

First Reading: Focus on words and sentences

- What does the text say? What are the key ideas and details?

1. At 1:43 in the video, she says that as a child, she was impressionable and vulnerable. What does she mean?
2. At 2:15 in the video, she says that she went through a mental shift in her perception of literature. She says, "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." What does she mean by this?
3. Before the mental shift, what did she think that books had to be about?
4. At 2:35, she says that discovering African literature "...saved me from having a single story of what books are." What does she mean by this?
5. At 2:56, she tells a story about Fide. How did she feel about Fide?
6. At 4:46, she says, "...was kind of patronizing, well-meaning pity." What do you think this means? How does she feel about this?

Second Reading: Focus on paragraphs and sections

- How does the text work?

1. Read the paragraph that begins at 5:55. In her view, what causes misunderstandings about other places and people?
2. At 5:55, she makes a connection to an earlier part of the text. Why does she do this?
3. At 8:53, she tells a story about her first day in Guadalajara, Mexico. She says she was ashamed. Why was she ashamed?
4. At 9:25, she talks about creating a single story. What does she mean? How might this relate to stereotypes?
5. At 10:11, she talks about power. Why does she talk about power?
6. At 10:51, why does the audience laugh when she tells the story about Nigerian men being abusers and young Americans being serial killers?

Third Reading: Focus on the text as a whole

- What does the text mean?

1. She tells several stories within this text. She tells a story about her own ideas of literature as a young girl; a story about Fide, her college roommate; and a story about John Lok. What do these stories all have in common?
2. How, does she say, single stories are created? How do you know this?
3. What does she say is the danger in a single story?
4. What is the author's message? What does she want you to hear, know, and do?