GEOGRAPHY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Reading Culture Presentation
Bryant Evans, HCC Geography Faculty
January 29-31, 2019

Image: Cape Town, South Africa
Image Source: Bryant Evans
True or False? South Africa has more than one national capital.

Answer: True. South Africa is home to 3 national capitals. The administrative capital is in Pretoria, the legislative capital is housed in Cape Town, and the judicial capital is in Bloemfontein.
Located in southern Africa, at the southern tip of the continent of Africa
Borders Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique. Surrounds Lesotho and nearly surrounds Swaziland.
The country is somewhat unique in that it possesses a perforated state shape.
South Africa’s Geographic Challenge

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eP2EmglUeIQ
South Africa’s Size and Population

- South Africa has an area of 470,693 square miles
- Close to twice the size of the U.S. state of Texas.
- South Africa is the 26th largest country in the world in area
- Population (2018): 55.3 million; 26th most populous country in the world
- Median age of South Africa’s population is 27.4 years old

Map Source: pasarelapr.com

Map Source: Geogypsy

Map Source: pasarelapr.com
South Africa possesses a vast interior plateau and is ringed by mountains on three sides.
The country has a narrow coastal strip and a total of 1,739 miles of coastline.
Over 1/3 of S. Africa possesses savanna environments.
The highest point is Mt. Mafadi = 11,320 feet.
The lowest point is along the Indian Ocean = sea level.
True/False: South Africa is famous for its wildlife, including what is known as the “Big 5”. The “Big 5” are the elephant, lion, leopard, rhinoceros, and zebra.

Answer: False

Four of the five listed above are correct, but the fifth is the Cape Buffalo, not the zebra.
A Brief Look at the “Big 5”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPBVCvs91eM
A key environmental issue for South Africa centers on water scarcity.

Already deemed as “water stressed”, and there is a high amount of pressure on limited water resources.

Cape Town’s “Day Zero” scare in 2018.
True or False?: South Africa’s official language is known as Afrikaans.

Answer: False

Afrikaans (spoken by 13.5% of the population) is one of 11 official languages in South Africa. Others include Zulu, Xhosa, and English.

Source: South Africa Gateway
Modern humans have inhabited S. Africa for over 100,000 years
1652: Dutch / 1806: British
1816-26: Zulu Empire founded and expands
1867 – Diamonds / 1886 - Gold
1899-1902: Anglo-Boer War
1910: Union of South Africa established
1948-early 1990s: Apartheid Years
1993: Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk jointly win Nobel Peace Prize
2006: Same-sex marriage legalized
2010: Hosted the FIFA World Cup
2018: Jacob Zuma, president since 2009, resigns under pressure
Trivia: Cultural

- **True or False?** Nelson Mandela was South Africa’s first fully freely elected president in the country’s history.

- **Answer: True**
- In the country’s first post-apartheid elections, Nelson Mandela won and served as President from 1994-1999.
• **Apartheid**: System of control of the movement, employment, and residences of non-whites with the goal of separate development of “races” within South Africa

• Official government-led policy 1948-1991

• Shifting peacefully from the apartheid era to a democracy represents a momentous achievement for S. Africa. However, vast economic disparities remain among the country’s population groups.
Apartheid in South Africa

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7yvnUz2PLE
Cultural: Politics / Political Framework

- Officially a republic
- 9 provinces; 3 capital cities
- Current constitution was adopted in 1997
- Matamela Ramaphosa was appointed President following Jacob Zuma’s resignation in 2018
Cultural: Demographics

- Ethnicity: very diverse ethnically, but broadly 80.9% black, 8.8% mixed; 7.8% white; 2.5% Asian
- Official language: 11 in total
- Religion: 86% Christian; tribal 5.4%; Muslim 1.9%
- Median Age: 27.4 years of age
- Life Expectancy at Birth: 64.1 years of age
True or False?: South Africa is the world’s leading producer of gold, diamonds, platinum, and macadamia nuts.

Answer: False

South Africa ranks #1 in platinum and macadamia nut production. Meanwhile, while not #1 in diamonds or gold, the country is a top 10 producer of each.
South Africa is described as a middle income emerging market with abundant natural resources.

High unemployment, poverty and inequality remain challenges to overall economic growth.

Labor force: 72% services; 23.5% industry; 4.6% ag.
Reconsider South Africa

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dqs_9vRnkCA
“If there are dreams about a beautiful South Africa, there are also roads that lead to their goal. Two of these roads could be named Goodness and Forgiveness.”

- Nelson Mandela

Thank you for your attention!

Questions?