

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)

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

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, _____

- 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?

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.
