

Springboard^{into} Comprehension 5

Main Idea **The Nelson Mandela Story**

Bukit Timah Nature Reserve

Compare and Contrast

Animals under Threat
Soccer v Ballet

Fact and Opinion

The Great Rainbow Hill Council Debate
The Smith Family Diaries

Cause and Effect

It's Just Not Right
Save Our Planet!

Bias and Prejudice

What's Up?
Changing Times

Figurative Language

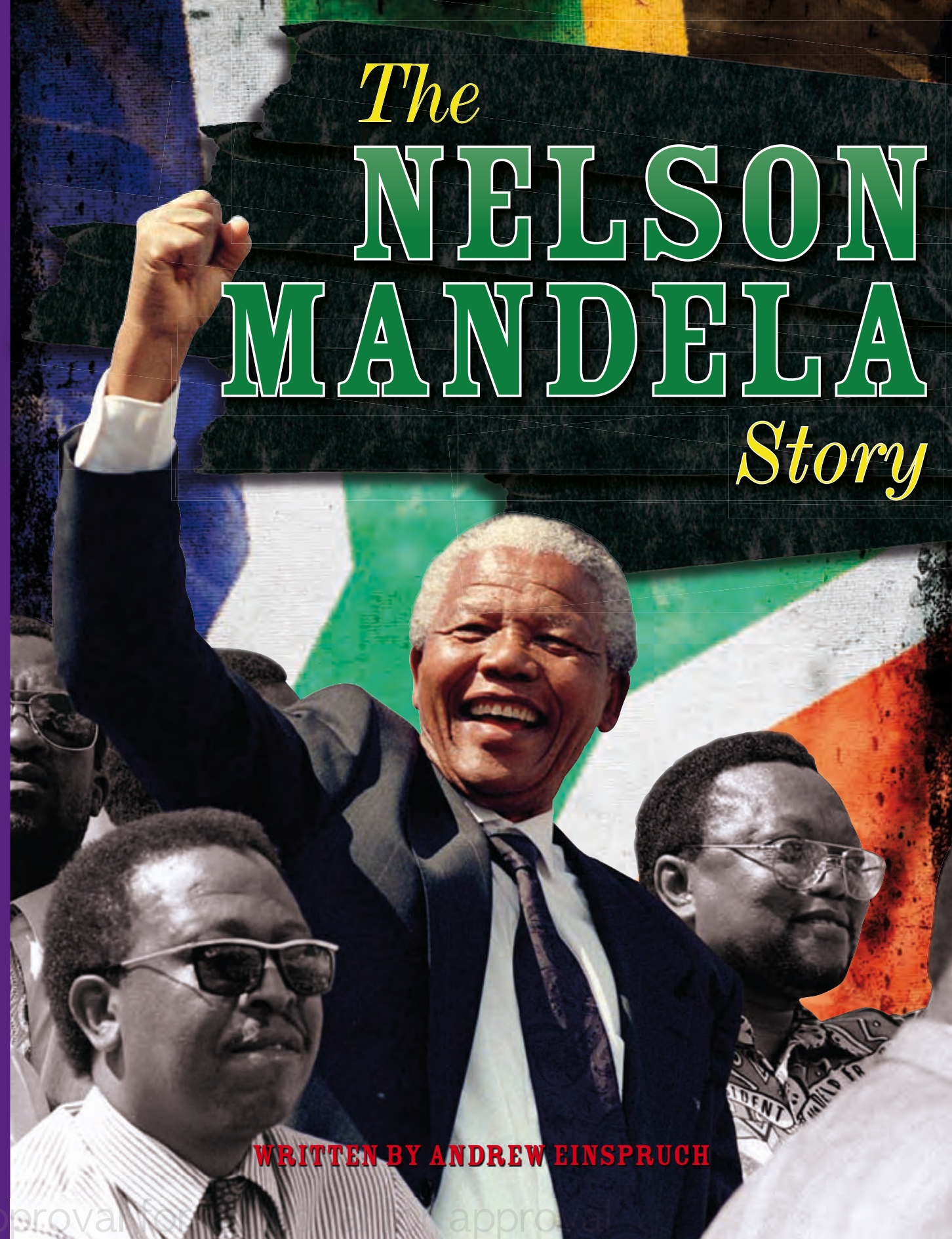
Sports Mad Magazine
The Highwayman

RA 10.5–11.5

