

16 March 2020

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Dear English 9 Students and Parents,

Last Semester at the beginning of winter, I distributed hard copies of AMI packets. If that has been misplaced, copies are available on Google Classroom and the class website. Here is the pattern for the anticipated AMI days:

DAY 1 - "The Hero's Journey" pgs 1-6
Day 2 - "The Hero's Journey" Open Response questions pgs. 7-8
Day 3 - "The Danger of a Single Story" pgs. 1-8
Day 4 - "The Danger of a Single Story" Open Response questions pgs. 9-10

Additionally, students are expected to read their independent reading (library) books and complete annotations while on the break. Fifteen (15) annotations and $\frac{3}{4}$ of the reading completed will be due on the Friday after Spring Break (April 3).

After today, the class novel *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson will be put on hold until after the ACTAspire Summative test scheduled for April 20-24. When we return from spring break we will begin ACTAspire workshops in preparation for the Summative. Independent reading (library) books should be completed by April 10. Rough draft essays will be due April 17.

I will be available for questions every day between 8:00a.m. and 3:45p.m. through the platforms listed above. Stay healthy and have a wonderful Spring Break!

Warmest Regards,

Patricia Hopkins, MAT
MHS English 11 Instructor

Write your annotations of passage one below:

Answer the questions to passage one:

Write the annotations for passage two below:

Answer questions for passage two:

On a new page, write the essay in MLA format:

Name: _____ Class: _____

The Hero's Journey

By Jessica McBirney
2017

*Joseph Campbell was an American mythologist, writer, and lecturer. His book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* explores the common journey that heroes from different works of literature take. In this informational text, Jessica McBirney further discusses this common structure of storytelling that Campbell identified. As you read, take notes on the different parts of the Hero's Journey.*

- [1] When we follow a good story, we tend to follow the journey a character makes from beginning to end. We can't wait to find out what happens next. It's a page-turner; there are obstacles at every stage and crucial¹ choices that characters have to make in order to overcome these obstacles. Eventually, we pick up another story. We have an appetite for stories. There are so many for us to choose from — in libraries, in bookshops, and on our screens — and each story seems new and exciting.



["Leaving Hobbiton"](#) by Jeff Hitchcock is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Well, in fact, oftentimes this is not true. We are led to believe these stories are new even though a lot of them follow a simple formula. When we stop to think about it, many of these stories have more similarities than we might think.

In the 1940s, the writer and professor, Joseph Campbell, noticed that a lot of his favorite stories shared a similar structure. He decided to write about it in his book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Today, this story structure is popularly known as "The Hero's Journey." Stories that use this structure loosely follow a similar series of general events, otherwise known as plot points.

The hero is the main character in the story. He or she sets off on an adventure, or quest, to accomplish a specific goal. Below are just a few of the steps all heroes face in the "Hero's Journey" story plot. Popular stories like *The Hobbit* and *The Hunger Games* follow this structure.

The Ordinary World

- [5] The story usually opens with the hero's normal life: their ordinary world. This "world" can include their home and family life, their job, their personal history, and more. The author does this to introduce their hero and explain certain things about their personality and actions.

In the ordinary world, the hero often feels uncomfortable in some way. There is something they don't like about their normal life, something that causes them stress or discomfort. Others in the ordinary world might think the hero is odd in some way.

1. **Crucial (adjective):** of great importance

Call to Adventure

According to Campbell's formula, something will then occur that disrupts our hero's life in the ordinary world and causes them to face a decision. It could be an event, a discovery, an added danger, or something new from within the hero. It requires the hero to do something; they are the only person who can fulfill this call or accomplish this goal. The call to adventure provides a first look into what Campbell calls "a new world," one very different from the ordinary world.

Refusing the Call

The hero may not immediately accept their call to adventure. They might be afraid of entering the new world or of the tasks they have to do. If this is the case, they will initially refuse to accept the call. If the hero initially refuses their call to adventure, bad things usually begin to occur.

