

Ndebele Art



Where Do the Ndebele People Live?

The Ndebele are a group of people who live mainly in South Africa.



A Life Filled with Colour

The Ndebele people are famous for their colourful homes, clothes and jewellery.

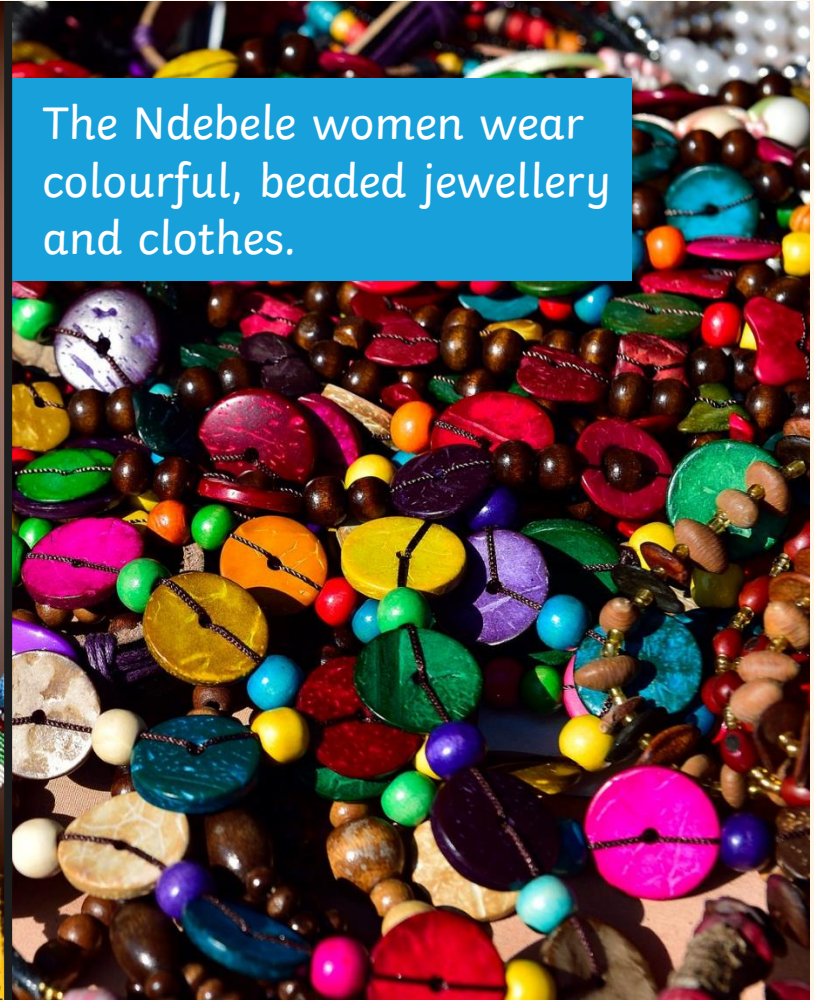


The inside and the outside of their homes are covered in bright, colourful patterns.

Ndebele Women



The Ndebele women wear colourful, beaded jewellery and clothes.



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Ndebele Jewellery



The ornaments that the Ndebele women wear represent different aspects of their life. For example, married women wear brass or copper rings around their necks called idzila.

A husband gives his wife the rings. The richer he is, the more rings she will wear!

Ceremonial Blanket



On their wedding day, Ndebele women are given a marriage blanket called a nguba. Like their homes, this is very colourful and vibrant and women add beads to it over time.

Ndebele Men



They wear ornate jewellery and rings for special ceremonies which are made for them by their wives and mothers.

Traditionally, Ndebele men look after and farm animals, such as goats and cows.

"Ndebele village artwork and crafts, Mpumalanga, South Africa" by [South African Tourism](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

"Goats browse by road above Simonstown, Cape Peninsula" by [Dr Mary Gillham Archive Project](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

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Ndebele Children

Ndebele children wear beads before they wear clothes. When they are born, babies wear white beads around their waists which their parents believe will bring them good luck. As they grow older, children begin to wear beads around their wrists, ankles and necks.



The Ndebele People's Diet

Traditionally, the Ndebele's diet consists mainly of maize (corn), a variety of meats and different vegetables.



Ndebele Homes



In the past, Ndebele families lived in round houses called rondawels. Men and women had separate living areas within the rondawel. Women would live on the left side and men on the right. Today, families tend to live in more modern houses built at the back of the rondawel.

Take a look at some more colourful Ndebele buildings.



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Activity

Ndebele house painting is traditionally done by the women. They have always done the painting freehand, without ever using a ruler! Long ago, the women used natural pigments for their paint but today they use more modern paint, but they still often use chicken feathers as paint brushes just as their ancestors did.

Try your hand at Ndebele house painting. Without using a ruler, sketch a design on a blank piece of paper or on the worksheet. Remember that Ndebele art uses a series of geometric patterns and shapes. Use black to outline your design then use bright colours to fill in the design.

If you want, you could make a 3D model of a Ndebele house using recycled cardboard and paint.

I can't wait to see the finished results!