

English Eduspot

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SSLC ENGLISH

Intensive Coaching
Sessions

Unit – 3

Lore of Values

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About the Author:



Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was born on 15th September 1977 in Nigeria. She had her education in the University of Nigeria located in Nsukka and at the age of 19 she went to the United State to join Drexel University. She is a very popular novelist, non-fiction writer and short story writer. She started writing at the very early age of seven. She is a well-know speaker too. “The Danger of a Single Story” is a popular speech made by Adichie. This speech has become one of the top ten most-viewed TED talks of all time. She has won many awards including Caine Prize for African Writing and the very prestigious Booker Prize. She continues the journey of her literary life with all its zest.

Glossary:

1. **Crayon:** A pencil or stick with coloured chalk or wax used for drawing.
2. **Illustration:** picture, drawing
3. **Obligate:** require or compel
4. **Impressionable:** easily influenced or affected by something
5. **Vulnerable:** weak and easily hurt physically or emotionally, exposed to harm and danger.
6. **Convinced:** ascertained, completely sure of something
7. **Kinky:** (here) curly

8. **Ponytails:** a hair style in which hair hangs down like a horse’s tail



9. **Stirred:** (here) moved, roused
10. **Conventional:** traditional and ordinary
11. **Norm:** an accepted standard, a custom
12. **Live-in:** working and staying in the same home
13. **Yam:** A yam is a root vegetable which is like a potato, and grows in tropical regions.
14. **Patterned:** designed, woven
15. **Dyed:** colour added.



16. **Raffia:** the fibre from the leaves of the raffia tree (a type of African palm tree)
17. **Startled:** surprised, shocked
18. **Occur:** (here) come into mind
19. **Consequently:** as a result
20. **Default:** (here) standard or normal
21. **Patronizing:** treating someone as if they are stupid or unimportant; apparently showing kindness by actually covering a feeling of superiority.
22. **Embrace:** (here) receive
23. **Irritable:** easily annoyed, ill-tempered, sensitive
24. **Incomprehensible:** not easily understood
25. **Authentically:** really, genuinely
26. **Close-knit:** having close and strong relationship and common interests.
27. **Repressive:** restricting personal freedom.
28. **Devalue:** (here) to give less importance, belittle, underestimate.
29. **Insist on:** (here) stick on.
30. **Flatten:** (here) knock down or defeat; make level of
31. **Overlook:** ignore; to look down upon from above
32. **Stereotype:** a fixed idea about a person or thing but that is not often correct.

Short Questions and Answers

Read the paragraphs 1 and 2 [from I'm a story teller...to...no need to] in pages 107 and 108 of the textbook and answer the following questions.

Q1-5:

1. What kinds of books did Adichie read when she started reading?
2. What kinds of stories did she write and how were her characters?
3. What was her mother obligated to read?
4. How were her characters different from the children of Nigeria?
5. 'I had never been outside Nigeria'. Change this negative sentence to affirmative without changing the meaning.

Read the 3rd paragraph [from What this shows... to...what books are] of the speech in page 108 and answer the following questions.

Q 6-10:

6. What were Adichie's ideas about books before she discovered African books?
7. How could she realize that people like her, girls with chocolate-coloured skin and kinky hair, could also exist in literature?
8. How did American and British books help her in her writing?
9. How did the African writers save Adichie?
10. If she had not read the African books, What would have been her single story about books?

Read the paragraphs 4 and 5 [from I come from...to...story of them] in page 109 of the textbook and answer the following questions.

Q 11-15:

11. Describe Adichie's family.
12. Who was Fide?
13. What would her mother do to help Fide's family?
14. What actually made Adichie form a single story about Fide's family and what was that story?
15. What did Fide's mother show Adichie when she visited their family and why did it startle her?

Read the paragraphs 6 and 7 [from Years later...to ...human equals] in page 109 of the textbook and answer the following questions.

Q 16-20:

16. When and why did Adichie leave Nigeria?
17. Why was Adichie's American roommate shocked?
18. Which 'tribal music' did Adichie play for her roommate and what was its result?
19. What was the American roommate's default position towards Adichie as an African?
20. What was the roommate's single story of Africa and how were the Africans in that story?