Crossing the Threshold

In some stories, before the hero accepts the call to adventure, they meet with a mentor. This person will be a mature person who has experienced the new world before. The mentor offers advice that convinces the hero to accept the call and enter the new world.

- [10] "Crossing the threshold" happens when the hero finally accepts the call to adventure and enters the new world. The new world is very different from their ordinary world. It has unfamiliar rules and values that the hero must navigate.

Tests, Allies, and Enemies

In the new world, the hero faces a variety of tests and obstacles. Sometimes the hero is successful and sometimes they fail. All the tests serve to make the hero stronger and more determined to accomplish their goal. The hero encounters other people during his journey. They usually have at least one ally, someone who travels with them and supports them in the mission. Together they may encounter other helpful people.

The Ordeal²

According to Campbell's formula, midway through the story, the hero will face their hardest test yet, a test that will make them confront their greatest fear or insecurity. This often includes a brush with death. The hero overcomes this test, or escapes death, and finds new hope as they push towards their ultimate challenge or goal.

The Supreme Ordeal

At the climax of the story — the most intense, exciting or important point of the story — the hero faces one final test, which is often their absolute greatest challenge. Campbell calls this plot point the “Supreme Ordeal.” The hero is close to being able to return to the ordinary world, but they must overcome this final test to return. This is the moment where the hero accomplishes their goal; their quest has succeeded.

During the “Supreme Ordeal,” the hero will tend to experience a lot of turmoil.³ Maybe they face death again, or have to make a great sacrifice. They defeat the internal and external conflicts they have been facing throughout the story.

Reward and the Journey Home

- [15] After they’ve accomplished their mission, the hero collects some type of reward from their journey. Usually this is a physical reward, anything ranging from treasure, a prince or princess, to even the rulership of a kingdom.

The hero returns, with this reward, home to their ordinary world. Because of all they have experienced and accomplished, they are changed from the beginning of the story. The story may or may not have a happy ending, but a lot of the tension or discontent they felt has now been resolved because of what they accomplished on their journey.

Where can we find The Hero’s Journey formula?

Campbell’s Hero’s Journey structure shows up all over literature, no matter the genre. The Hero’s Journey stories are so compelling because we like to see heroic characters overcoming great obstacles; we admire these heroes and hope to be like them. You don’t have to be a character in a book to be a hero in your own life.

Now that you are familiar with the Hero’s Journey story structure. Let’s try it out on the two popular hero stories mentioned earlier, *The Hobbit* and *The Hunger Games*. A warning for those readers who haven’t read these books, the examples carry spoilers!

3. **Turmoil** (*noun*): a state of great disturbance or uncertainty

The Hobbit

In J.R.R. Tolkien's fantasy novel, *The Hobbit*, the hero is the Bilbo Baggins. Bilbo's "Ordinary World" is his hobbit hole in Bag End in the Shire. At first glance, Bilbo Baggins seems to be the most comfortable hobbit⁴ in all of Hobbiton. However, after hearing the dwarves' song, a part of Bilbo begins to long for adventure. His "Call To Adventure" comes when the wizard, Gandalf, approaches him and asks if he wants to go on an adventure. Bilbo, at first, refuses to go with Gandalf on the adventure ("Refusing the call"). Gandalf puts a sign on Bilbo's door and a band of dwarves come to his house and eat all his food. This is extremely unnerving for Bilbo (bad things happening after refusing the call). Gandalf serves as Bilbo's "Mentor" throughout the story. Bilbo agrees to go with the dwarves to try and reclaim the treasure from a place called Lonely Mountain ("Crossing the Threshold"), and they begin their journey. One of Bilbo's "Tests" is his encounter with the trolls in the woods. When they capture the dwarves, he must rescue his friends. The elves ("Allies") in Rivendell take care of Bilbo and the other dwarves and prepare them for the journey ahead. They will also face various "Enemies" who want to prevent them from finishing their goal. Bilbo's "Ordeal" is his journey to the heart of the goblin mountain and his encounter with Gollum, a twisted character, who he must outwit to save his own life. His "Supreme Ordeal" is when he participates in 'the Battle of Five Armies,' and his side succeeds. Bilbo's "Reward" is his share of the dwarves' treasure from the mountain.

