Colonisation of the Cape 17th – 18th centuries

GRADE 7
Indigenous inhabitants of the Cape in the 17th century

**San hunter-gatherers**

- **Hunter-gatherer** = a person who hunts for meat or collects plant food.

- They were nomads.

- **Nomads** = people who do not stay long in one place and have to move around during certain seasons as they are hunters and shepherds.

- This way they could always be near good pasture.

- They had to move as seasons changed to follow the animals for food.

- Fresh green grass and trees meant that there would be leaf-eating animals to hunt. It also meant that there would be good food for them and their goats to eat.
San hunter-gatherers: The San community

- They lived in family groups.
- A family group usually consisted of 30-40 people.
- The family groups were very close to each other and treated each other with respect.
- They shared resources with each other. (e.g. food, water etc.)
- They lived in caves and huts built of sticks & grass.
- Their clothes were made from animal skins.
San hunter-gatherers: Rock paintings
San hunter-gatherers: Rock paintings

The San's rock paintings against the walls of caves give us an idea of what their lives were like. The drawings depicted their existence - their hunting trips, communities, relationship with nature, etc.
Khoikhoi herders

- Herders keep animals that are useful to them (e.g. cattle, sheep, goats etc.)
- Cattle were used for their meat and cows for their milk.
- About 2000 years ago, Khoikhoi herders began moving into the south-western parts of southern Africa.
- The Khoikhoi settled in the winter rainfall areas of the Cape where there was good grazing for their sheep.
- They were larger groups than the San.
- They also moved around to find the best grazing for their livestock.
- **Livestock** = domestic animals such as cattle and sheep.
About 2000 years ago, Xhosa-speaking African farmers started settling in the eastern and southern parts of Africa. They grew crops such as:

- **Sorghum** = a type of grass used as grain.
- **Millet** = a type of grass used for cereal.

These crops needed summer rainfall. These farmers also had cattle, sheep and goats.
People who lived in Europe could not find everything they wanted and needed.

They traded with countries in the Middle East (Arabs).

The Arab traders then traded to countries in the East such as India and China.

The Arab traders had full control over trade-routes, and this meant that they could levy high taxes on goods that Europeans wanted.
The European traders realised that if they could get the goods themselves, they could buy them for cheaper and thus make a bigger profit.

They wanted to find a sea route that did not cross the Arab trade routes and could take them to East Africa.

They did not know much about the routes to Africa and had to explore them.
The government of the Netherlands started the VOC, which can also be translated to the Dutch East India Company.

The Dutch government said that the VOC was the only Dutch trading company allowed to trade in the East.

1652 – The VOC started a refreshment station at the Cape as a stopping place for ships. The purpose of this settlement was to provide VOC ships with fresh water, food and other supplies. It was also a place where sailors who had scurvy could recover.

Scurvy = a disease sailors got from not having any fresh vegetables and fruit on long sea journeys.
The arrival of the Dutch at Table Bay in 1652

- Commander Jan van Riebeeck arrived at the Cape with 90 people from the Netherlands.
- These people were sailors, soldiers and other skilled workers.

**What was the VOC’s instructions to Jan van Riebeeck:**

- Planting of vegetable seeds & small fruit trees.
- Set up peaceful and friendly trade with the Khoikhoi.
- To build a fort for protection for the Dutch and a hospital for sick VOC sailors.
- To keep a diary of each day and regularly send a report to the VOC in the Netherlands.
The arrival of the Dutch at Table Bay in 1652

Struggles the settlement had to deal with in the first few years:

- Winter rain washed away the mud and stone walls of the fort.
- Rain flooded the vegetables and other plants.
- The strong south-easterly winds destroyed the wheat crop.
- Trade with the Khoikhoi for livestock did not go well either – they never wanted to trade more than a few animals at a time.
Between **1652 – 1808** there was about **63 000** slaves brought to the Cape.

**Slaves of the Cape**

**1658** - The first slaves were brought to the Cape from Angola and Gambia.

**17th & 18th century** – Slaves were brought from 4 main areas = continent of Africa, island of Madagascar, India and Sri-Lanka.
LET'S PAUSE QUICKLY…

What exactly is a slave?

- A person that has been captured, taken away from their family and sold to someone else as their new property.
- Someone who must do everything their owner tells them.
- They had to do hard labour without any pay.
- They could be punished if they didn’t obey their owner.
WHY WERE SLAVES BROUGHT TO THE CAPE?

▪ Jan van Riebeeck realized that he needed more people to work at the settlement – growing crops, working at the settlement and supplying passing VOC ships.

▪ The locals (Khoikhoi) were herders, so they had no interest in growing crops and doing building for the Dutch.

▪ Slaves were needed to do all the hard work.
SLAVE RESISTANCE IN THE CAPE:

- Slaves hated being slaves – they were treated poorly and had horrible working and living conditions.
- There were 2 major rebellions of slaves - BUT they failed.

**How did slaves show resistance?**

- They worked slowly;
- They would backchat their owners and refuse to work;
- They committed suicide;
- They got drunk;
- They set fire to houses and crops;
- They tried to run away;
- They murdered their owners.
The religion of Islam

- Many of the slaves that the VOC brought from the East Indies were Muslim.
- **1693** – Sheik Yusuf of Makassar in the East Indies was sent to the Cape, because he was involved in war against the Dutch.
- At the Cape, Sheik Yusuf taught many slaves about Islam.
- **1840** – 6435 people had converted to Islam in the Cape, which was one-third of the total population of the colony.
- **Late 18th century** - a **Mosque** was established in Cape Town.
- **Mosque** = a place of worship for Muslims
Free burghers – Dutch & French Huguenot immigration to the Cape

- The settlement in the Cape was unable to grow enough food to feed all the people working at the settlement as well as the ships stopping for refreshments.
- Van Riebeeck allowed some of the people at the settlement to become ‘Vry Burghers’ (Free Citizens), in other words, soldiers who were released from their VOC contracts in order to become farmers.
- 1857 -The first 9 free citizens were given farms alongside Liesbeeck River.
- They owned the farms and sold their produce (vegetables, fruit, crops) to the VOC.
- Refreshment settlement now became a Colony.
- As the number of free citizens increased, the more herds and grazing land was taken away from the Khoikhoi herders.
- This did not happen without resistance!
- They fought 2 battles against the Dutch.
- They were forced to give up their grazing land to the Dutch and without grazing land, they lost their livestock.
- At the end of the 18th century, almost all the Khoikhoi lived within the borders of the Cape Colony and worked as servants of the Dutch.
The movement of trekboers with their slaves and servants inland

- **1700’s** – VOC got the wheat and wine they needed from the Vry burghers in and around the Cape.
- The VOC needed livestock farmers to supply meat.
- The farmers were encouraged by the VOC to move **inland** (north and east from the Western Cape).
- They now became known as trekboers as they began to move around.
- They were allowed to establish bigger farms at places where they could find good grazing for their sheep and cattle.
- The trekboers also became hunters of meat.

**Trekboers** = farmers who moved around.

Let’s look at how the trekboers lived
They travelled in ox-wagons.
They had horses & guns.
They lived in the wagons and tents.
They hunted wild animals for meat.
They got milk, eggs and meat from their livestock.
They boiled fat from fat-tailed sheep with wood ash to make soap.