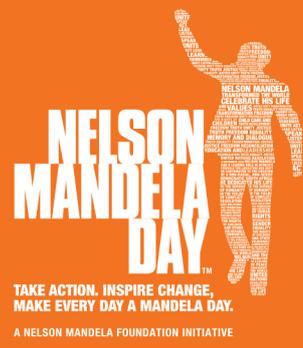




NELSON MANDELA'S NAMES

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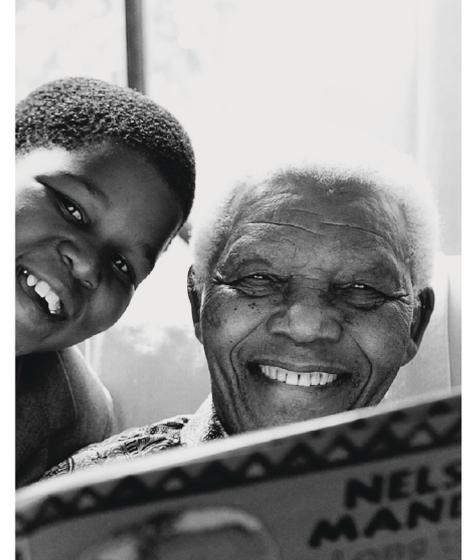


NELSON MANDELA'S NAMES

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MANDELADAY

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The late Mr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela is sometimes referred to by other names. Each name has its own special meaning and story. When you use them you should know what you are saying and why. So here is a brief explanation of each name.

ROLIHLAHLA

This was Mr Mandela's birth name: it is an isiXhosa name which means "pulling the branch of a tree", but colloquially it means "troublemaker". His father gave him this name.

NELSON

This name was given to him on his first day at school by his teacher, Miss Mdingane. Giving African children English names was a custom among Africans in those days and was influenced by British colonials who could not easily, and often would not, pronounce African names. It is unclear why Miss Mdingane chose the name "Nelson" for Mr Mandela.

MADIBA

This is the name of the clan of which Mr Mandela was a member. A clan name is much more important than a surname as it refers to the ancestor from which a person is descended. Madiba was the name of a Thembu chief who ruled in the Transkei in the 18th century. It is considered very polite to use someone's clan name.

TATA

This isiXhosa word means "father" and is a term of endearment that many South Africans use for Mr Mandela. Since he was a father figure to many, they call him Tata regardless of their own age.

KHULU

Mr Mandela is often referred to as "Khulu", which means great, paramount, grand. The speaker means "Great One" when referring to Mr Mandela in this way. It is also a shortened form of the isiXhosa word "Tat'omkhulu" for "grandfather".

DALIBHUNGA

This is the name Mr Mandela was given at the age of 16 once he had undergone initiation, the traditional Xhosa rite of passage into manhood. It means "creator or founder of the council" or "convenor of the dialogue".