

Editorial Years 10 - 12: A vote for the future, a reflection on the past

A vote for the future, a reflection on the past

On this most historic of days, as people of all races queue together for the very first time in a general election, we at the *Johannesburg Weekly* feel we must have a moment of reflection on what has passed. Because although today is a vote for the future, to venture forth without learning from the past is a fatal mistake we cannot afford to make.

The *Johannesburg Weekly* acknowledges the wrongs we committed as an Afrikaner newspaper. We are sorry for all we have written which denigrated those formerly classified as non-white. As a media outlet for whites during this period we acknowledge and apologise for our role in oppressing the non-white population.

We believe that with the abolition of apartheid the new South Africa will become a richer country. We believe it will become a more progressive, more civilised country. We believe it will become a happier country. Why? Because now that the laws have changes more people will be able to flourish and reach their full potential. We believe this flourishing will benefit everyone in our society.

As we reflect we ask: how could a non-white person flourish under apartheid? How can anyone flourish when the law treats them with so little dignity? When the law restricts your education, your every movement, where you live, where you sit and where you eat, how could any non-white flourish? The laws actively worked to oppress non-whites, to narrow down their identities to mere servants of the whites. When the law gives such a rigid definition, the rest of society follows.

Every white media outlet, and that includes us, had this view and followed blindly. Every white parent was saying the same to their children. Every sign on every beach, every bus queue, every restaurant which said that only whites were allowed reinforced this inequality. Every time a white person moved into a new house built upon reclaimed land, it was a slap to a non-white's face as their home had been destroyed to create this new one for the whites. Our own office and press was built on such land.

Never before did we consider that perhaps we were wrong, yet the reality of this false simplicity has stared us in the face for longer than we care to consider. Let us look at Sandra Laing, at Nelson Mandela, at Basil D'Oliveira.

Sandra Laing, born white, was reclassified as coloured and expelled from school. Over her life, her resilience was her saviour. Nelson Mandela, African, was fortunate to be educated at a mission school and managed to study law while imprisoned, but still we refused to recognise his brilliance. Basil D'Oliveira, coloured, had to leave South Africa to rise to the top in cricket. He was good enough to tour internationally with England and yet we still refused him entry to play.

How much more could they have achieved had they been allowed to flourish? Thanks to apartheid we will never know.

As the day draws to a close and the votes are counted we can only hope the votes reflect what every person thinks. We can only hope in this new age of equality that everyone will be allowed to reach their full potential. We can only hope we learn

Setting the scene to provide a context for the argument
Introduction incorporates the newspaper's position on the issue

Sombre tone captures the feeling of regret being expressed
Use of inclusive language to represent the group opinion

Clear statement of contention
Repetition emphasising the central message of hope or the future

Rhetorical questions engage the reader's sympathy

Repetition of 'every' highlights the overwhelming power of Apartheid

Specific individuals used as case studies to support the argument about oppression

Link to argument builds cohesion

Short closing paragraph draws the reader back to the present context and

from the mistakes of the past to make the future brighter for everyone.

drives home the message
of hope.

From: Tulloh. E and Napthine. M, *Insight Year 12 English Skills*, Insight Publications, Australia, 2012.