



One Maryland One Book 2017 Supplemental Teacher Resources

This resource packet was created as a supplement to the 2017 One Maryland One Book Teacher's Guide.
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BEFORE READING QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

Discussion:

1. Have you ever felt like you lost your ability to speak due to insecurities or shyness? Describe what you felt like when this occurred. How did you react? How did others react? What did you do to assuage your feelings?
2. What traditions do you practice in order to celebrate your culture? Are there traditions that have been forgotten but were once practiced by older family members? What were they? Do you miss those traditions, or are they outdated in today's society?
3. What people in your life have had the most influence on the person you are? Explain how their influence has shaped who you are today.

ACTIVITY 1: "BODY RITUAL AMONG NACIREMA" BY HORACE MINER

- Students should read the following article by Horace Miner:
<http://www.ohio.edu/people/thompsoc/Body.html>
- Have students discuss the real meaning of the following items found in the article: Notgnihsaw, Household shrines, Charm boxes, Medicine men, Herbalists, Small font in the shrine, "holy-mouth-men," Small bundle of hog hairs, Women baking their heads in ovens, Latipso, "listener," Women with "inhuman hypermammary development"
- Be sure to discuss with the students that "Nacirema" is actually "AMERICA," and that most of the words are either spelled backwards or a description of people's daily bathroom "rituals."
- Imagine that you are a visitor from another planet or a remote culture, and you have decided to observe and report on the practices and behaviors of American teenagers.
- How does the perspective of the storyteller (insider or outsider) affect how the subject of the story (the culture being described) is represented?

ACTIVITY 2: "MANHOOD IN THE MAKING: CULTURAL CONCEPTS OF MASCULINITY" BY DAVID GILMORE

- Before completing this activity, students should have read up to Chapter 8 in *Purple Hibiscus*. The following link is an article about the cultural concepts of masculinity:
<http://www2.psych.ubc.ca/~ara/Teaching%20407/psych407%20readings/Manhood%20in%20the%20Making%20-%20Gilmore%201990.pdf>

- Pre-reading: Discuss the following questions with students:
 - **What does it mean to “be a man”?**
 - Possible questions to consider:
 - What are men in our culture expected to do?
 - What are they discouraged from doing?
 - What are the consequences if a man does not behave as expected?
 - Do these expectations change throughout a man’s life?
 - Do they change depending on context (home, work, etc)?
- Choose several significant paragraphs from Gilmore’s article (the article is 14 pages long) and have students complete the following:
 - Read and annotate the excerpts from Gilmore’s article about masculinity across cultures.
 - As you read the article, record a list of requirements Gilmore identifies for men in a variety of cultures.
 - Identify evidence from the article to support each item on your list.
- After students read, discuss the comparisons and contrasts between cultures:
 - Examine the elements that David Gilmore lists as common cultural expectations of men.
 - Which elements are parts of our definition of manhood? Which elements are parts of the definition of manhood in Nigeria?
 - Do you think there are any universal (cross-cultural) expectations regarding what it means to “be a man”? What are they?
 - Do you think it is fair that we have these expectations for “real manhood”? Why/why not?

ACTIVITY 3: STEREOTYPES AND “THE SINGLE STORY”

After reading Chapters 1-6, show the students the following speech titled “The Danger of the Single Story” by Chimamanda Adichie that she gave at the October 7, 2009 TED Conference:

http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html .

Pre-viewing:

- What judgments might people make about you before they get to know you? Why?
- Have you ever been guilty of stereotyping others? In what ways? Explain.

During viewing:

- What does Chimamanda Adichie mean by “the single story”?
- What examples does she give to support her argument?
- What does she say about stereotypes?
- What parts of her speech stand out to you as particularly interesting or powerful?

Post-viewing:

- Consider the role that the “single story” has played in your own life.
- Perhaps you have had the experience of being judged or treated based on the “single story” version of some aspect of who you are.
- Perhaps you have also had the experience of judging or treating others based on expectations created by a “single story” of who they are.
- Write briefly about either or both experiences and how they have impacted you and/or your view of the world around you.

Written response in relation to *Purple Hibiscus*:

- Based on what you have read so far, how does Chimamanda Adichie seem to be combating the “single story” of Nigerian culture in the novel?
- Do the characters and events in the novel so far defy any stereotypes you may have had regarding Nigerian culture? Explain your response.

