

# Exploring South Africa

**SUBMITTED BY:** Kamaila A. Sanders, The University of Pennsylvania

**SUBJECT(S):** Entrepreneurship

**GRADE LEVEL(S):** 9, 10, 11, 12

## ≡ OVERVIEW:

In this lesson, students will learn about one entrepreneur's venture in South Africa, which will highlight some of the unique challenges of doing business in this country. Then they will discuss some of the pros and cons of an attempt to scale up the business mentioned in the article by exporting cookies and creating stores in disadvantaged U.S. cities.

## ≡ NBEA STANDARD(S):

- Entrepreneurship, I. Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurial Opportunities
- Entrepreneurship, VII. Global Markets

## ≡ RELATED ARTICLES:

- [“The Power of One African Teen’s Idea to Ward Off Lions”](#)
- [“Muna Yussuf on Strengthening Sports in Africa – Starting with the Confederations Cup”](#)
- [“Mo Fall Dreams of Playing Basketball for an African League”](#)
- [“Financial Literacy: The Voice of South African Youth”](#)
- [“Educator Toolkit: Doing Business in Africa”](#)
- [“Dark Milk Chocolate Bars Help to Unlock Wealth in West Africa”](#)
- [“5 Ways the World Will Look Different in 2030”](#)

**Common Core Standard(s):** Key Ideas and Details, Comprehension and Collaboration, Presentation and Key Ideas

**Objectives/Purposes:** In this lesson, students will learn some of the unique challenges to being an entrepreneur in South Africa.

**Knowledge@Wharton Article:** “[Creating a Sustainable Business among South Africa’s Poor ‘One Bite at a Time’](#)” (podcast, 10 mins)

### Activity:

1. (10 mins) Introduce students to South Africa by compiling the following information, taken from their government website, into a PowerPoint presentation:

#### South Africa at a glance

**Size** 1 219 090 km<sup>2</sup>

**Key economic sectors** [Mining](#) and [energy](#), manufacturing, [tourism](#), [agriculture](#)

\*[Fishing](#) is also an important economic contributor (hake, anchovy, pilchard, mackerel and more)

### Population

- Total: 50 586 757
- Male: 24 515 036; Female: 26 071 72
- 10 – 14 years: 15 812 268; 15 – 34 years: 18 714 750
- Households: 13,8 million; Household size: Average 3,6 persons

### Official languages

- English
- isiZulu
- isiXhosa
- isiNdebele
- Afrikaans
- siSwati
- Sesotho sa Leboa

- Sesotho
- Setswana
- Tshivenda
- Xitsonga

## Government

- Constitutional multiparty
- Three-tier (local, provincial, national) democracy
- Read more about South Africa's [government](#)

## Capitals

- Pretoria (administrative)
- Cape Town (legislative)
- Bloemfontein (judicial)

The Constitutional Court is located in Johannesburg.

## Provinces

- [Free State](#)
- [Eastern Cape](#)
- [Gauteng](#)
- [KwaZulu-Natal](#)
- [Limpopo](#)
- [Mpumalanga](#)
- [Northern Cape](#)
- [North West](#)
- [Western Cape](#)

**Currency** Rand (ZAR). 100 cents equals one rand

**Time** GMT +2 hours

## Distances

- Cape Town to Johannesburg 1 400 km (880 miles)
- Johannesburg to Durban 600 km (380 miles)
- Port Elizabeth to Bloemfontein 700 km (440 miles)

**Transportation** Excellent roads, rail and air facilities (both domestic and international)

**Telecommunications** World-class infrastructure. Internet access is widely available. There are four mobile (cellular) networks.

**Health** Top-quality [healthcare](#) is available throughout the country, although basic in rural areas.

Click [HERE](#) for news updates from South Africa.

Population group	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	% of total population	Number	% of total population	Number	% of total population
African	19 472 038	79,4	20 734 237	79,5	40 206 275	79,4
Coloured	2 188 782	8,9	2 351 008	9,0	4 539 790	9,0
Indian/Asian	626 690	2,6	648 177	2,5	1 274 867	2,5
White	2 227 526	9,1	2 338 299	9,0	4 565 825	9,0
Total	24 515 036	100,0	26 071 721	100,0	50 586 757	100,0

More information about South Africa can be found here: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/africa/south-african-political-geography/south-africa>

(15 mins) Have students listen to the podcast, “Creating a Sustainable Business among South Africa’s Poor ‘One Bite at a Time’” and take notes on the following questions:

- What is the driving force behind Alice Polak’s company, Khayelitsha Cookies?

- She would like to get the families living in poverty in South African Townships out of shacks.
- How will the Wharton Societal Wealth Generation Program use donation money it receives?
  - To fund projects that will eventually be able to fund themselves over time.
- In what ways is Polak looking to scale up the company?
  - She wants to export the cookies to developed countries and bring the cookie concept to developed parts of the U.S. like New Orleans and Camden, N.J.
- Why did the Snowflake baking company flop?
  - It provided recipes in English and most women in the township couldn't read English or read.
- What are some criticisms Polak offers of NGO's?
  - A lot of waste
  - They exist to create jobs for expats who live very nicely
- Why is a company that sells baked goods a good company to build in a poor region?
  - Baking is a skill that is transferable across cultures and languages.
  - It is simple, friendly
- Whom does the company sell cookies to?
  - Tourists

**Tying It All Together:** (15 minutes) The article mentions that Polak would like to increase profits and scale up the company by exporting both the products (baked goods) and the company to disadvantaged parts of the U.S. like New Orleans and Camden, N.J. Have students work in groups to discuss the pros and cons of this initiative to scale up in these types of areas. Additionally, have them provide recommendations for implementation. Finally, have students identify some business opportunities that follow Polak's model. Once students are done working in their groups, have each group present the class with their findings (pros and cons) and recommendations.

**Practice Outside of the Classroom:** The entrepreneur highlighted in this lesson chose baked goods because they transfer well across cultures. What other goods also have universal appeal?

**What Worked and What I Would Do Differently:** This activity works well. I found that students were very interested to learn about South Africa, so I recommend including the PowerPoint with information about the country and pictures as well. You can also search for some short travel videos on South Africa at [THEWORLD OF TRAVEL](https://www.theworldoftravel.com/) YouTube page. If your students are not familiar with Camden and New Orleans, you may need to introduce them to those areas as well. For a bit of Camden background, reference the Wharton Global Youth Program article "The Flavor of Bold:

Aaron McCargo, Jr. Dishes About Life Before and After “The Next Food Network Star.” You can also pick a low-income urban or rural area that your students would be familiar with and go over some of the unique challenges those areas face. This will help students to get an idea of what the needs are and what the entrepreneurial opportunities might be.

5