

Sample written task HL

Rationale

In class we studied a unit on Nelson Mandela and the end of apartheid in South Africa. For Part 2 we looked at how Mandela used language to persuade his audience to believe in a new South Africa. Specifically, I looked at his 9 May 1994 speech given in Cape Town and studied the effects of its persuasive language. I wanted to show how his words were still relevant to a modern context, where crime and poverty are problems in South Africa. Therefore, I decided to take on the role of Antjie Krog, an Afrikaner journalist and literary author, and write a speech written from her perspective for an ANC convention in 2014, on the 20th anniversary of Mandela's inauguration. I feel that writing this speech made me look both critically at Mandela's words and my own, as I applied the rhetorical devices and conventions of speech writing that we studied in class. In my speech you will notice evidence of ethos in the opening paragraphs where I comment on Krog's mandate to speak to the ANC. You will also notice pathos, where I appeal to the audience's sense of emotion by describing Mandela's sense of selflessness. Furthermore there is evidence of logos, as I appeal to the audience's sense of logic by arguing that Mandela's ideas are still relevant today. All in all, I feel this was a good exercise in understanding and writing speeches.

Written task

I am honoured to be here today on this very special day, the 20th anniversary of the inaugural address of Nelson Mandela, a day which has already taken its place in the history of South Africa. Many of you know me from my role as a journalist during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission years that followed the election of President Mandela. Many of you know me as an outspoken Afrikaner who supported the ANC and the unification of all races and religions in South Africa after apartheid. Many of you know me as a poet and artist who has explored the issues of our country, from racial tension to social injustice.

Today I would like to talk about the speech that Mandela gave to the people of Cape Town on May 9th 1994, the day before he was inaugurated. While this speech has always been overshadowed by his eloquent inaugural address, I would like to show how his speech from 9 May is equally important and very relevant to South Africa today.

I remember listening to this speech with much anxiety. Many Afrikaner's feared transition and the thought of coloureds running the country. There was a fear of redistribution and retribution. With the prisoners now in control, the prison guards had to constantly look over their shoulder. Mandela's speech put the anxieties of the Afrikaner to rest though. In the words of Mandela:

"We place our vision of a new constitutional order for South Africa on the table not as

conquerors, prescribing to the conquered. We speak as fellow citizens to heal the wounds of the past with the intent of constructing a new order based on justice for all.”

These words have presented all Africans with an enormous challenge. We have had to rise above the temptation to seek revenge, and instead, we have had to learn to forgive and forget. This challenge is one we still face today. In fact many Africans today still think in terms of ‘conquerors’ and ‘conquered’. We have seen this struggle on the farms in the country and in the townships in the cities for the past 20 years.

But despite the constant struggle, why do we continue to turn to Mandela’s words for hope? How is it that, 20 years later, his words still ring true and inspire many of us to put our anger behind us? In his speech he looked out from Cape Town and saw Robben Island, where he suffered for years in exile as a political prisoner. He could have made his Cape Town speech about himself, showing us his personal atrocities as the scar left behind by the apartheid government. Instead he encouraged us to look at this ‘Cape of Good Hope’ in the greater context of world history, where many cultures have come together for centuries. He made us realize that our struggle for reconciliation started long before us. In his words: “The names of those who were incarcerated on Robben Island is a roll call of resistance fighters and democrats spanning over three centuries. If indeed this is a Cape of Good Hope, that hope owes much to the spirit of that legion of fighters and others of their caliber.” By making his Cape Town speech about them, he showed a selflessness that has inspired many. By making his speech about them, he made their suffering meaningful to a new South Africa. Their resistance was not futile.

What’s more, Mandela stressed that the victory of the ANC in 1994 was not the triumph of one race over another, but the triumph of democracy and human rights over autocracy and oppression. As he said, the Bill of Rights, published by the ANC in 1990, “speak of a constitutional, democratic, political order in which, regardless of colour, gender, religion, political opinion or sexual orientation, the law will provide for the equal protection of all citizens. They project a democracy in which the government, whomever that government may be, will be bound by a higher set of rules, embodied in a constitution, and will not be able to govern the country as it pleases.” I think that all races understood the inherent truth and urgent importance of democracy that were echoed in these words of this great leader.

I say he was a ‘great leader’, and many of us know what made him so great. He was great because he was humble. He did not promise to fix our “battered society” single handedly. Rather he said he needed us to help him do it. He gave us the Reconstruction and Development Programme, but said it needed “unity of purpose” and “action”. It required “us all to work together to bring an end to division, an end to suspicion and build a nation united in our diversity.” This is to say that if we are still living in a “battered society” today, then we must look to ourselves to make it better. We must become even more unified than ever before. Our leader said it would take determination and effort, and he was right.

Finally I would like to state that we have come a long ways. We are in the process of

lifting ourselves out of “the morass of racism and apartheid.” We have walked the road that Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu paved for us through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It was the legal framework that Mandela referred to in his speech. It forced us to move forward by confronting our past. While so much hurt and suffering is still felt today, we can be proud of ourselves for having dealt with so much hurt and suffering already. Mandela said that the task of rebuilding this nation would not be easy, and he was right. But at least we have a country where the majority live in hope and can have a sense of dignity and self-esteem and confidence in the future.

The ANC received a mandate 20 years ago from that majority. Along with that majority, came a great sense of responsibility. We must all bear this responsibility. We do not only owe it to Mandela to bear this responsibility. We owe it to ourselves and to our children to make the future of South Africa safer and freer and filled with more opportunity than we have ever enjoyed. And like Mandela, I believe the only way to do this is to be “united in our diversity.”