4. a member of an imaginary race similar to humans, of a small size and with hairy feet

The Hunger Games

[20] In Suzanne Collins' dystopian⁵ novel, *The Hunger Games*, the main hero is Katniss Everdeen. Her "Ordinary World" is in District 12, an impoverished region in the fictional country of Panem where she lives with her mother and little sister, Prim. She struggles to support her family, often hunting illegally to keep them fed, but poverty is not the only stress in her life. Every year, children between the ages 12 to 18 face the 'reaping': a ceremony that chooses participants for the Hunger Games, a contest where those participants must fight to the death. In the beginning of *The Hunger Games*, Katniss experiences her "Call to Adventure" while on a hunting trip with her childhood friend, Gale. He talks about running away, leaving District 12 to live in the woods. Katniss dismisses Gale's suggestion to run away because they both have families to take care of ("Refusing the Call"). After refusing to run away, she attends the reaping ceremony. Out of the hundreds of entries, her little sister's name is chosen, which forces Katniss to volunteer in her sister's place in order to save Prim's life. Bad things have happened after Katniss "refused the call," which leads to her "Crossing the Threshold" and participating in the Hunger Games. Haymitch Abernathy is her "Mentor" figure, a former victor of the Hunger Games from District 12. He advises Katniss and the other District 12 champion, Peeta, on how to survive the Hunger Games. The Gamemakers test Katniss and the other tributes on their skills, and their score usually determines how well they will do in the game ("Tests"). Katniss encounters allies and enemies both in and out of the arena. Cinna, her stylist and only friend in the Capitol, encourages Katniss and helps her win over the audience in her interviews. Peeta and Haymitch also work to help Katniss survive ("Allies"). Many of Katniss' competitors resent her and see her as a challenge ("Enemies"), but others, like the character Rue, create an alliance with Katniss. For the participants, the game itself is an ordeal; it forces them to kill or be killed. But for Katniss, the "Ordeal" occurs when Rue is killed. Rue's death forces Katniss to confront the injustice of the Hunger Games. Shortly after, Katniss is motivated to defy the Capitol by making sure she and Peeta survive. "The Supreme Ordeal" arrives at the end of the game, the Gamemakers announce that only one tribute may win, despite their earlier rule change that declared two could survive. Rather than attack each other, Katniss and Peeta agree to eat poisonous berries. They are stopped by the Gamemakers before they can do so, but their willingness to sacrifice their own lives instead of killing each other saves them. Survivors of the Hunger Games receive money and fame ("Reward"), though at a terrible cost.

As you can see, both *The Hobbit* and *The Hunger Games* follow Campbell's formula for "The Hero's Journey". So the next time you read a book, or watch a movie, check to see if it follows the formula and ask yourself: is this story really new?

"The Hero's Journey" by Jessica McBirney. Copyright © 2017 by CommonLit, Inc. This text is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

5. relating to an imagined place or state in which everything is unpleasant or bad

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which sentence best expresses the central idea of the text?
 - A. While different genres of literature exist, all of them follow the Hero's Journey.
 - B. When authors are writing novels, they intentionally adhere to the Hero's Journey.
 - C. The Hero's Journey establishes the structure of a story that countless stories follow.
 - D. The Hero's Journey is a helpful outline for author's to follow when writing.

2. PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
 - A. "There are so many for us to choose from — in libraries, in bookshops, and on our screens — and each story seems new and exciting." (Paragraph 1)
 - B. "Popular stories like 'The Hobbit' and 'The Hunger Games' follow this structure." (Paragraph 4)
 - C. "Campbell's Hero's Journey structure shows up all over literature, no matter the genre." (Paragraph 17)
 - D. "So the next time you read a book, or watch a movie, check to see if it follows the formula and ask yourself: is this story really new?" (Paragraph 21)

3. Which of the following describes the author's main purpose in the text?
 - A. to encourage authors to move away from the structure of the Hero's Journey
 - B. to show how common the structure of the Hero's Journey is in literature
 - C. to prove that essentially every story follows the Hero's Journey
 - D. to help readers understand how Campbell came to identify the Hero's Journey

4. Which statement describes how the author develops their analysis of the Hero's Journey?
 - A. The author describes the structure of the Hero's Journey and then explores how it translates to popular books.
 - B. The author discusses the Hero's Journey as Campbell describes it and then shows how it has changed over time.
 - C. The author describes what the Hero's Journey is and then discusses the pros and cons of following such a structure.
 - D. The author discusses Campbell's discovery of the Hero's Journey and then explores how the structure of stories has changed since then.

5. How does the author's discussion of "The Hobbit" and "The Hunger Games" contribute to the development of ideas in the text? Cite evidence from the text in your response.

Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. McBirney asserts that the Hero's Journey structure can be found across genres. What is another book or movie that follows the Hero's Journey? Describe how your chosen book or movie fills the requirements for the Hero's Journey.
2. In the text, the author claims that the Hero's Journey requires a main character who is the hero. Do you think any main character can be the hero? Why or why not? What makes an ideal fictional hero for you? Who is your favorite fictional hero and why?
3. McBirney claims that the Hero's Journey is so popular because people aspire to be like the hero and can relate to them. How do stories help us understand our world? Can we learn lessons that apply to our world from stories that follow the Hero's Journey? Explain.

Name: _____ Class: _____

The Danger of a Single Story

By Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
2009

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a Nigerian novelist, nonfiction writer, and short story writer. In this transcript from her TED talk, Adichie discusses her experiences with literature and the influence stories can have on constructing one's understanding of the world and people. As you read, take note of the times that Adichie made someone the victim of a single story and why she fell into that trap.

- [1] I'm a storyteller. And I would like to tell you a few personal stories about what I like to call "the danger of the single story." I grew up on a university campus in eastern Nigeria. My mother says that I started reading at the age of two, although I think four is probably close to the truth. So I was an early reader, and what I read were British and American children's books.

I was also an early writer, and when I began to write, at about the age of seven, stories in pencil with crayon illustrations that my poor mother was obligated to read, I wrote exactly the kinds of stories I was reading: All my characters were white and blue-eyed, they played in the snow, they ate apples, (Laughter) and they talked a lot about the weather, how lovely it was that the sun had come out.

(Laughter)

Now, this despite the fact that I lived in Nigeria. I had never been outside Nigeria. We didn't have snow, we ate mangoes, and we never talked about the weather, because there was no need to.

- [5] My characters also drank a lot of ginger beer, because the characters in the British books I read drank ginger beer. Never mind that I had no idea what ginger beer was.

(Laughter)

And for many years afterwards, I would have a desperate desire to taste ginger beer. But that is another story.

What this demonstrates, I think, is how impressionable and vulnerable we are in the face of a story, particularly as children. Because all I had read were books in which characters were foreign, I had become convinced that books by their very nature had to have foreigners in them and had to be about things with which I could not personally identify. Now, things changed when I discovered African books. There weren't many of them available, and they weren't quite as easy to find as the foreign books.



["Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie at The Forum recording at the Galle Literary Festival"](#) by BBC World Service is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0.

But because of writers like Chinua Achebe and Camara Laye, I went through a mental shift in my perception of literature. I realized that people like me, girls with skin the color of chocolate, whose kinky hair could not form ponytails, could also exist in literature. I started to write about things I recognized.