After Reading Discussion Questions

1. Because the novel has layers of English with local Igbo language, it deciphers the difference between formal and informal settings. Discuss how the novel deals with language throughout the text, how it represents the various characters, and how it acts as a cultural interchange.
2. Kambili comments on the motif of silence in the last chapter: “There is still so much that we do not say with our voices that we do not turn into words” (297). Overall, this is a novel of things left unsaid, such as all of the internal dialogue the reader experiences through Kambili’s narration. Is silence an important aspect of communication? Support your answer with contextual examples.
3. Does Kambili come across as disingenuous at times due to the immaturity and innocence of her character throughout most of the novel? Do we hear the voices of modern Nigeria through Kambili’s narration? Or are the voices less impactful due to the naivety of the narrator?
4. Could this novel be considered a bildungsroman, or a novel about the moral and psychological growth of the main character? Support your position with cited examples from the text.

5. Is Kambili able to effectively communicate the realistic political situation that is going on throughout the course of the novel? How is she affected by the political situation? Does the political situation in Nigeria affect the plot? Support your response.

6. “Although specific meanings for the hibiscus differ depending on the culture of the beholder, there are some generalities about what the hibiscus symbolizes. This is considered a very feminine flower and so is usually given or worn by women. In North America especially, a hibiscus means a perfect wife or woman. In Victorian times, giving a hibiscus meant that the giver was acknowledging the receiver’s delicate beauty. In China, hibiscuses symbolize the fleeting and beauty of fame or personal glory. It is given to both men and women” (“The Hibiscus Flower: It’s Meanings and Symbolism”). Is Adichie’s title, *Purple Hibiscus*, appropriate for the novel? Why or why not? If it is usually a symbol relating to a woman, why are many of the contextual references about Jaja’s connection to the flower?
<http://www.flowermeaning.com/hibiscus-flower-meaning/>

7. From the first chapter on, Adichie alludes to Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, where things literally (i.e. Mama’s figurines) and figuratively fall apart. Compare and contrast the two Nigerian-based novels, closely analyzing topics such as colonialism, Nigerian politics, the role of men and women, and traditionalists.

8. Are Kambili and Amaka and Jaja and Obiora character foils? If so, what is the purpose and effect of these foils?

AFTER READING ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 3: REWRITTEN SCENE FROM JAJA’S POINT OF VIEW

- Throughout the novel, Jaja’s clearly asserts his independence differently from Kambili, but mostly through his actions rather than through dialogue. Pick any scene that directly involves Jaja’s character and rewrite it from his first person point of view. Maintain accuracy with events and attitudes throughout the scene.

ACTIVITY 4: PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH: IDEAL VS. REAL SELF

- The Ideal Self versus the Real Self is a theory that comes from a psychologist names Carl Rogers. Rogers believed that a healthy person has a closely linked Ideal Self (how you wish to be) and Real Self (how you really are). However, an unhealthy self-image and negative personality occurs if a person has a discrepancy between his Ideal Self and Real Self.
- An example of this would be if a person strives to be an Ideal Self he cannot ever possibly achieve this because his expectations are too high. Sometimes a person is not aware of this discrepancy.
- Read the following article by Saul McLeod [<http://www.simplypsychology.org/carl-rogers.html> (McLeod, S.A. (2007). *Carl Rogers.*)] that discusses Carl Rogers’ theories and respond to the following question:
 - Is there a discrepancy between Papa’s Ideal Self and his Real Self? Identify at least three examples from the text to support your response. Cite examples with page numbers.

ACTIVITY 5: NPR PODCAST

- Students listen to the NPR podcast on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s latest book *Dear Ijeawele*, April 18, 2017 <http://www.npr.org/podcasts/381444348/midday-on-w-y-p-r>
- Students discuss the similar themes found in both *Purple Hibiscus* and *Dear Ijeawele*.
- *Background:* Tom Hall is joined by Nigerian author, essayist, and activist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. She splits her time between her native country Nigeria and the US, where she has a home in Columbia, Maryland. She's won several prestigious awards, including the Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction and a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. She's headed the 2017 Baltimore CityLit Festival in April. That's an annual event sponsored by the CityLit Project, an organization that advances the cause of all things literary here in Maryland. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie writes with tremendous power and grace. Her prose is unshakably grounded on a fundament of authority, compassion, and an unquenchable sense of wonder. She is the author of three novels: *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, and *Americanah*. She published a short story collection in 2009 called *The Thing Around Your Neck*, and a TED Talk she gave in December of 2012 was published as a book, called “We Should All be Feminists.”