

Name: _____

South African Vocabulary Day Three

New Words: stope thwart implore malevolent itinerant

Gumboots

Forced to work for hours deep underground carving *stopes* and tunnels in South Africa's gold mines, miners were often faced with great dangers. To add insult to injury, the life of a miner was further affected by the ill treatment from *malevolent* mining officials. Miners were not allowed to visit families more than once or twice a year regardless of *implored* letters from wives and children (the result of bringing in *itinerant* labor from the homelands), were poorly paid, and suffered serious health consequences from life in the dark and dusty tunnels.

In order to alleviate the stress of this kind of life, South African miners developed a dance of stomping and thigh slapping not unlike German lederhosen dances. These dances quickly became a form of communication (like a morse code) and entertainment for the miners. Officials often attempted to *thwart* Gumboots performances, but were not able to stop this expressive dance from becoming an international phenomenon. Today, Gumboots performances have made it to the stages of Broadway and London's West End.

Sample sentences: Try your hand now at using your new words by writing them in their correct form (change endings if necessary) in these sentences:

1. The young man _____ the police officer not to arrest him after he failed to produce his identity pass.
2. Mine workers in South Africa led an _____ lifestyle, making it difficult to sustain relationships with their families.
3. The _____ and passages under my house have caused it to tilt at a precarious angle.
4. The _____ slaughter of an entire Zulu community by the river is remembered by the Blood River Monument in South Africa.
5. The police _____ the school children's uprising in Soweto by killing hundreds of kids, yet they were not able to quell the wave of ensuing protests.

Definitions: Match the new words with their dictionary meanings.

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| 6. stope | a. having or exhibiting ill will; wishing harm to others; malicious. |
| 7. itinerant | b. an excavation in the form of steps made by the mining of ore from steeply inclined or vertical veins. |
| 8. implore | c. to beg, plead. |
| 9. malevolent | d. to hinder, defeat |
| 10. thwart | e. traveling from place to place, especially to perform work or a duty. |

Today's Idiom

Out of the frying pan into the fire - to go from a difficult situation to a worse one.

South African Vocabulary Day 4

New Words: veld(t) belittle din arrhythmia inter

Frightened by the Sound

The rumbling shook the rock causing the everyday *din* of the mines to come to an abrupt halt. Not a sound was to be heard. Joseph listened through the sounds of dripping water and thought he heard an *arrhythmia* in his chest. There had been a number of these tremors as of late and the baas had always tried to *belittle* the sounds and ordered everyone to keep working. Joseph noticed the baas was avoiding coming down to this level of the mine more and more over the last few days.

A crackle could be heard further down and suddenly all light disappeared. Joseph felt sweat drip down his nostrils. This was it. He would never see his children play. He would never see animals leaping along the *veld* again. He would be *interred* in this mine forever, a fossil. He heard the drip of water and saw only blackness surrounding.

Suddenly, the engines started up again; the lights switched back on. False alarm. He was lucky this time. Hopefully his luck would hold out until he was able to go back to his family.

Sample sentences: Try your hand now at using your new words by writing them in their correct form (change endings if necessary) in these sentences:

1. In the diamond mines, it was impossible to hear over the _____ of the machines and the workers.
2. Although South Africa experienced great turmoil, the _____ was still filled with some of the most exotic animals I had ever seen.
3. Although Ralph can't play, he doesn't hesitate to _____ the efforts of our soccer team.
4. The crumbling of the diamond mine left two workers _____ under the ground.
5. After the riots, the nervous student experienced a(n) _____ as she walked down the alley late at night.

Definitions: Match the new words with their dictionary meanings.

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| 6. veld | ___ | a. any of the open grazing areas of southern Africa |
| 7. belittle | ___ | b. an irregularity in the force or rhythm of the heartbeat |
| 8. din | ___ | c. a jumble of loud, usually discordant sounds |
| 9. arrhythmia | ___ | d. to make seem less important |
| 10. inter | ___ | e. to place in a grave or tomb; bury |

Today's Idiom

a red herring— something that diverts attention from the main issue (a red herring drawn across a fox's path destroys the scent)

We felt that the introduction of his war record was a *red herring* to keep us from inquiring into his past work in the scandalous company.