Read the paragraphs 8 and 9 [from I must say...to ...authentically African] in page 109 and 110 of the textbook and answer the following questions.

Q 21-25:

21. After having spent some years in the US, what did she begin to understand about her roommate's response to her?
22. Was Adichie actually irritated in the nature of her roommate? Substantiate your answer.
23. What did the professor say about her novels?
24. What did the professor mean by authentically African?
25. "My characters drove cars." Rewrite this sentence beginning with "Cars..."

Read the paragraphs 10 - 12 [from When I learned...to ...the only story] in page 110 of the textbook and answer the following questions.

Q 26-30:

26. According to Adichie, what were writers expected to have had to be successful?
27. In her humorous words, what were the horrible things that her parents had done to her?
28. What were a few incidents that her family members and friends had experienced as part of the poverty and backwardness of Nigeria?

29. According to Adichie what is the problem of a single story?
30. “They make one story become the only story”. In this sentence, the structure ‘make + object + bare infinitive’ is used. Create another sentence of the same structure.

Answers

1. When she started reading she used to read British and American children’s books.
2. She wrote exactly the kinds of stories she was reading. Her characters were foreign, white and blue-eyed.
3. At about the age of seven she began to write stories in pencil with crayon illustrations that her mother was obliged to read.
4. Her characters played in snow, ate apples and talked a lot about the weather. But the real situations of the Nigerian children were totally different. They did not have snow, they ate mangoes and they did not have to talk about the weather.
5. I had always been inside Nigeria.
6. She had become convinced that books by nature should have foreigners in them as characters and the things mentioned in the books should not have any connection with her personal identity.
7. When she happened to read African books like those written by Chinua Achebe and Cmara Laye, she realized that girls like her could also exist in literature.
8. The American and British books stirred her imagination and opened up new worlds for her.
9. The African writers saved Adichie from having a single story about what books are.
10. If Adichie had not read African books, she would have had a single story about what books are. The books by their nature should have foreign characters and things mentioned in books should not have any relation with her personal identity.
11. Adichie is from a conventional, middle class, Nigerian family. Her father was a professor and Mother was an administrator.
12. Fide was the house-boy of Adichie’s family.
13. Adichie’s mother would send yams, rice and old clothes to Fide’s family.
14. Adichie’s mother used to talk about the poverty and miseries of Fide’s family. This formed in her mind a single story about them in which they have nothing but poverty.
15. Fide’s mother showed her a beautifully patterned basket of dyed raffia that Fide’s brother had made. It startled her because in her single story about them they had no other ability than simply being poor.
16. When Adichie was 19 she left Nigeria to go to university in the United States.
17. Her American roommate was shocked to hear Adichie’s perfect English. She was not aware of the fact that English was the official language of Nigeria.
18. Adichie played for her roommate the ‘tribal music’ of Mariah Carey. But it disappointed the roommate.
19. The roommate’s default position toward Adichie as an African was a kind of patronizing, well-meaning pity.
20. The roommate had a single story of Africa that it was a land of backward, poor and uneducated tribal people. In that story, the Africans were never similar to her, she had no other feelings towards them than pity and they were never human equals in her class of people.

21. If Adichie had not grown up in Nigeria and if all she knew about Africa were from some popular images, she too would think of Africa in the same way as her roommate thought.
She would also think of Africa in the same way as she had thought of Fide's family.
22. No, Adichie was not irritated as she herself understood that if she had been in place of the roommate she also would have formed a single story about Africa in the same way as the roommate did.
23. The professor once told Adichie that her novels were not 'authentically African'.
24. The professor had a single story of Africa in which all the Africans were poor and uneducated. On the contrary, Adichie's characters drove cars and they were too much like the professor, an educated and middle class man. So he believed that her characters were not Authentically African.
25. Cars were driven by my characters.
26. Writers were expected to have had really unhappy childhoods to be successful.
27. Humorously she says that her parents had done to her horrible things by providing her with a very happy childhood, full of laughter and love, in a very close-knit family.
28. Her grandfathers had died in refugee camps, her cousin Polle died due to lack of adequate healthcare and her close friend Okoloma died in a plane crash because the fire trucks did not have water.
29. The single story creates stereotypes and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete.
30. African books make Adichie change her ideas about characters.