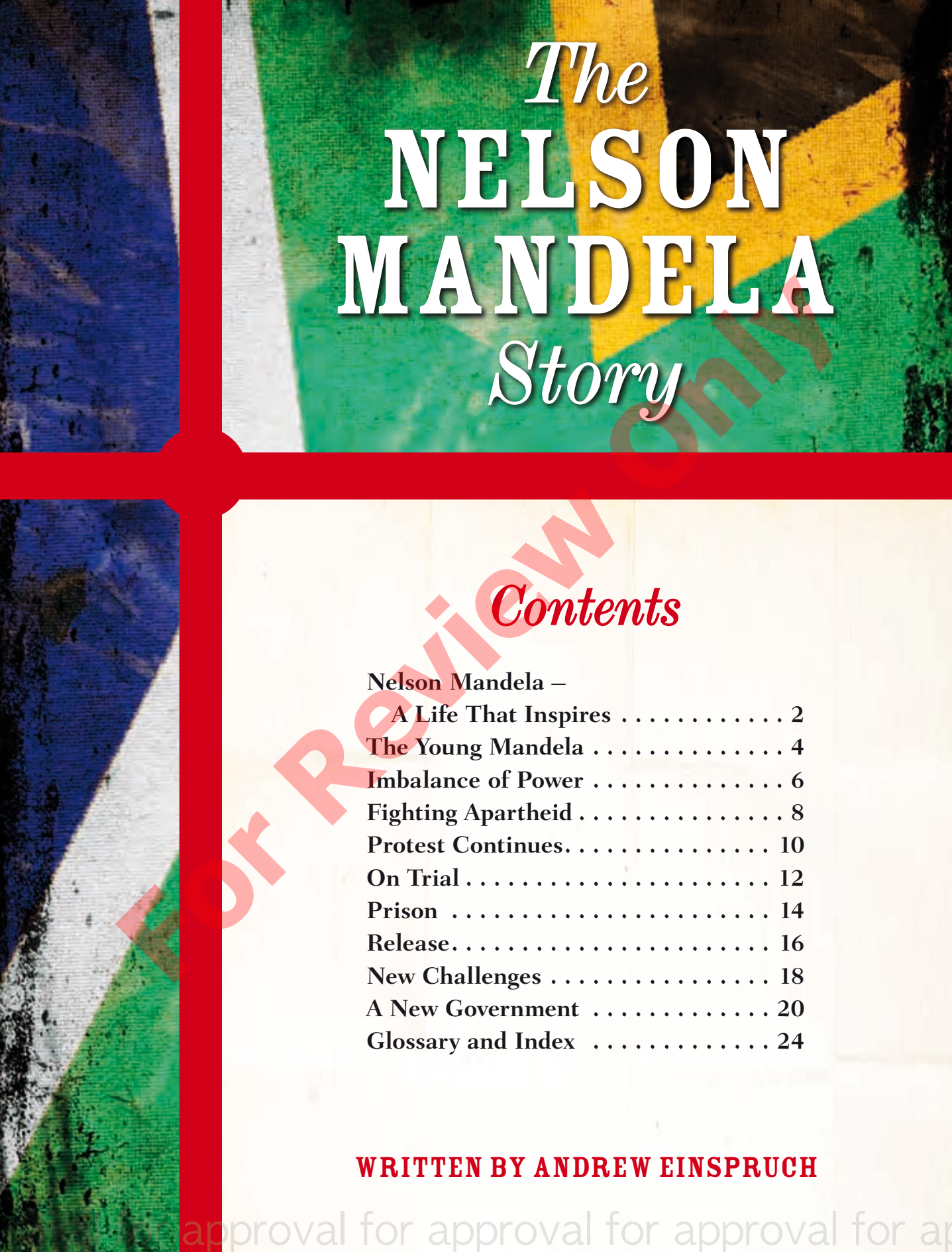


Recount

The **NELSON MANDELA** *Story*



WRITTEN BY ANDREW EINSPRUCH



The **NELSON MANDELA** *Story*

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NELSON MANDELA - *A Life That Inspires*

Nelson Mandela is a remarkable man. He was a revolutionary. He was a prisoner. He was a statesman. He was a president. Today, he is a Nobel Prize winner. He is dignified, funny, and also profound. He is an inspiration!

