

Harmony Day – Family History

f) Grandparents/relatives/elders in Harmony - ask grandparents/relatives/elders to share their stories or family history. Students could also write a piece about their family's history.

I'm Paige Morrison and I was born here in Australia. Even though I was brought up here I was brought up with my parent's cultures. My mum is from Spain and my father is from South Africa. I am proud of my culture and proud of what my grandparents had to go through. Before living here my grandparents lived in South Africa with my dad and my uncle. This was the same time the whites ruled over the government and there was Racial segregation which was called Apartheid, the meaning is "apartness" in the language of Afrikaans. Prior to 1949, there was no apartheid policy in South Africa. Racial groups were allowed to interact and marry. The off-spring of mixed marriage was called "coloreds". In 1949 the white African Party won government and introduced the Apartheid Policy whereby all racial groups were segregated into "Whites" and "Non-whites". Non-whites were broken into groups colored, Indians and blacks. Each group had to live in their own government-designated suburbs or areas. In general, the "Whites" lived in the cities and the better-located suburbs. "Whites" were the privileged group in all respects. My family fell under the so-called "colored" group. My grandparents had to go through many years of this and after having their kids they spent around 10 more years there until they were able to come here to Australia. They were able to have a fresh start without getting looks or told they weren't allowed to go to a certain place without being told they weren't allowed due to their skin. Before coming here my dad and uncle had to attend school. You could not go to a school that was designated for another group. The "white" schools were always better built, better equipped and had far better sporting facilities. While the "non-whites" did not. When it came to working opportunities, certain occupations and jobs were reserved for white people only. My grandfather told me Whites were mainly employed as managers, office workers, and supervisors. Where "Whites" and "non-whites" were employed to do the same job, the white person would always be paid a higher wage. Where a certain standard of education was required to fill a position, a lower standard was often acceptable for the white person with the non-white person requiring a higher standard. The "white" applicant was always at an advantage due to their color. It must be remembered that almost all businesses were "white" owned. My grandparents also explain to me what every day was like during the period. If they went into the city, all shops and facilities were "white" owned and were for the use of "whites only". They could not go into a "white" restaurant or cinema instead they had to use facilities in our own suburbs which were almost non-existent. There were separate buses and taxis for the uses of "whites only". All buildings such as hospitals, post offices and banks to name a few would have two totally separate sections, one for the privileged "whites"

and one for the “non-whites”. These “non-white” areas were the same size as the “white” areas but because the “non-whites” outnumbered the “whites” their areas were always overcrowded with long ques. They would never go on holiday to other cities or towns unless you had family or friends that you could stay with. All accommodation facilities such as hotels or motels were in “white” areas, “white” owned and were for “white” occupation only. It must be noted that it was very difficult, nearly impossible for “non-whites” to purchase land to build a home. So in general, the “non-whites” did not have the opportunity to own businesses. After a lot of research, my grandparents knew to move to Australia was the right thing to do. My grandfather said that he did not want my children to experience the injustices that I had to live with. This is why I am proud of my culture and family history. My family had to work hard to get where they are today.