

PSWB-LIFE SKILLS

GRADE 6

Nation Building and Cultural Heritage

Lesson 2-28 September-2 October 2020

Read the following notes on Nation Building and Cultural Heritage

Our history and cultural heritage

The coat of arms

A coat of arms is a special symbol of a country or a family. South Africa's coat of arms has a protea – an emblem of beauty and our national flower – in the centre. Above that is a secretary bird with outspread wings. Between the wings of the secretary bird, you can see the sun, which is a symbol of the promise of rebirth, reflection and knowledge. The ears of wheat symbolise growth and fertility. The elephant tusks symbolise wisdom and strength. Between the ears of wheat is a shield with images of the Khoisan people, the first inhabitants of the land. This shows identity and spiritual protection of the nation. Above the shield you can see a spear and a knobkierie. They are lying down and this shows that we want peace rather than war. The motto on the coat of arms is in the Khoisan language of the Xam people, and means 'Unity in diversity'.



The coat of arms is used on all government documents and letters. It is displayed on public buildings.

National days

1838

16 December: Day of Reconciliation

During the earlier part of the 19th century, many Afrikaner farmers left the eastern Cape and moved inland. Among them were the Voortrekkers, a group of Afrikaners protesting British colonialism and seeking independent republics on what they thought was empty land. But the land was not empty and clashes between these Afrikaners and the indigenous people were to be expected.

On 16 December 1838, about 10 000 Zulus attacked about 470 Voortrekkers. But the Voortrekkers had the advantage of guns, and fought them off. Only three Voortrekkers were wounded, but more than 3 000 Zulus were killed during the battle. This became known as the 'Battle of Blood River'.

In apartheid South Africa, 16 December was known as the 'Day of the Vow' because, in preparation for their battle, the Voortrekkers had taken a vow that they would build a church and that they and their descendants would always keep that day as a day of thanksgiving if they were victorious.

African Nationalist Congress (ANC) activists remember 16 December as the day, in 1961, when the movement started to arm its soldiers to overthrow apartheid.

In democratic South Africa, 16 December is still celebrated as a national public holiday, but now it is a day of peace and overcoming the conflicts of the past.

1856

1 May: Workers' Day

The idea for a workers' holiday began in Australia in 1856. There was a struggle by the stonemasons (men who build with stone) for the right to work only eight hours per day. When they succeeded, 1 May was declared a holiday called 'Eight-hour Day'. Over the years, this has become known as International Workers' Day and many countries around the world remember the contribution made by workers.

Workers' Day has traditionally been a day to protest for better wages and working conditions.



Trade unions played a big role in the fight for freedom.

1956

9 August: National Women's Day

On 9 August 1956, 20 000 women marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest against the law requiring black women to carry passes. This day is celebrated as a reminder of the contribution made by women to society, and to acknowledge the difficulties and prejudices many women still face.



Activity

1. When and where did the idea for a "Worker's Day Holiday" on May 1 begin?
2. Why was 16 December first celebrated in South Africa? Why do we celebrate it now?