**The Danger of a Single Story**



*“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.”*

Inherent in the power of stories, is a danger—the danger of only knowing one story about a group of people.

Chimamanda Adichie speaks about how impressionable people, especially children, are when hearing a single story. The invaluable lesson is that, by only hearing a fraction of the truth (whether in the media, in school, or in popular culture), we are creating damaging representations.

*“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 incomprehensible people fighting senseless wars, dying of poverty and AIDS, unable to speak for themselves, and waiting to be saved by a kind, white foreigner.”*

***Questions*:**

1. Imagine an individual who has been raised in a small, predominantly white, Christian community. Toward what social groups might this person hold a ‘single story’? List at least three. What socialization factors may have lead to these?

2.*“Show a people as one thing, as only one thing,* *over and over again and that’s what they become.”*

Try to understand Adichie’s words. In what ways can the single story be harmful for social groups? Provide examples to illustrate your response (link to #1 above).

3. What are some single stories associated with the Acton community (and/or Acton High School)? Explain in detail. Provide evidence to support your answer.

4. Are you a single story? Explain why (not).

5. In what ways can we avoid perpetuating single story stereotypes? Think!

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| **You respond to each question thoughtfully. You provide examples to explain that you have a deep understanding of the danger(s) of a single story and agents of socialization.**  **(Thinking)**  **/20** | You respond to each question with limited effectiveness | You respond to each question with some effectiveness | You respond to each question with considerable effectiveness | You respond to each question with a high degree of effectiveness |
| **You communicate and express ideas and information (spelling, grammar, organization)**  **(Communication)**  **/10** | You express and organize ideas and information with limited effectiveness | You express and organize ideas and information with some effectiveness | You express and organize ideas and information with considerable effectiveness | You express and organize ideas and information with a high degree of effectiveness |