

VIDEO WATCHING:  
"THE DANGER OF A SINGLE STORY"  
(BY CHIMAMANDA ADICHIE)



**BEFORE WATCHING**

1. What do you think is a single story? Why can it be dangerous?

**WHILE WATCHING**

PART 1

1. Complete the following information.

Name: Chimamanda Adichie

Profession: \_\_\_\_\_

Country of origin: \_\_\_\_\_

Age she started reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Age she started writing: \_\_\_\_\_

What she used to read as a child: \_\_\_\_\_

Characters in her stories as a child (description): \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the idea she's trying to communicate?
  - a) that children are vulnerable to their parents' opinions
  - b) how vulnerable we are in the face of a story
  - c) that children don't understand about countries.
3. When did things change?
  - a) when she started to write professionally
  - b) when she travelled abroad
  - c) when she read African books

4. What was she saved from? \_\_\_\_\_

PART 2

- 1) Who was Fide? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) What did Chimamanda's mother tell her about him? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) How did she feel about Fide? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) What was Adichie's single story of Fide? \_\_\_\_\_

### PART 3

- 1) Where did Chimamanda go to university? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) What prejudices did Adichie's American roommate have of African people? Mention three (at least)

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- 3) What's the origin of the single story of Africa? How was Africa portrayed? Give details.

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### PART 4

- 4) Complete with phrases you hear:
  - When Chimamanda visited Mexico, there were debates going on about\_\_\_\_\_.
  - After she saw Mexicans going to work, preparing tortillas and laughing she felt\_\_\_\_\_and\_\_\_\_\_.
  - In her mind, Mexicans were only\_\_\_\_\_.

- 5) According to Adichie, how is a single story created? Complete the extract.

So that is how to create a single story,\_\_\_\_\_

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- 6) Adichie says, "stories... are defined by the principle of *nkali*." What is the definition of this word? What is the relationship between power and single stories?

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### PART 5

- 1) Fill in the gaps as you listen to the talk.

When I learned, \_\_\_\_\_, that writers were expected to have had really unhappy childhoods to be successful, I began to think about how I could invent horrible things my parents had done to me. (Laughter) But the truth is that I had a very happy childhood, full of \_\_\_\_\_ and love, in a very \_\_\_\_\_ family. But I also had grandfathers who died in refugee camps. My cousin Polly died because he could not get adequate \_\_\_\_\_. One of my closest friends, Okoloma, died in a plane crash because our \_\_\_\_\_ did not have water. I grew up under \_\_\_\_\_ military governments that \_\_\_\_\_ education, so that sometimes my parents were not paid their salaries. And so, as a child, I saw jam \_\_\_\_\_ from the breakfast table, then margarine disappeared, then bread became too expensive, then milk became rationed. And most of all, a kind of \_\_\_\_\_ political fear invaded our lives.

All of these stories make me \_\_\_\_\_. But to insist on only these negative stories is to \_\_\_\_\_ my experience, and to overlook the many other stories that formed me. The single story creates stereotypes. And the problem with stereotypes is not that they are \_\_\_\_\_, but that they are \_\_\_\_\_. They make one story become the only story. Of course, Africa is a continent full of catastrophes. There are immense ones, such as the horrific \_\_\_\_\_ in Congo. And depressing ones, such as the fact that 5,000 people apply for one job vacancy in Nigeria. But there are other stories that are not about \_\_\_\_\_. And it is very important, it is just as important, to talk about them.

2. Give two examples of how Adichie dispels (proves wrong) the single story of Nigeria.

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