Multimedia Primary Source Discussion Set
The Anti-Apartheid Movement in the United States

URL: https://americanarchive.org/primary_source_sets/anti-apartheid-movement

Teaching Tips
This source set includes a series of videos related to the anti-apartheid movement in the United States. It features politicians from the United States advocating for and against additional action against the apartheid government of South Africa. This set also includes the voices of South Africans detailing the atrocities of apartheid and advocating for greater intervention by the United States. The suggested activities below prompt students to consider the relationship between different sources in this set and to analyze the sources given the historical context in which they were produced.

Background Information
Before engaging with this resource set, students should be familiar with the following:

- South Africa’s colonial history
- The apartheid system in South Africa
- The African National Congress and other groups within South Africa opposed to apartheid
- The concept of economic sanctions
- The African American Civil Rights Movement in the United States

Essential Question
How did activists seek to end apartheid in South Africa?
General Discussion Questions

- How were Black South Africans oppressed? Why were they oppressed?
- How did activists connect apartheid in South Africa to issues in the United States?
- What were reactions to Reagan’s 1985 sanctions? Why might the reactions have varied?
- What were the strengths and limitations of the different strategies that activists used to try to bring about the end of apartheid?

Classroom Activities

1) Topic: The nature of apartheid

Ask students to watch the following sources:
- Reverend Jesse Jackson’s Anti-Apartheid Speech at Harvard University (1985)
- Interview With President Oliver Tambo and Senator Richard Lugar (1985)
- Interview With Anti-Apartheid Activist Albertina Sisulu (1989)

How do the speakers in these sources describe conditions under apartheid? How are their descriptions similar or different? What rhetorical strategies do they use to further their arguments about the nature of apartheid?

2) Topic: Reactions to Reagan’s sanctions

Ask students to watch the following sources:
- President Ronald Reagan Issues Executive Order Against Apartheid (1985)
- Reactions in South Africa to President Ronald Reagan’s Sanctions (1985)
- Interview With Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker (1986)

What were reactions to President Ronald Reagan’s sanctions against South Africa? How were they similar? How did they differ? How might the backgrounds of the different speakers help to explain the differing reactions?