- [10] Now, I loved those American and British books I read. They stirred my imagination. They opened up new worlds for me. But the unintended consequence was that I did not know that people like me could exist in literature. So what the discovery of African writers did for me was this: It saved me from having a single story of what books are.

I come from a conventional, middle-class Nigerian family. My father was a professor. My mother was an administrator. 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 houseboy. His name was Fide. The only thing my mother told us about him was that his family was very poor. My mother sent yams and rice, and our old clothes, to his family. And when I didn't finish my dinner, my mother would say, "Finish your food! Don't you know? People like Fide's family have nothing." So I felt enormous pity for Fide's family.

Then one Saturday, we went to his village to visit, and his mother showed us a beautifully patterned basket made of dyed raffia¹ that his brother had made. 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. Their poverty was my single story of them.

Years later, I thought about this when I left Nigeria to go to university in the United States. I was 19. My American roommate was shocked by me. She asked where I had learned to speak English so well, and was confused when I said that Nigeria happened to have English as its official language. She asked if she could listen to what she called my "tribal music," and was consequently very disappointed when I produced my tape of Mariah Carey.

(Laughter)

- [15] She assumed that I did not know how to use a stove.

What struck me was this: She had felt sorry for me even before she saw me. Her default position toward me, as an African, was a kind of patronizing,² well-meaning pity. My roommate had a single story of Africa: a single story of catastrophe. In this single story, there was no possibility of Africans being similar to her in any way, no possibility of feelings more complex than pity, no possibility of a connection as human equals.

I must say that before I went to the U.S., I didn't consciously identify as African. But in the U.S., whenever Africa came up, people turned to me. Never mind that I knew nothing about places like Namibia. But I did come to embrace this new identity, and in many ways I think of myself now as African. Although I still get quite irritable when Africa is referred to as a country, the most recent example being my otherwise wonderful flight from Lagos two days ago, in which there was an announcement on the Virgin flight about the charity work in "India, Africa and other countries."

1. a palm tree native to tropical Africa and Madagascar

2. **Patronize (verb):** to treat with an apparent kindness that betrays a feeling of superiority

(Laughter)

So, after I had spent some years in the U.S. as an African, I began to understand my roommate's response to me. If I had not grown up in Nigeria, and if all I knew about Africa were from popular images, I too would think that Africa was a place of beautiful landscapes, beautiful animals, and incomprehensible³ people, fighting senseless wars, dying of poverty and AIDS, unable to speak for themselves and waiting to be saved by a kind, white foreigner. I would see Africans in the same way that I, as a child, had seen Fide's family.

- [20] This single story of Africa ultimately comes, I think, from Western literature. Now, here is a quote from the writing of a London merchant⁴ called John Lok, who sailed to West Africa in 1561 and kept a fascinating account of his voyage. After referring to the black Africans as "beasts who have no houses," he writes, "They are also people without heads, having their mouth and eyes in their breasts."

Now, I've laughed every time I've read this. And one must admire the imagination of John Lok. But what is important about his writing is that it represents the beginning of a tradition of telling African stories in the West: A tradition of Sub-Saharan Africa as a place of negatives, of difference, of darkness, of people who, in the words of the wonderful poet Rudyard Kipling, are "half devil, half child."

And so, I began to realize that my American roommate must have throughout her life seen and heard different versions of this single story, as had a professor, who once told me that my novel was not "authentically African." Now, I was quite willing to contend that there were a number of things wrong with the novel, that it had failed in a number of places, but I had not quite imagined that it had failed at achieving something called African authenticity. In fact, I did not know what African authenticity was. The professor told me that my characters were too much like him, an educated and middle-class man. My characters drove cars. They were not starving. Therefore they were not authentically African.

