



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

## Center for Middle Eastern Studies

**Title:** Perceptions and “The Danger of a Single Story”

**Author:** Athena Kalia

**Purpose/Connection to the Curriculum:** Before we begin our African novel, *Things Fall Apart*, it is important for students to recognize that there are *multiple* stories for every country, culture, religion, etc., and we’ll begin by taking a look at some of the misconceptions people have about what it means to be a member of a certain group, then focusing on what it means to be a Muslim.

**Overview:** This will be a two day lesson. The first lesson will focus on people’s perceptions of what it means to be a member of a certain group as students try to match pictures with religions, and then we’ll look specifically at “A Land Called Paradise” which is a video set to music that shows Muslims of different ages and colors sharing one thing they would like people to know about them. The second day will focus on “The Dangers of a Single Story” by Chimamanda Adichie as it relates specifically to people’s view of Africa and what it means to be an African and will become a counter point for the novel.

**Grade Level:** 10

**Time Required:** 2 days (more if we do the video)

**Targeted Skills - Based on Arizona State Standards:** 9-10.RL.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

**Suggested Procedures:** The first day students will be given a quiz where they have to identify which religions are depicted in a series of pictures. The pictures will be deliberately hard to identify. For example, the photo for “Christians” will be a picture of bearded, tattooed men in leather who are members of a Christian heavy metal group. The photo of Muslims will be of teenagers in Bosnia, none of whom are wearing hijabs. We will review the quiz as a group, focusing on the stereotypes associated with each religion. Then we will watch “A Land Called Paradise” which is a video where Muslims of different ages, genders, and colors share one thing they want people to know about them/their religion: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0V4ePb3aOT0>. Muslims in the film hold up a placard with their message on it. Students will break out into groups to analyze how people are treated based on other people’s perceptions of them and then we will come together and have a Socratic Seminar to discuss their conclusions. As homework they will come up with their own placard for what they would like others to know about them.

The second day students will share their placards, and then we will watch the TED talk by Chimamanda Adichie -

[https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story), and students will also have a copy of her speech to reference. Students will break out into groups to discuss the theme or

central idea of this speech (using the text as a reference) and analyze in detail its development, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details. As homework students will provide an objective summary of the text.

**Extending the Lesson:** I would really like my inner-city students to create their own video of what it means to be teenager at this point in time in the United States, and share it with Senida Chelo's English classes in Bosnia.