

# Summary: The Road to Independence

## Moving Toward Independence

Colonial rule in Africa disrupted social systems and governments. It also robbed Africa of resources. Africans did not have the power to stop it. But as more young Africans became educated, they started to dream of independence. Nationalism grew strong. European nations wanted to keep their colonies because they wanted Africa's resources. Many Europeans believed that Africans could not govern themselves. This belief is an example of racism.

Educated Africans believed they could govern themselves. After fighting for the European Allies in World War I, ex-soldiers wanted self-rule. Pan-Africanism, or the idea that people of African descent around the world should work together for freedom, grew in popularity. The first Pan-African Congress was held in 1919. Many Africans who fought in World War II also felt they should have freedom. Several Africans who attended the 1945 Pan-African Congress became leaders of their countries.

## New African Countries

Between 1951 and 1980, most colonies in Africa south of the Sahara gained independence. In 1960, Nigeria gained independence from the United Kingdom. Nigeria's diversity caused many problems. There was hostility among the country's ethnic groups. Many Nigerian leaders cared about their ethnic group instead of the whole country. Some leaders stole money and took bribes. In 1966, riots broke out. The next year, people in eastern Nigeria formed the separate country of Biafra. After three years of civil war, Biafra rejoined Nigeria.

South Africa won its independence from Britain in 1910. But most South Africans did not have freedom. Laws were passed that limited the freedom of nonwhites. In 1948, the policy of apartheid was adopted. South Africans were separated by color. Many people protested apartheid. Sometimes protests became violent. In 1991, apartheid ended.

### Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

**racism** *noun*, the unfounded belief that one race is inferior to another race

**diversity** *noun*, having different cultures and viewpoints

**apartheid** *noun*, an official policy of racial segregation

### After You Read

**REVIEW** How did the two world wars and the Pan-African congresses affect the struggle for African independence? Draw a box around the paragraph that explains why Africans wanted to govern themselves.

**REVIEW** What led to the 1966 rioting in Nigeria? Highlight the three sentences that describe problems in Nigeria that led to rioting.