But I must quickly add that I too am just as guilty in the question of the single story. A few years ago, I visited Mexico from the U.S. The political climate in the U.S. at the time was tense, and there were debates going on about immigration. And, as often happens in America, immigration became synonymous with Mexicans. There were endless stories of Mexicans as people who were fleecing⁵ the healthcare system, sneaking across the border, being arrested at the border, that sort of thing.

I remember walking around on my first day in Guadalajara, watching the people going to work, rolling up tortillas in the marketplace, smoking, laughing. I remember first feeling slight surprise. And then, I was overwhelmed with shame. I realized that I had been so immersed in the media coverage of Mexicans that they had become one thing in my mind, the abject⁶ immigrant. I had bought into the single story of Mexicans and I could not have been more ashamed of myself.

- [25] So that is how to create a single story, show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become.

3. **Incomprehensible (adjective):** not able to be understood; not intelligible
4. a person who buys and sells commodities for profit
5. **Fleece (verb):** to strip of money or property by fraud or extortion
6. **Abject (adjective):** sunk to or existing in a low state or condition

It is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about power. There is a word, an Igbo word, that I think about whenever I think about the power structures of the world, and it is “nkali.” It’s a noun that loosely translates to “to be greater than another.” Like our economic and political worlds, stories too are defined by the principle of nkali: How they are told, who tells them, when they’re told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power.

Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person. The Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti writes that if you want to dispossess⁷ a people, the simplest way to do it is to tell their story and to start with, “secondly.” Start the story with the arrows of the Native Americans, and not with the arrival of the British, and you have an entirely different story. Start the story with the failure of the African state, and not with the colonial creation of the African state, and you have an entirely different story.

I recently spoke at a university where a student told me that it was such a shame that Nigerian men were physical abusers like the father character in my novel. I told him that I had just read a novel called *American Psycho* — (Laughter)— and that it was such a shame that young Americans were serial murderers.

(Laughter)

[30] (Applause)

Now, obviously I said this in a fit of mild irritation.

(Laughter)

But it would never have occurred to me to think that just because I had read a novel in which a character was a serial killer that he was somehow representative of all Americans. This is not because I am a better person than that student, but because of America’s cultural and economic power, I had many stories of America. I had read Tyler and Updike and Steinbeck and *Gaitskill*. I did not have a single story of America.

When I learned, some years ago, 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.

[35] (Laughter)

But the truth is that I had a very happy childhood, full of laughter and love, in a very close-knit family.

But I also had grandfathers who died in refugee camps. My cousin Polle died because he could not get adequate healthcare. One of my closest friends, Okoloma, died in a plane crash because our fire trucks did not have water. I grew up under repressive military governments that devalued education, so that sometimes, my parents were not paid their salaries. And so, as a child, I saw jam disappear from the breakfast table, then margarine disappeared, then bread became too expensive, then milk became rationed. And most of all, a kind of normalized political fear invaded our lives.

7. **Dispossess (verb):** to deprive someone of land, property, or other possessions

All of these stories make me who I am. But to insist on only these negative stories is to flatten my experience and to overlook the many other stories that formed me. The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes⁸ is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. 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 rapes 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 catastrophe, and it is very important, it is just as important, to talk about them.

- [40] I've always felt that it is impossible to engage properly with a place or a person without engaging with all of the stories of that place and that person. The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar.

So what if before my Mexican trip, I had followed the immigration debate from both sides, the U.S. and the Mexican? What if my mother had told us that Fide's family was poor and hardworking? What if we had an African television network that broadcast diverse African stories all over the world? What the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe calls "a balance of stories."

What if my roommate knew about my Nigerian publisher, Muhtar Bakare, a remarkable man who left his job in a bank to follow his dream and start a publishing house? Now, the conventional wisdom was that Nigerians don't read literature. He disagreed. He felt that people who could read, would read, if you made literature affordable and available to them.

Shortly after he published my first novel, I went to a TV station in Lagos to do an interview, and a woman who worked there as a messenger came up to me and said, "I really liked your novel. I didn't like the ending. Now, you must write a sequel, and this is what will happen..."

