

INVICTUS



PRODUCTION: USA 2009
 DIRECTOR: Clint Eastwood
 STARRING: Morgan Freeman (Nelson Mandela), Matt Damon (François Pienaar)

SYNOPSIS

In 1990, Nelson Mandela is released after a 27-year imprisonment in Robben Island and in 1994 he is elected President of South Africa with the difficult task of uniting the country after apartheid.

Around the time of the Rugby World Cup in 1995, Mandela invites the Captain of the Springboks, François Pienaar, to come to the government palace for tea. He makes him understand that he wants the team to win the World Cup and inspires him to become a leader.

South Africa is hosting the Rugby World Cup and, although the Springboks are the national team, they are still considered the team of white South Africa.

Mandela asks the team to train and teach rugby in small towns around the country and spend some time in the prison where he was held for many years.

Thanks to the universal language of sport, in which he believes, and the support of the captain, Mandela achieves the unrealistic goal of the Springboks winning the World Cup, even against such powerful rugby teams as the All-Blacks of New Zealand, uniting the nation as well.



N. Mandela and F. Pienaar

BEFORE VIEWING

1 Read the synopsis and answer the questions.

1. Who are the Springboks?
2. Who is François Pienaar?
3. What does President Mandela make him understand?
4. How does Mandela succeed in uniting the country?
5. How does Pienaar build support for the rugby team?
6. What do you think is the message of this film?



FILM CLIP

2 Watch the clip and answer the questions.

François Pienaar has been invited to tea by President Mandela.

1. How does Pienaar inspire his team?
2. What inspired Mandela on Robben Island?
3. What does Pienaar do on the day of a big match?
4. How was Mandela greeted in Barcelona? What was the effect?
5. What is necessary, according to President Mandela, to build a nation?

3 Watch the video again and complete the text with the missing words.

Mandela: Tell me, François... What is your philosophy of **1**? How do you inspire your team to do their best?

Pienaar: By example. I've always thought to lead by example, sir.

Mandela: Well, that is right. That is exactly right. But how to get them to be better than they think they can be? That is very difficult, I find. Inspiration, perhaps. How do we inspire ourselves to **2** when nothing less will do? How do we inspire everyone around us? I sometimes think it is by using the work of others. On Robben Island, when things got very bad, I found inspiration in a poem.

Pienaar: A poem?

Mandela: A Victorian poem. Just **3** But they helped me to stand when all I wanted to do was to **4** down. But you didn't come all this way to hear an old man talk about things that make no sense.

Pienaar: No, no, please, Mr. President. It makes complete sense to me. On the day of a big match, say a **5**, in the bus, on the way to the stadium, nobody talks.

Mandela: Yes, they're all preparing.

Pienaar: Right. But when I think we're ready, I have the bus driver put on a song. Something I've **6**, one we all know. And we listen to the words together. And it helps.

Mandela: I remember when I was invited to the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona. Everybody in the stadium greeted me with a song. At the time, the future, our future, seemed **7** But to hear that song in the voices of people from all over our planet made me proud to be South African. It inspired me to come home and do better. It **8** me to expect more of myself.

Pienaar: May I ask, what was the song, sir?

Mandela: Well, it was "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" (= God bless Africa). A very inspiring song. We need inspiration, François. Because in order to build our nation, we must all exceed our own expectations.

AFTER VIEWING

4 Do you know any other films in which sport inspired great deeds? Here are some titles for you. Surf the Net and find out the sports and what the stories are about.

1. *Victory* (1981)
2. *Chariots of Fire* (1981)
3. *Race* (2016)