

What your South African ID number reveals about you

[Staff Writer](#) 28 August 2016 [4 Comments](#)



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The Department of Home Affairs is expanding its Smart ID services to more bank branches across the country, giving more South Africans the opportunity to receive a new identification document.

The Smart ID card contains similar information to the current green barcode ID book – most important of which is your ID number.

Besides providing a unique numerical identifier, your ID number reveals information about you – such as your date of birth and gender.

Here's what your ID number means.

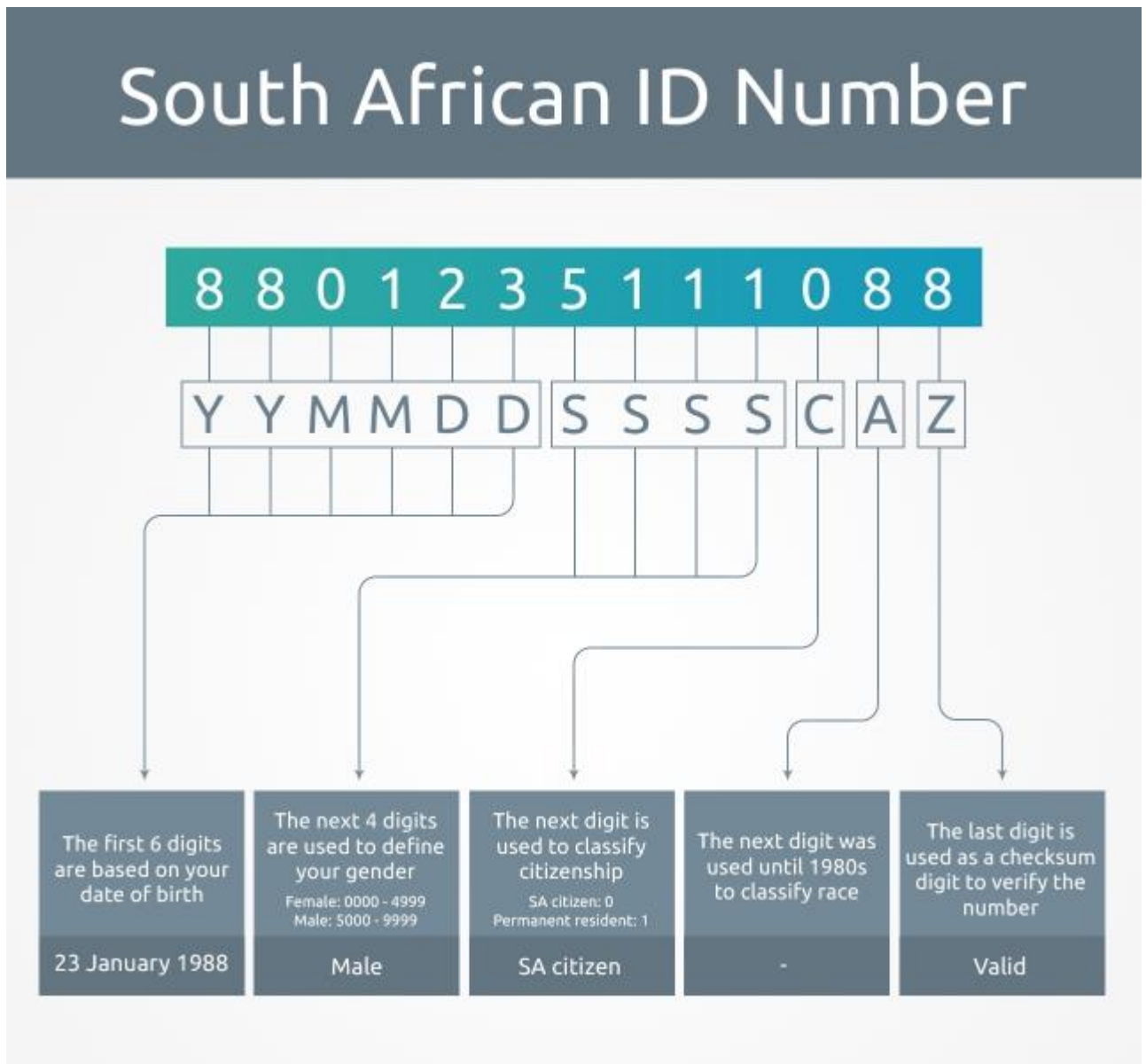
South African ID number

A South African ID number is a 13-digit number which is defined by the following format: YYMMDDSSSSCAZ.

- The first six digits (YYMMDD) are based on your date of birth – 23 January 1988 is 880123.

- The next four digits (SSSS) are used to define your gender – females are assigned numbers in the range 0000-4999 and males from 5000-9999.
- The next digit (C) shows if you are an SA citizen – 0 – or a permanent resident – 1.
- The next digit (A) was used until the late 1980s to indicate a person’s race. This has been eliminated and old ID numbers were reissued to remove this.
- The last digit (Z) is a checksum digit – used to check that the number sequence is accurate using the Luhn algorithm.

The graphic below details the different sections of an ID number, based on the fictitious sequence 8801235111088.

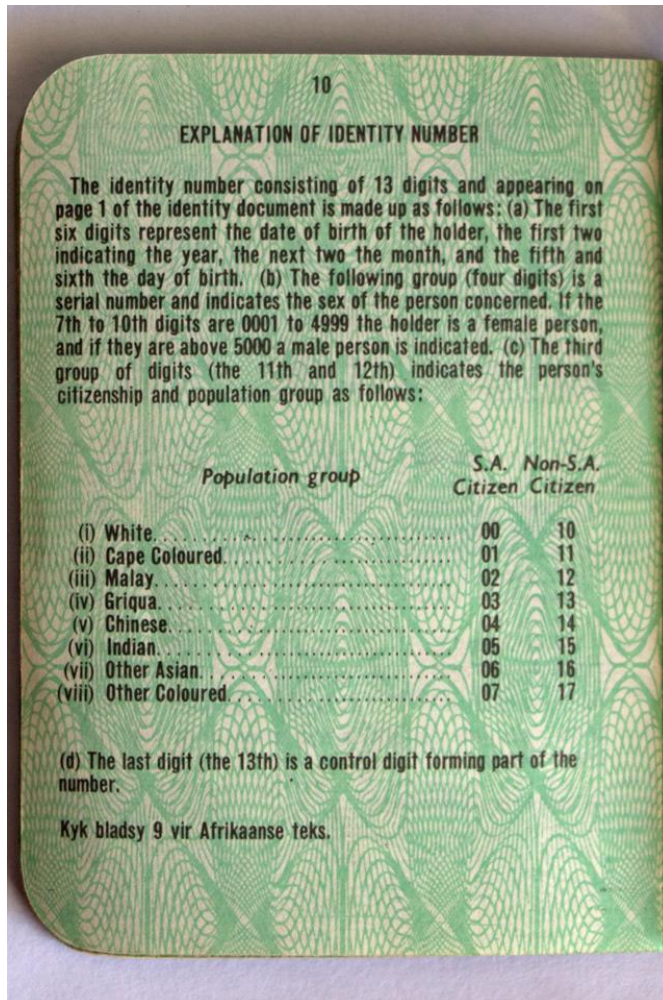


Pre-democracy classifications

Before the race-group classification was abandoned, this is what the assigned number indicated (digit A).

- 0 – White
- 1 – Cape Coloured

- 2 – Malay
- 3 – Griqua
- 4 – Chinese
- 5 – Indian
- 6 – Other Asian
- 7 – Other Coloured



More on the government