His life story has been one of dedication and persistence. It has been driven by a set of strong values and beliefs. Even in the face of hardship, Mandela held onto his principles. Through his actions, he left an unforgettable print on the history of South Africa.

Nelson Mandela lived in South Africa at a time when racial prejudice separated black and coloured people (as mixed-race people were called in South Africa) from white people. He was an activist. Some people even called him a terrorist. However, Mandela became a symbol of hope and determination for black people in South Africa. He helped end the country's system of racial separation, or **apartheid**.

Nelson Mandela led South Africa out of a dark and difficult period. He became the first president to be democratically elected by both black and white South Africans. He helped found a new and just legal and political system, or **constitution**. He guided the people of South Africa as they faced the wounds of their country's past and found a new way to face the future.

Mandela's leadership skills helped bring apartheid to a peaceful end.



Apartheid

In 1948, South Africa's white rulers put the apartheid system in place. It was a law that separated black and coloured people from white people. Black and coloured people lived and worked separately to white people. They had to use separate facilities. They could not be part of the government.



Police could arrest black people simply for not carrying passes for being in the city.

Map of South Africa



"It always seems impossible until it's done."
— Nelson Mandela

THE YOUNG MANDELA

Nelson Mandela was born on July 18, 1918. He was named Rolihlahla Mandela. His mother was Nonqaphi Nosekeni. His father, Henry Mgadla Mandela, was a chief of the Thembu tribe.

When Mandela was a young boy, he lived in a small village called Mvezo in south-east South Africa. He spent his boyhood herding cattle and going to school. When Mandela was nine years old, his father died. After that, a powerful relative, named Jongintaba Dalindyebo, looked after him. He made sure Mandela got a good education. He told Mandela stories of the bravery of African tribes during the war against the British in 1879. These stories inspired Mandela. He dreamed of helping South Africa's black people.

Mandela attended the University College of Fort Hare. There he met Oliver Tambo. They became lifelong friends. Mandela became active in student politics and was elected to the student council. Not long after, he was suspended from the university for taking part in a protest.

In the early 1940s, Mandela moved to Johannesburg to avoid an arranged marriage. He worked briefly as a guard at a mine. Then, he became an apprentice at a law firm. In 1942, Mandela completed his bachelor's degree by correspondence. Soon after, he began studying law.

In 1942, Mandela became actively involved in politics. He joined a political group called the African National Congress (ANC). The ANC had been started in 1912 to fight for the rights of black people.

"The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." – Nelson Mandela



Mandela (back row, second from left) with his law class from the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg



The young Mandela in Mthatha, wearing his first suit

Rolihlahla means pulling the branch of a tree. It can also mean troublemaker. One of Mandela's teachers, who could not pronounce his name, gave him the English name Nelson.

IMBALANCE OF POWER

At the time, the white people in South Africa had all the power. Although there were far fewer white people than black or coloured people, white people controlled the government and military. They also had most of the money. Black people had been forced to give in to this imbalance of power, so most of them went along with the unfair system. The ANC wanted to change this system.

However, after a while, Mandela became unhappy with the ANC. He felt it was not effective or active enough. It was doing too little to change the system. He felt that the older leaders were too polite. In 1944, Mandela joined with about 60 other people. Together, they formed the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL).

The Youth League set out to change the ANC. Members of the Youth League took up key positions within the ANC. They wanted it to be a mass organization. They wanted its actions to be more extreme, or **radical**. They wanted to change the system. They wanted black people to govern themselves.

At first, the ANCYL chose to use non-violent protest. They used tactics such as –

- choosing to not buy something, or to not participate in an activity. This form of protest is called a **boycott**.
- choosing to not cooperate socially, economically, or politically with a particular group. This form of protest is known as **non-cooperation**.
- refusing to do work. This form of protest is known as a **strike**.
- choosing to disobey rules or laws that they believed were wrong. This form of protest is known as **civil disobedience**.

Mandela became involved with these kinds of resistance, but progress was slow. The ANC was still far from changing the system.



Mandela with one of the other members of the ANCYL

“We have sufficient cause to be cynical about humanity. We have seen enough injustice, strife, division, suffering, and pain, and our capacity to be massively inhuman.” – Nelson Mandela