

OLDER LEARNERS' READING

TEACHER'S NOTES: READ THE FOLLOWING STORY ALOUD OR GIVE IT TO OLDER LEARNERS AS A READING COMPREHENSION.

FELA'S MUSIC

Fela Kuti was a musician from Nigeria. Nigeria is a country in West Africa.

Fela's family was famous in Nigeria. His mother worked hard for women's rights in the country. His father was a school principal and worked hard for workers' rights. Fela's two brothers became well known doctors in Nigeria. His cousin was the first African to win a Nobel Prize for Literature.

When he finished school, Fela went to London to study music. He started a band and travelled around the world playing music. People loved Fela's songs because they were special. Many of Fela's songs were about life in Nigeria.

Fela used his music to tell people around the world about problems in Nigeria, like poverty and hunger. He sang about people being treated unfairly in Nigeria. He explained that poor people were not treated equally. They were considered less important than rich people.

In a song called 'No Bread', he sang:

*'Your head's pounding; your mouth's dry; your stomach's flipping; hunger's overwhelming you
You have no power to fight*

*It is here we know real poverty
I'm fed up with poverty!*

Fela also sang about the Nigerian government. He sang about the unfair things the government did, like putting people in prison for saying what they thought and sharing their ideas with other people.

Fela sang about these things because he wanted life in Nigeria to get better for everyone. He hoped the government would listen. He wanted the government to treat people fairly.

PUNISHED FOR SPEAKING OUT

The government was angry with Fela for singing about the problems in Nigeria and for disagreeing with the way they ruled the country. They did not like being told that they were wrong.

One day, the government sent soldiers to Fela's home. Fela lived with lots of his friends and family members. His house was called 'Kalakuta'. The soldiers hurt Fela's family and burned down his house. Fela's mother was badly hurt. She died a few months later because of her injuries.

Fela was not scared, but he was angry. So, he continued to sing about the problems in Nigeria for many years. In a song called 'Unknown Soldier', he sang about how the government soldiers had burned down his house and hurt his family.

The government got even angrier with Fela. They arrested him and put him in prison. ▶

- ▶ The government made up an excuse for arresting Fela. However, it was clear that they had put Fela in prison for telling people he disagreed with the government. Fela was not given a chance to explain his side of the story.

When Fela's fans heard what had happened, they were furious. They wrote lots of letters to the Nigerian government. They demanded he be released. They said 'Fela should be set free'. They explained that it wasn't fair to keep Fela in prison because of his beliefs. He had done nothing wrong.

At first, the government didn't listen. Fela's fans wrote more and more letters. They shared Fela's story with more people. After some time, the government started listening. After spending a year and a half in prison, Fela was finally set free.

DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS

Fela was so happy to be free. He was not afraid to keep telling people what he thought.

He continued to write songs about life in Nigeria.

He knew that people should be treated fairly and he knew that this message was important to share with people in Nigeria and all over the world.

So, Fela sang his songs until the day he died. He took part in concerts to share his music and his messages about human rights. He wasn't afraid to share his ideas and opinions with people.

The messages in Fela's songs are still important today. Many people in the world today are poor and hungry. Many people are punished for saying what they think. People all over the world still listen to Fela's songs and agree that it is important to treat people fairly. A stage show called 'Fela!' has been made of Fela's life so that his story can be shared with people around the world.

OLDER LEARNERS' WORKSHEET 1

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT FELA'S STORY

1. WHY DID FELA GO TO LONDON?

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2. WHAT WERE FELA'S SONGS ABOUT?

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3. WHAT DID THE SOLDIERS DO AT FELA'S HOUSE?

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4. WHY WAS FELA PUT IN PRISON?

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5. WHY DID FELA'S FANS GET ANGRY WHEN HE WAS PUT IN PRISON?

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6. WHAT WAS FELA'S MESSAGE FOR THE WORLD?

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OLDER LEARNERS' WORKSHEET 2

WORD MEANING ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: FIND THE MEANING OF THESE WORDS IN YOUR DICTIONARIES.

POVERTY:.....

OVERWHELMING:.....

GOVERNMENT:

PUNISH:.....

FURIOUS:.....

BELIEF:

OPINION:.....

CONSIDER:.....

UNFAIR:

CONTINUE:.....

**ACTIVITY 2: WRITE FIVE SENTENCES USING A WORD FROM THE LIST ABOVE
IN EACH SENTENCE.**

1.....

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2.....

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3.....

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4.....

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5.....

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OLDER LEARNERS' WORKSHEET 3

WORD MEANING ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 3: CHOOSE THE WORD OR PHRASE CLOSEST IN MEANING TO THE UNDERLINED WORD OR PHRASE.

1. FELA'S FANS WERE FURIOUS WITH THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT FOR PUTTING HIM IN PRISON.

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|--------------------|--------------|
| A) HAPPY | B) UNHAPPY |
| C) EXTREMELY ANGRY | D) SATISFIED |

2. IT WAS FELA'S OPINION THAT NOBODY SHOULD LIVE IN POVERTY.

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|--------------|-----------|
| A) CONCERN | B) BELIEF |
| C) NIGHTMARE | D) WORRY |

3. FELA'S FANS DEMANDED HE BE RELEASED FROM PRISON.

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|-------------|------------|
| A) INSISTED | B) ASKED |
| C) ACCEPTED | D) ALLOWED |

4. THE GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA RELEASED FELA FROM PRISON AFTER A YEAR AND A HALF.

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| A) POPULATION | B) TEACHERS |
| C) STUDENTS | D) LEADERS |

5. FELA'S COUSIN WAS FAMOUS IN NIGERIA FOR HIS LITERATURE.

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| A) BOOKS | B) HOMEWORK |
| C) THOUGHTS | D) FILMS |