Let's revisit

➤ **Activity 1, Textbook page 111**

In her speech Adichie says , 'All these stories make me who I am'.



➤ **Listen to her speech on www.TED.com and pick out instances of personal stories from it. (link to the speech:**

https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story

- The story of her childhood when she started reading at the age of four and writing when she was seven.
- She wrote exactly the kind of stories she was reading.
- All her character were white and blue-eyed, the same as the characters in the books she used to read.
- When she happened to read the books of African writers like Achinua Achebe and Camara Laye, she realized that people like her could also exist in literature.
- The craftsmanship of Fide's brother made her change her single story about Fide and his poor family.

- She realized that her American roommate had a patronizing mentality as she had maintained a single story about African people.
- Her American professor had also a single story about Africa and he believed that her characters were not authentically African.
- Her own friends and relative had bad experience from the poverty of her country, Nigeria and its repressive military government.

➤ **Activity 2, Textbook page 111**

Try to watch the speech presentation from the link provided above and agree with the following points.

1. Adichie uses repetition very effectively in her speech.
2. She tells about her childhood in Nigeria.
3. She makes eye contact with the audience.
4. Her speech is smooth, confident and charming.
5. She talks about her experience with her American roommate.
6. She maintains perfect voice modulation and interactions with the audience.
7. Her excellent body language and gestures show that she doesn't have any stage fear.
8. Her speech is emotionally charged.
9. She is able to catch the attention of the audience from the very beginning and keep them spellbound.

Additional Activities

- ***Adichie's visit to Fide's family was a great learning experience for her. After reaching back home, she jots down her feelings in the diary. Write the likely diary entry.***

Monday, 13December2017

10:00am

What a fool I was! I thought poor people like Fide and his family had nothing but poverty. Today I realized my idea was wrong. Poor may lack comforts and luxuries in life. In creativity and craftsmanship they are equal to all. What a beautiful baskets they have made! In their expertise even raffia strings became beautifully patterned baskets. I couldn't believe it was made by his brother. I had only a single idea about Fide. A wrong idea. It made me a fool of myself. To have a one-sided idea about a person will lead us to misunderstanding. The visit to his house has taught me a great lesson – to have a single story about anybody or anything is dangerous!

- *A single story creates stereotypes. The problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. Do you agree to these statements? Prepare a write up justifying your views in the light of your reading of the speech 'The Danger of the Single Story'.*

Stereotypes are Partial Truths

“The single story creates stereotypes and the problem with stereotype is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete”. Adichie says so in her speech ‘The Danger of a Single Story’. Citing some examples, she very aptly proves the danger of having a single story about people or countries.

As a child, she used to read American and British books. She had convinced that books by their nature should have foreign characters and things with which she should not have any personal identity. But when she got chances to read books by African authors like Chinua Achebe and Camara Laye, her single idea about books was changed. She realized that people like her, girls with kinky hair and chocolate-colored skin could also be characters in books.

Adichie’s family had a house-boy namely Fide. She had heard a lot about his poor and miserable family from her own mother. Thus Adichie developed in her mind one single story about him - a poor boy from a poverty-stricken family. But when she visited once his house, she found out that they had other abilities of craftsmanship. Fide’s brother could make beautifully patterned baskets of dyed raffia. Then she realized the foolishness behind her single thought about Fide and his family.

When she was 19, Adichie went to America to continue her university studies. Her American roommate had a single story about Africa. She believed African people were poor, uneducated and backward in every field. They were only a tribal community in need of support from other countries. In her single story about Africa, she even did not know that English was the official language of Nigeria and was shocked to hear Adichie’s good English. She had always a patronizing, pity feeling toward Adichie. In her single story, Africans were never similar to her or could not be human equals. Similarly, her professor once told her that her characters were not authentically African. He thought an African writer should create African characters and they should be uneducated and starving. He had such a single story about Africans but all Africans were not always like what he thought of them.

When we analyze her views and the cited examples, we can’t help agreeing with her. If we have only one idea in our mind about the people or a country, that single idea doesn’t make the whole of the reality. The people have other qualities and abilities that we are not aware of. If we judge someone with the single idea we have about them, our judgment will not always be correct and complete.
