

**Heroism and Humility of Nelson Mandela – Teacher’s Answer Key**

1. Mandela displayed great humility when he stepped down from the role of a president after one term, although he could have stayed a president for life. One of his most famous descriptions of himself which also shows his humility is: “I am not a saint unless you think of a saint as a sinner who keeps on trying.” He was definitely a person who was aware of both his strengths and his limitations.

Even after becoming famous, he was always insisting that other people should be put alongside, or even before, him. One time he said: “I was in the company of great men: some of them more qualified than me.” Shortly after he turned 80, Nelson Mandela received an honorary doctorate from Harvard at a special convocation. “I know that through this award, you are not so much recognizing any individual achievement, but are rather paying tribute to the struggles and achievements of the South African people as a whole,” he said in his address.

2. Mandela embodies five characteristics of heroism in the following way:
  - His heroism was not born overnight, but he developed it slowly through many years of struggle, and by making excellent choices in day to day situations.
  - He showed that heroism is not about never making mistakes, but rather, always trying to get on the right track after making them. He said: “I am not a saint unless you think of a saint as a sinner who keeps on trying.”
  - He embodied the fact that heroism is enhanced by excellent friendships. He knew that ending the apartheid would never be possible without friends working together in solidarity.
  - He also embodied different habits of excellence. Maybe most notable is the habit of forgiveness. He was famous for rejecting resentment toward his oppressors by saying: “Resentment is like drinking poison and hoping it will kill your enemy.” He made peace with his oppressors and started a Truth and Reconciliation Commission after becoming president.
  - Mandela’s heroism was aimed at sacrificing for others, and not increasing his own importance. His main aim was building peace and transforming his country in a positive way.