

Reading for Meaning

**Welcome to the Reading for
Meaning programme.**

**We hope that you will have fun
reading stories and doing activities
with learners.**

**Remember, nurturing and
supporting a child is important
for their physical, emotional and
academic development.**



**Part of the Zero Dropout campaign working towards
halving the rate of school dropout by 2030.**

Guitar playing mom

STORY GUIDE

STORY
28

EACH READER NEEDS...

The story

Pens or pencils

Paper

The Story



INTRODUCE THE STORY

Nothembi Mkhwebane is a mother and traditional Ndebele singer who became famous for her guitar-playing skills. She is proud of who she is, you can tell from the beautiful, colourful Ndebele clothes she wears. In this story we learn about how she became known as The Queen of Ndebele Music.



READ THE STORY...

Read the story aloud, with expression. Change your voice when different characters speak.

Pause briefly for commas, full stops etc. and between paragraphs.

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Guitar playing mom



Guitar playing is not just for young people. Nothembi Mkhwebane is a mother and traditional Ndebele singer who became famous for her guitar-playing skills.

Many years ago, when she came onto the scene, JJ Phiri wrote in a magazine:

I heard about a woman who was performing on Freedom Day at Kippies, one of the most popular clubs in Johannesburg. She wears traditional Ndebele clothes and plays an electric guitar. "Never, that can't be true!" I said. But I was curious. I wanted to see her for myself. So I went to Kippies and there I found Nothembi.

I could not believe my eyes when Nothembi walked onto the stage. She looked enormous. Colourful beaded bracelets covered her arms and legs. She had a bright, beaded blanket around her shoulders and she wore a large traditional hat. She picked up her guitar and

started playing.

Nothembi also sings. Her songs are about the rural areas. "My uncle taught me to play the guitar when I was very young," Nothembi says. "I used to sing at funerals and weddings."

She says she is lucky now. She performs for a living.

Nothembi grew up in a rural area in Mpumalanga. Her grandmother taught her to play traditional Ndebele instruments and her uncle taught her to play a home-made oil tin guitar. These lessons were given to her during lunch time while they were taking a break from ploughing the fields and looking after cattle.

Then Nothembi moved to Pretoria where she worked as a domestic worker to support her two children. But she got bored sitting alone in her room so she bought a keyboard and acoustic guitar and started to compose songs. Her next step was to form a group known as

The Siblings.

At first, Nothembi recorded her own music on a portable tape recorder and took it to a record company. But her reading skills were not good enough to read the contract and so she lost money she could have earned from her music.

So Nothembi went back to school to improve her reading skills. With her better reading skills, she could read the contract properly and understand what she was signing.

As a result, Nothembi was able to sign a good contract. She could record her music and make money from it.

From then on, her music earned her money. It also made her more and more famous. She travelled to lots of countries, and was awarded many honours in South Africa and in other countries. In return, she started a Foundation to promote cultural and traditional music.

Nothembi is still known as the Ndebele Queen of Music. You can listen to her music on YouTube.

By Pam Hicks, DGMT

Photograph by courtesy of Daily Dispatch



WORD FOCUS

Ask the Readers to choose words that they find difficult and write them on a sheet of paper.

Ask them to use a dictionary or ask someone else at home what those words mean in their home language. Help them out if necessary.



SECOND READING...

Once you've worked out the meaning of the words, read the story again out loud.

Activities

QUIZ QUESTIONS

Ask the Readers to answer the following questions in their notebooks:

- 1. Mma Nothembi's other name when she sings is the Ndebele Queen of ?**
- 2. What musical instrument did Mma Nothembi play?**
- 3. Who taught Mma Nothembi to play the guitar? Who taught her to play traditional instruments?**
- 4. Where did Mma Nothembi go to work to support her children? Name the city?**
- 5. How many children did she have when she went to this city? (Write the word for that**

number.)

6. What kind of work did she do to support her children?
7. Mma Nothembi wears traditional clothes when she plays her music. Name any traditional item she wears.
8. Mma Nothembi went back to school when she was already an adult. Why? What did she learn to do better than before?
9. Mma Nothembi's Foundation promotes a certain kind of music. What kind of music does it promote?

ANSWERS:

1. *music*
2. *guitar*
3. *uncle*
4. *her grandmother*
5. *Pretoria*
6. *two*
7. *domestic*
8. *bracelet/beads/blanket/hat*
9. *read*
10. *traditional/cultural*

Ending

Praise the Readers for their participation.

Ask if they enjoyed the story, and what they liked best. Tell them you enjoyed it too.

Say goodbye, and say how much you look forward to seeing them next time.

**ZERO
DROP/OUT**

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