



“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.”

-Chimamanda Adichie

Lesson Plan for Exploring Equity: Understanding Stereotypes “The Danger of a Single Story”

[Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story](#)

This Equity Learning Module was made possible by Grow Your Own funding from the Educator Advancement Council awarded to the Willamette Education Service District in 2021.



Willamette
EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICT

Understanding Stereotypes: “Danger of a Single Story”

Overview

This Equity Learning Module, spotlighting an Oregon Equity Initiative developed by the Department of Education is designed to:

- Inspire and motivate aspiring teachers (high school students, classified employees, college students, and other career changers)
- Help aspiring teachers imagine how they can help change the world as teachers.
- Introduce aspiring teachers to resources they’ll be able to use as teachers to address equity and social justice.

Instructor Notes

- Timeframe for lesson: 1 hour to 3 class periods
- Link to video: [Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story](#)
- Delivery model: Individual, small group, or whole class
- Relevance for: Social Justice, Communications, and Current Events
- Age appropriateness: Middle School through College
- Resources needed: None
- Culturally Relevant Education (Ladsden-Billings, G. 2009): The facilitation of a sociopolitical/critical consciousness that facilitates students’ understandings and critique of inequities within educational and social institutions.
- Career connections: Teachers need to be aware of their implicit biases and help their recognize the danger of stereotypes. This lesson can also help students become more aware of the multiplicity of subjectivities in the global world.

Introducing the Module to Students

1. Have you ever heard a story about a place, person, or custom that you later learned was different than you first were told?
2. What was that story?
3. How did finding out a different side to the story change your perceptions?
4. In your opinion, what is the value in hearing stories from all people?

In this module, you will explore the value of engaging with multiple perspectives—of your own and of others.

LEARN

Background –Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a Nigerian author and activist. Through her story telling, Adichie shares experiences as a woman of color that can be applied to people from all backgrounds as we work to better understand our diverse global community.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story



ENGAGE

Questions to ponder:

- ⇒ What were your first impressions from the video? What was the main idea?
- ⇒ What are the wolf's perceptions and beliefs about the three little pigs? How does this relate to Chimamanda's story?
- ⇒ If you could talk with Chimamanda, what example would you share of how your original perceptions or beliefs about a place, person, or custom changed. What caused your perceptions to change? What would have happened if they had never changed?

As you learn in the video, Adichie advocates for seeking multiple stories to better understand the situation, individual, and lived experiences. She explains how believing one story can reinforce stereotypes.

⇒ Fill in the blank: I used to think _____ and now I wonder _____.

REFLECT

⇒ Reflect on your earlier memory. How does this video help you think now about stories you may have heard (and initially believed) about a place, person, or custom?

⇒ When do you think children first form perceptions or beliefs about groups of people based on race, language, ability, income, or religion? Who or what do you think influences those perceptions?

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

⇒ Watch the video of *The Story of the Three Little Pigs*:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vB07RfntTvw>

⇒ Learn more about Chimamanda Adichie at <https://www.chimamanda.com>

Books by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

[*We Should All Be Feminists*](#)

[*Americanah*](#)

[*Half of a Yellow Sun*](#)