(Laughter)

- [45] And she went on to tell me what to write in the sequel. I was not only charmed, I was very moved. Here was a woman, part of the ordinary masses of Nigerians, who were not supposed to be readers. She had not only read the book, but she had taken ownership of it and felt justified in telling me what to write in the sequel.

Now, what if my roommate knew about my friend Funmi Iyanda, a fearless woman who hosts a TV show in Lagos, and is determined to tell the stories that we prefer to forget? What if my roommate knew about the heart procedure that was performed in the Lagos hospital last week? What if my roommate knew about contemporary Nigerian music, talented people singing in English and Pidgin, and Igbo and Yoruba and Ijo, mixing influences from Jay-Z to Fela to Bob Marley to their grandfathers?

8. **Stereotype (noun):** a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing

What if my roommate knew about the female lawyer who recently went to court in Nigeria to challenge a ridiculous law that required women to get their husband's consent before renewing their passports? What if my roommate knew about Nollywood,⁹ full of innovative¹⁰ people making films despite great technical odds, films so popular that they really are the best example of Nigerians consuming what they produce? What if my roommate knew about my wonderfully ambitious hair braider, who has just started her own business selling hair extensions? Or about the millions of other Nigerians who start businesses and sometimes fail, but continue to nurse ambition?

Every time I am home I am confronted with the usual sources of irritation for most Nigerians: our failed infrastructure, our failed government, but also by the incredible resilience of people who thrive despite the government, rather than because of it. I teach writing workshops in Lagos every summer, and it is amazing to me how many people apply, how many people are eager to write, to tell stories.

My Nigerian publisher and I have just started a non-profit called Farafina Trust, and we have big dreams of building libraries and refurbishing¹¹ libraries that already exist and providing books for state schools that don't have anything in their libraries, and also of organizing lots and lots of workshops, in reading and writing, for all the people who are eager to tell our many stories.

[50] Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign,¹² but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.

The American writer Alice Walker wrote this about her southern relatives who had moved to the North. She introduced them to a book about the southern life that they had left behind. "They sat around, reading the book themselves, listening to me read the book, and a kind of paradise was regained."

I would like to end with this thought: That when we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise.

Thank you.

(Applause)

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9. a term used to refer to the Nigerian film industry
10. **Innovative (adjective):** tending to introduce new ideas; original and creative in thinking
11. to renovate and redecorate something
12. **Malign (verb):** to speak about someone in a spitefully critical manner

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which of the following identifies the central idea of the text? [RI.2]
 - A. By only exposing ourselves to a single story, we run the risk of constructing overly-simplistic understandings of other people and places.
 - B. By only reading a single story, we cheat ourselves of experiencing different cultures from different perspectives.
 - C. Literature is reflective of the stories that are most popular and that people are most likely to identify with.
 - D. Literature primarily shapes the understanding of children, while adults are less likely to construct their views of the world based on a single story.

2. PART B: Which section from the text best supports the answer to Part A? [RI.1]
 - A. "What this demonstrates, I think, is how impressionable and vulnerable we are in the face of a story, particularly as children." (Paragraph 8)
 - B. "Like our economic and political worlds, stories too are defined by the principle of nkali: How they are told, who tells them, when they're told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power." (Paragraph 26)
 - C. "The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story." (Paragraph 38)
 - D. "What if my roommate knew about the female lawyer who recently went to court in Nigeria to challenge a ridiculous law that required women to get their husband's consent before renewing their passports?" (Paragraph 47)

3. PART A: What is the author's purpose in the text? [RI.6]
 - A. Adichie wants to warn people that if they primarily consume stories of Western culture, they have likely been influenced by a single story.
 - B. Adichie wants to show how important it is to acknowledge more than a single story in order to fully understand what you are unfamiliar with.
 - C. Adichie wants to prove how limited the United States' understanding of other cultures is, as most of her experiences with single stories have been in the U.S.
 - D. Adichie wants to show people how she has managed to avoid being influenced by a single story, so that they can do the same.

4. PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to Part A? [RI.1]
- A. "My American roommate was shocked by me. She asked where I had learned to speak English so well, and was confused when I said that Nigeria happened to have English as its official language." (Paragraph 13)
 - B. "Now, I've laughed every time I've read this. And one must admire the imagination of John Lok. But what is important about his writing is that it represents the beginning of a tradition of telling African stories in the West: A tradition of Sub-Saharan Africa as a place of negatives" (Paragraph 21)
 - C. "But it would never have occurred to me to think that just because I had read a novel in which a character was a serial killer that he was somehow representative of all Americans." (Paragraph 33)
 - D. "Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity." (Paragraph 50)
5. PART A: How do stories of the West compare to stories of Africa? [RI.3]
- A. Stories of Western culture discuss a greater variety of experiences, while African stories are more limited.
 - B. Stories of Western culture are more readily available across the world, while there are fewer African writers and their stories are less accessible in other countries.
 - C. Stories of Western culture are more popular because more people can identify with them, while African stories provide limited identifiable experiences.
 - D. Stories of Western culture are more popular because most people are unaware of the current work of African writers.
6. PART B: Which quote from the text best supports the answer to Part A? [RI.1]
- A. "All my characters were white and blue-eyed, they played in the snow, they ate apples, (Laughter) and they talked a lot about the weather, how lovely it was that the sun had come out." (Paragraph 2)
 - B. "Now, things changed when I discovered African books. There weren't many of them available, and they weren't quite as easy to find as the foreign books." (Paragraph 8)
 - C. "[I]f all I knew about Africa were from popular images, I too would think that Africa was a place of beautiful landscapes, beautiful animals, and incomprehensible people, fighting senseless wars, dying of poverty and AIDS" (Paragraph 19)
 - D. "I grew up under repressive military governments that devalued education, so that sometimes, my parents were not paid their salaries. And so, as a child, I saw jam disappear from the breakfast table, then margarine disappeared" (Paragraph 37)

7. How did Adichie allow a single story to construct her understanding of other people? [RI.3]

Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. When was a time that you falsely judged someone, or a group, through the lens of a single story? How were you wrong in your judgements and what made you realize this?
2. Have you ever been the victim of a stereotype? Describe the situation and how it made you feel. What was the stereotype or single story that was used to describe you? Why was it made and why was it surprising to you?
3. How have the stories you've read shaped your understanding of the world and other people?
4. In the context of the text, what makes you who you are? Is it primarily the positive or negative life experiences that make you who you are? What are Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's views on the construction of one's identity?
5. In the context of the text, how does prejudice emerge? How do single stories contribute to the construction of prejudice? How can this be combatted? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.

On a separate sheet of paper, use the following rubric and the passages from the rest of the packet to write a well-developed 3 paragraph essay. Choose one of the prompts below for your essay:

Prompt 1: Explain how Adichie's life epitomizes the hero's journey. Use text evidence from both passages to support the answer.

OR

Prompt 2: Explain how focus on the singular hero's story can lead to the pitfall of skewing one's perspective of the world. Use text evidence from both passages to support the answer.

Learning Target	Level 4 Extends	Level 3 Meets	Level 2 Approaching	Level 1 Basic
READING/ WRITING RUBIC	I can accurately and sufficiently analyze ideas, events, and individuals to make logical inferences.	I can analyze and explain how ideas, events, and individuals lead to logical inferences. (MASTERY)	I can identify textual details which lead to logical inferences.	I can identify logical inferences.
Success Criteria	How well am I doing?		Teacher Comments	
<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate understanding of logical inference <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate analysis of text <input type="checkbox"/> Make an inference based on details from the text.				