SPEAKING FOCUS

Famous speeches *Chimamanda Adichie.*

"I come _____ Nigerian family. (…) And so we had, as **was the norm,** live-in domestic help, who would often come from nearby rural villages. So the year I turned eight we got a new house boy. His name was Fide. The only thing my mother told us about him _____ very poor. (…) Then one Saturday we went to his village to visit, and his mother showed us a beautifully **patterned** basket made of dyed **raffia** _____. I was **startled**. It had not **occurred** to me that anybody in his family could actually make something. All I had heard about them was how poor they were, so that it had become impossible for me to see them as anything else but poor. _____ _____ story of them. (…) The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is _____, but that they are incomplete. They make on story become the only story."

(The danger of a single story, Chimamanda Adichie, 2009.)

1. How did the speaker, at age 8, see Fide and his family?
2. Who had made the basket the girl thought was beautiful?
3. Why was she surprised that the basket was beautiful?
4. Do you have any preconceived stereotypes about any person, country or nationality?
5. Is there a stereotype for people of your nationality? Is it right? (explain)



Developing vocabulary

1. to be the norm

2. patterned

3. raffia

4. startled

5. occurred

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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Parts of speech

Once your speech has been written, you have to worry about presenting it – how you talk to your audience is just as important as what you say to them. Perhaps one of the most relevant aspects is demonstrating **confidence** and speaking with **conviction**: if you know, truly know, your speech, you will have no problems doing that. Also, **plan** everything beforehand: if you are going to use audio-visual aids, make sure they are installed and ready to use; if you are going to have handouts, make sure they are within your reach and organized to be easily handed out.



Fluency

They are going to have finished the job by tomorrow.

I wonder how *they are going to have finished the job by tomorrow.*

1. She's going to have learned everything for the test tonight.
2. He's going to have destroyed all the evidence once they arrive.
3. We're going to have eaten everything by the end of the week.
4. They're going to have killed all the fish before lunch.
5. She's going to have asked him by today.
6. He's going to have cleaned the house before she gets home.
7. We're going to have played the game before they come.
8. They're going to have finished the book before the movie starts.



Listen and discuss

CULTURE DIFFERENCES

1. Where were the headquarters of his company located?
2. What was his opinion of that country's culture and habits?
3. What difficulties did he and his family face moving to another country?
4. What surprised him in regards to his expectations of the country, people and culture?
5. Do you know anyone from a different country?
6. Are there any cultural differences between your countries?

Public Speaking Hints

Dress appropriately for the occasion.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

SPEAKING FOCUS

Transcript

A New Life Abroad: Mark's Cultural Journey

When Mark Anderson accepted a job transfer from Chicago to Tokyo, he felt both excited and nervous. His company's Asia-Pacific headquarters were located in Japan, and they needed someone with his skills to manage a new project. Mark had always admired Japanese culture—its discipline, technology, and unique traditions—so he imagined this would be an enriching adventure for him and his family.

At first, everything seemed like a dream. The city was clean, efficient, and fascinating. But after a few weeks, reality hit hard. Daily life was more complex than expected. Mark's Japanese was limited, and while many locals were kind, language barriers made basic tasks like grocery shopping or taking the train confusing. His wife, Emily, struggled even more. She had left her job in Chicago and felt isolated, unable to connect with neighbors or understand the local customs. Their two children missed their school and friends back home, and they had trouble adapting to the different classroom culture in their international school.

Mark also faced challenges at work. In the U.S., his meetings were direct and fast-paced. In Japan, however, decisions were made slowly, and everyone's opinion was considered before action was taken. He didn't understand why his team remained silent during meetings—it felt like they were not participating. Later, he learned that in Japanese business culture, silence often means respect or reflection. It wasn't about disinterest at all.

Despite the difficulties, Mark began to notice the beauty of his new environment. He admired how people were polite and respectful, how the city balanced tradition and modern life, and how much care was given to nature and public spaces. What surprised him most was how different his expectations were from reality. He had assumed he would adapt quickly, but the cultural differences were deeper than he thought. Still, those same differences taught him valuable lessons about humility, patience, and empathy.

He also started to reflect on how immigrants and foreigners might feel in his own country. "Back in the U.S., I never really thought about how hard it must be for people adjusting to a new culture. Now I get it," he said. "It's not just about learning the language—it's about learning how people think, behave, and live."

Over time, the family found ways to adapt. They made new friends, joined community events, and explored Japanese traditions together. Mark became more flexible in his management style, learning to listen and slow down. Emily began volunteering at the children's school, which helped her feel part of something again.

When asked if he would recommend moving abroad, Mark smiles. "Definitely. It's not easy, but it opens your mind in ways you can't imagine."

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