

# CHIMAMANDA ADICHIE'S DIGNITY STORY

Students/participants view the Chimamanda Adichie's TED Talk, *The Danger of A Single Story*, or read the text from her presentation, and reflect on the messages about dignity that are embedded within it. The learning experience culminates with students/participants considering what their single story might be, identifying a robust list of personal details that provide a richer story about themselves, and reflecting on how it feels to be reduced to a single story.

AGES 10+ | TIME 30 MIN

## MATERIALS

**TECHNOLOGY OPTION:** [Chimamanda Adichie's TED Talk, \*The Danger of A Single Story\*](#)

**TECHNOLOGY FREE OPTION:** the [text from Chimamanda Adichie's TED Talk](#)

Computer, internet access  
Paper, pencil or pen

## DIRECTIONS

Students/participants view Chimamanda Adichie's TED Talk or the teacher/facilitator reads the text to them. As they are watching/listening to the story, students/participants should note which comments, stories,

characters, and words remind them of dignity, in all of its manifestations.

**DISCUSS:** Students/participants explore the answers to the following questions. Teacher/facilitator may say them one-by-one out loud, write them on the board or display them on a projector:

- What role does dignity play in Adichie's dignity story about her family's live-in domestic helper named Fide?
- What role does dignity play in Adichie's dignity stories while living in America?



- Consider the following statement. How does Adichie connect the concept of the single story to dignity? What is your reaction to this quote? “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. . . . 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.”
- Why are stories important? How do they connect to dignity?
- What is your response to Adichie’s TED Talk? How did it challenge or stretch your thinking? What are some new ideas you encountered?

### EXTENSIONS OR GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

- Students/participants think about how the concept of the single story applies to them. They respond to the questions: How might others see you and mistakenly reduce you to a single story? What would your single story be?
- Students/participants write a couple of sentences describing their single story.
- Then students/participants list words or phrases about themselves that describe themselves in a more robust and accurate way.
- Students/participants share their single story and their accompanying list with the class.
- They reflect on how it feels being reduced to a single story.
- Students/participants practice treating others with dignity and take turns acknowledging classmates who shared something that resonated with them.
- Students/participants hold a TED Talk activity where they read their dignity stories, videotape them, share them online and within their communities. Be sure to keep the privacy and protection of students/participants in mind. Have students only post their first names and do not disclose their exact location.

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Connect with our Global Dignity community and explore our Teaching Dignity resources and curriculum at [GLOBALDIGNITY.ORG](https://www.globaldignity.org).