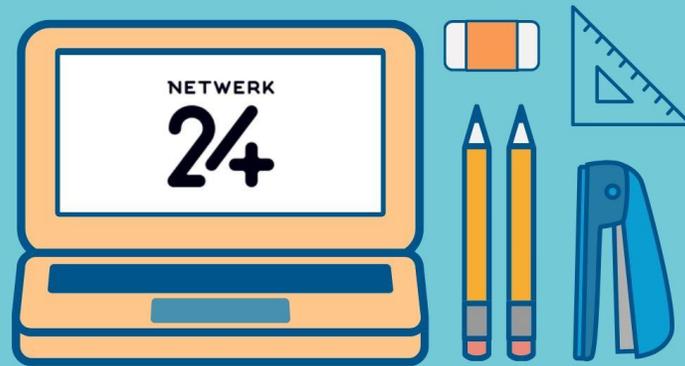


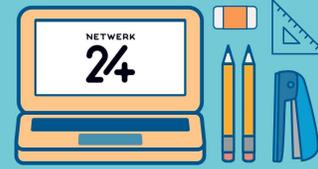
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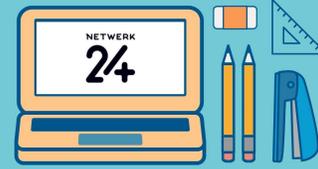


ENGELS



Themes: My Children! My Africa!

Communication versus violence	The Generation Gap	The effects of an unjust social system	The meaning of a useful life
Words and literature	Tradition and culture	Race relations	Friendship
Debate	Generation clashes	Politics and power	Purpose
Education		Privilege and poverty	A teacher's role
Conflict		Education	
Violence		Violence	
Justice		Revolution	



Themes: My Children! My Africa!

**Main themes mnemonic:
Camdeboo Gets Excellent Marks**

Communication versus violence
Generation Gap
Effects of an unjust social system
Meaning of a useful life

What is a theme? An important idea that runs through the action of the play. There can be more than one theme.

You need to know (for 3 marks): The meaning of the theme; how it applies to the drama; examples from drama.



Themes: My Children! My Africa!

Communication versus violence:

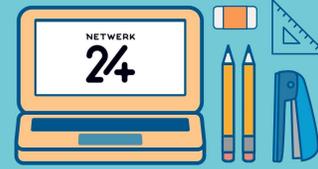
Meaning: There are different approaches to solving problems, talking through them, or educating people about the impact, or violent ways.

In the play, Mr. M, as part of the older generation, believes words can bring social and political change.

Thami, as part of the younger generation, believes action (violence) will be the way to bring change, since words have not worked.

Examples: Mr. M believes the literature quiz will bring change. Thami decides to quit the quiz and join the boycott.

Mr. M holds a stone in one hand and a dictionary in the other and asks which one is more powerful.



Themes: My Children! My Africa!

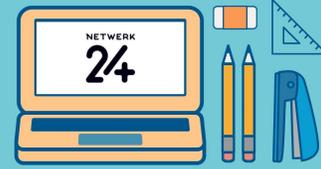
The generation gap:

Meaning: Different generations have different values, hopes and ideals.

In the play, Mr. M represents the older generation. He is a 57-year-old teacher and more patient than the younger generation.

Thami is 19 years old and represents the younger generation. He is impatient for change.

Examples: Mr. M and Thami experience conflict because Mr. M tries to impose his values on Thami but Thami has different ideas.



Themes: My Children! My Africa!

Effects of an unjust social system:

The unjust social system referred to is apartheid, a system where white citizens had certain rights, freedoms and privileges that black citizens did not have, like the right to vote.

In the play, Isabel represents the white citizens and lives in the pretty town of Camdeboo and is receiving a good education.

Thami and Mr. M represent the black citizens and live in Brakwater, the ugly location with no electricity or running water.

Thami is receiving an inferior education called Bantu Education.

Examples: The descriptions of Camdeboo and Brakwater; How Isabel views school and her education versus how Thami views his.



Themes: My Children! My Africa!

Meaning of a useful life:

A life must have meaning/ purpose

In the play, the theme is explored through the characters' lives.

Black people's lives are wasted because of fewer opportunities.

It is a waste to have Thami and Isabel as opponents, they must work together. Mr. M hates waste.

After his death, Isabel promises Mr. M she will live a meaningful life.

Is Thami's life wasted by the fact that he joins the boycott instead of finishing his education?

Is Mr. M's life wasted?



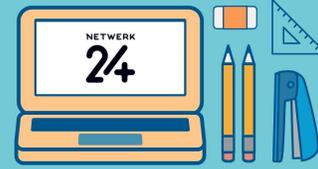
Themes: My Children! My Africa!

Race

My Children! My Africa! exposes some of the ongoing struggles of apartheid in the 1980s, particularly related to education. Apartheid was a system of segregation laws that kept black South Africans from the spaces and resources to which whites had privileged access.

Two of the characters are black, and one is white. Isabel, the white character, initially thinks the black characters will be grateful to her for visiting their school and will not equal her intelligence. However, she comes to love both Thami and Mr. M, and recognises through them the difficulty and importance of the struggle against apartheid. Thami and Mr. M are both proud of their race and their racial heritage, even if they have different ideologies about what it is necessary for an individual to do to end apartheid.

Isabel has certain privileges that Thami doesn't because she is white and he is black, like a good education, a peaceful environment etc.

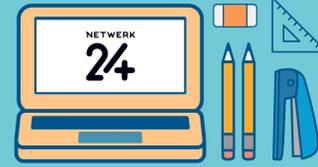


Themes: My Children! My Africa!

Education

In South Africa at the time shown in *My Children! My Africa!*, schools for white and black South Africans were completely segregated. This is shown in the play by Isabel and Thami attending different schools and the fact that Thami did not receive an equal education to Isabel is shown by Isabel's shock and disgust at how simple and dull Thami's school seems. However, the play shows even black South Africans raised in these segregated areas had the intellect to succeed in academics and in life, if the government would have allowed them the chance.

The subject of teaching and teachers is also very important to the play. All the characters are either teachers or students and the traditional relationship between teachers and students is shown through the characters of Thami and Mr. M. Mr. M keeps an emotionally distant relationship and often tells Isabel he will tell Thami what to do rather than ask him. Secretly, Mr. M tells Isabel Thami is his favourite student and that his biggest goal, after all his years of teaching, is for Thami to succeed.



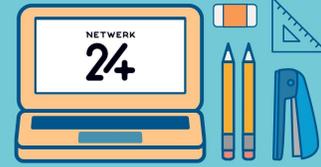
Themes: My Children! My Africa!

Tradition and Culture:

Tradition is used to describe beliefs and behaviours that are passed on from generation to generation, while culture is used to describe the characteristics of a certain society at a particular point in time. In African tradition and culture, elders are respected by younger members of society. That is why Mr. M believes Thami will follow his will unquestioningly.

In the debate, Thami argues Africans should stick to their traditions and heritage. It is ironic, because later he rejects these traditions for change.

Isabel believes we should be able to change with the times. She easily accepts change in her views toward black people and black culture.



Themes: My Children! My Africa!

Friendship:

Friendship implies equality. Isabel and Thami become friends, even though Isabel later questions that friendship. A friendship even develops between Isabel and Mr. M. Mr. M and Thami are not friends, as their relationship is not one of equals. Mr. M sees himself as Thami's elder, and therefore has power over him. Isabel and Thami's friendship is tested by gender, race, lifestyle and background differences. Good friends should be honest and loyal and express their true feelings. Do they?