

Sports in the Commonwealth

Playing the enemy

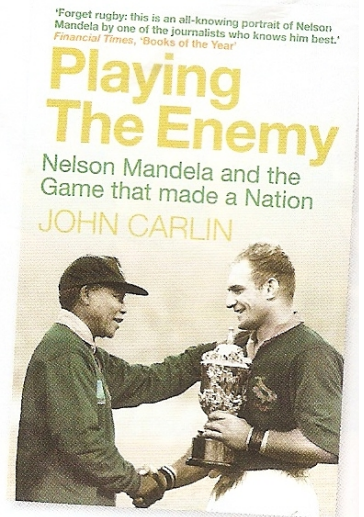
The film 'Invictus' was based on the book by John Carlin, 'Playing the Enemy'.

- e. Do you support a team? Why? How far could you go for your team?

Another sign that this was no ordinary day was that Mandela, not usually prone to nerves, had a knot in his stomach. "You don't know what I went through on that day," he confessed to me. "I was so tense!" It was a curious thing for a man with his past to say. This was not the day of his release² in February 1990, nor his presidential inauguration in May 1994, nor even the morning back in June 1964 when he woke up in a cell not knowing whether the judge would condemn him to death or, as it turned out, to a life sentence. This was the day on which his country, South Africa, would be playing the best team in the world, New Zealand, in the final of the Rugby World Cup. His compatriots were as tense as he was. But the remarkable thing, in a country that had lurched³ historically from crisis to disaster, was that the anxiety they all felt concerned the prospect⁴ of imminent national triumph. Before today, when one story dominated the newspaper it almost always meant something bad had happened, or was about to happen; or that it concerned something that one part of the country would interpret as good, another part, as bad. This morning an unheard-of⁵ national consensus had formed around one idea. All 43 million South Africans, black and white and all shades in between, shared the same aspiration: victory for their team, the Springboks.

Playing the Enemy, John Carlin, 2008

1. sujet à 2. libération 3. moved quickly 4. perspective 5. new, unprecedented



John Carlin
(b. 1956)

is a journalist and author who deals with both sports and politics. In 2008, he wrote "Playing the enemy", that was used in 2009 as the basis for Clint Eastwood's "Invictus".

Read and answer the following questions on your copybook :

- 1) What do you notice about the photo on the book cover and the title of the book?
- 2) Pick up all the proper nouns.
- 3) What does the text deal with?
- 4) Pick out expressions showing Nelson Mandela was nervous on that day.
- 5) What was the narrator's reaction to Mandela being nervous.
- 6) Pick up words referring to justice. What event do they refer to?
- 7) What words refer to a) togetherness and b) opposition? What is the narrator referring to?
- 8) What sentence best illustrates Mandela's hope?
- 9) Why do you think Mandela had a knot in his stomach on that day?

Worksheet "Playing the enemy"

- 1) There is a **contrast** on the book cover between the word "enemy" in the title and the image that shows **two men who are shaking hands**.
- 2) **Proper nouns**: Mandela / South Africa / New Zealand / Rugby World Cup / Springboks
- 3) The text deals with **the final of the Rugby World Cup that took place in South Africa, between South Africa and New Zealand**. At the time, New Zealand was seen as "the best team in the world".
- 4) "a knot in his stomach" / "I was so tense"
- 5) The narrator is **surprised** as we can see with these two quotes: "not usually prone to nerves" / "A curious thing for a man with his past to say".
- 6) **Lexical field of justice**: a cell / judge / condemn to death / life sentence. These words refer to the period when Mandela was sent to prison for fighting Apartheid.
- 7) **Lexical field of togetherness**: consensus / all 45 million South Africans / share the same aspirations / team
Lexical field of opposition: one part of the country... - another part of the country. / good - bad . The lexical field of opposition is referring to Apartheid.
- 8) The sentence that best expresses Mandela's hope is **the last one (l.17 to l.19)**
- 9) **In my opinion**, Mandela had "a knot in [his] stomach" **because a very symbolic event was at stake that day**.

Read and answer the following questions :

1. Pick out the sports mentioned in Pienaar's answer to the first question and explain how athletes can influence people.
2. Read the answer to the second question. Pick out references to places and explain the role sports can play in communities.
3. Write a short paragraph to comment on the following quotation : « *I have seen the power of sport and how it can change communities* » (François Pienaar, 2013).

In July 2012 Francois Pienaar discussed the power of sport to inspire whole communities. He answered questions.

Journalist: Do you think one sport works better than the other in achieving change?

Francois Pienaar: It depends. There are the three or four biggest sports in the world and it depends on the country. Football is huge, athletics is huge, and in America you have the NFL¹, basketball and women's volleyball is massive. It doesn't really matter what sport it is, as long as it is a big sport in that country. And if you can use that as a powerful vehicle for change and make people think: "why don't we use it?", you have the opportunity to change people's views and perceptions, because they love sport, they love the brand, they love the athlete. And if that athlete says to them: "Think about somebody else, what are you doing in your community?", then again it plants a seed² and that little orchard³ can grow. (...)

Journalist: You have lived in Britain for several years [as player, coach and CEO⁴ of Saracens rugby club] and have travelled a lot with the teams. Do you see differences in the role sport plays in different places?

FP: Every country is different. When I lived here [in the UK], I was asked to speak in the House of Commons, and the topic was the power of sport, so I did some research. I learned that in Camden [area of London] there was just one communal sports field, so what do the young people do? How do they express their energy? And when you dig

a little deeper, you realise that because there is no social prospect, and no sport, they will get involved in gangs and get involved in stuff that is going to affect their lives negatively. Every country is different, but every big city has those challenges, around the world. You can get depressed by it, or look at what people are doing in the communities to create change.

Danielle Batist, interview with rugby legend Francois Pienaar, *The Big Issue South Africa*, September 24, 2012

1. NFL [en ef el] = National Football League
2. seed (n.) [si:d] = graine
3. orchard (n.) [ɔ:tʃəd] = verger
4. CEO [si: i: əu] = Chief Executive Officer. P-DG

President Nelson Mandela and Francois Pienaar, ex-captain of the Springboks who led South Africa to victory in the 1995 Rugby World Cup



Worksheet: "A driving force"

1) **Sports mentioned:** football (NFL), athletics, basketball, women's volleyball. Athletes are **an example** for many people who love, imitate and respect their idols. That is why athletes, brands or sports **can transmit values and ideas and change people's opinions and minds**.

2) **Places mentioned:** the UK, the House of Commons, Camden, country, big city, communities.

Sports **can prevent** young people **from getting involved** in gangs and crime and **from being violent** for instance. Sports **can help them to get a better life** and give them prospects.

3) **key words:** **to unite people, to support a team, to connect people from different origins, to reduce delinquency, to share the same passion no matter their origin, language, religion, skin colour**