

Grade 7 Life Orientation Worksheet

Careers - case study

Case study

Peter Magubane – Resistance photographer

Peter Magubane was born in Vrededorp and grew up in Sophiatown. He became attracted to photography after doing some photography using a Kodak Brownie as a schoolboy.

He was highly inspired by the works of great photographers of the day, especially those from *Drum magazine*. He started work at Drum magazine as a driver and messenger but three months later he was trained to be a darkroom assistant until he was given his first assignment as field photographer to cover the 1955 [ANC](#) convention in Bloemfontein. In the 1950s he covered many important political events, including the treason trials and demonstrations against the [pass laws](#).

In 1958 he was honoured with being the first Black South African to win a photographic prize in the country – first and third prizes were awarded to him for *Best Press* pictures of the year. Between 1963 and 1964 he worked in London as a freelancer. During this time he held an exhibition of his work, becoming the first black South African to do this. After his freelance years, Magubane came back to South Africa in 1966 and started working for the *Rand Daily Mail* from 1967 until 1980. In June of 1969 he was arrested while photographing protestors outside Winnie Mandela's jail cell. After days of interrogation and solitary confinement, he was released, and the charges were dropped a year later, but he was banned from taking any photographs for five years.

In March of 1971 he was arrested again, spent 98 days in solitary confinement, and was then jailed for six months. When the banning order was lifted he resumed work for the *Rand Daily Mail*. From June through to August of 1976 he documented the [Soweto student uprisings](#), was arrested then released in December of 1976. From 1978 until 1980 he was also employed as a correspondent for *Time magazine*. In 1980 he left South Africa for New York.

Coverage of the June 16 student uprisings of 1976 earned him worldwide acclaim and led to a number of international photographic and journalistic awards, one of which was the *American National Professional Photographers Association Humanistic Award* in 1986, in recognition of one of several incidents in which he put his camera aside and intervened to help prevent people from being killed. He also took photographs for several United Nations agencies, including the High Commission for Refugees and UNICEF, being particularly committed to exposing the plight of children and documenting traditional societies. His photographs have appeared in *Life magazine*, the *New York Times*, *National Geographic* and *Time magazine*.

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In 1992 the Missouri School of Journalism presented him with the *Missouri Honorary Medal for Distinguished Service in Journalism* for his lifelong coverage of apartheid. In recent years he has become an art photographer, documenting the surviving tribal ways in post-apartheid South Africa in colour. He has stopped doing news work, and is instead concentrating on documenting post-apartheid culture and publishing books on this, e.g. *Vanishing Cultures* by Peter Magubane.

Awards

He has won many local and international awards, including

- 1999 - Order for Meritorious Service Class II from President Mandela
- 2003 - Honorary doctorate degree from the University of South Africa

Questions

Read the above case study with understanding. If there is anything that you do not understand, discuss it with your teacher. Then answer the following questions.

1. Write a paragraph about why Peter Magubane is called a 'resistance' photographer. [5]
2. Do you think that Peter Magubane planned and promoted his career? Explain your answer. [5]
3. In your opinion, has Peter Magubane enjoyed his working life? Explain your answer. [5]
4. Pretend that you are a reporter and will be interviewing Peter Magubane. What five questions will you prepare for your interview? [5]

Total marks = [20]

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Suggested Solutions

| Question number | Possible marks | Solution |
|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 5 | Personal response. |
| 2 | 5 | Personal response. |
| 3 | 5 | Personal response. |
| 4 | 5 | Personal response. |
| Total marks: 20 | | |