL TO REMEMBER:

Winnie was offered a scholarship to study in the United States, but chose to stay and work as a social worker in South Africa.

MEET HER | MONTHLY READING ACTIVITY

READER'S NAME: _____

WOMAN I MET THIS MONTH: _____

MEET HER

1. WHO WAS SHE, AND WHAT IS SHE REMEMBERED FOR?

2. WHERE WAS SHE FROM? FIND OR CIRCLE THE COUNTRY ON A MAP OF AFRICA.

FOLLOW HER STORY

FIRST: _____ NEXT: _____

THEN: _____ FINALLY: _____

STORY DETECTIVE

3. WHAT CHALLENGE, PROBLEM OR QUESTION DID SHE FACE?

4. WHAT DID SHE DO? INCLUDE ONE DETAIL FROM THE TEXT AS EVIDENCE.

5. WHAT CHANGED BECAUSE OF HER WORDS, IDEAS OR ACTIONS?

READ BETWEEN THE LINES

6. HOW DO YOU THINK SHE FELT, AND WHICH DETAIL HELPED YOU MAKE THAT INFERENCE?

UNLOCK A WORD

WORD FROM THE STORY

MY MEANING

CLUE THAT HELPED ME

WHY AFRICA REMEMBERS HER

7. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I LEARNED WAS...

8. ONE QUALITY I ADMIRE IN HER IS... BECAUSE...

THIS MONTH'S DISCOVERY MISSION

Choose one: ☐ Find another fact about her ☐ Learn one fact about her country ☐ Tell someone her story

I met her. I read her story. I will remember her.