

V.285

Unterrichtsmagazin

Interpreting Adichie's short story *The Thing Around Your Neck* – Abiturtraining kompakt (S II)

Dirk Beyer



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„On the move: migration and cross-cultural encounters“ – so lautet das neue Schwerpunktthema des baden-württembergischen Zentralabiturs. Anhand der Kurzgeschichten und Pflichtlektüre „*The Thing Around Your Neck*“ der Autorin Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie lernen Ihre Schülerinnen und Schüler die Sichtweise und das Erleben einer nigerianischen Einwanderin in die USA unter interkulturellen und transkulturellen Aspekten kennen und reflektieren. Sie bauen ihre Lesekompetenz und ihre interkulturelle Kompetenz aus und erarbeiten wichtige Hintergründe kultureller Überschneidungen und Differenzen mit abwechslungsreichen analogen und digitalen Methoden wie einem VENN-Diagramm oder *LearningApps*.

KOMPETENZ



Klassenstufe/Lernjahr: 11/12 (G8), 12/13 (G9); 7./8. Lernjahr (G8), 8./9. Lernjahr (G9)

Dauer: 6 Unterrichtsstunden

Kompetenz: 1. Lesekompetenz: literarische Texte verstehen und Textdeutungen entwickeln; 2. Interkulturelle kommunikative Kompetenz: z. B. kritisches Reflektieren anderer Kulturen

Inhalt: Nigeria (Landeskunde, Themen und Motive nigerianischer Literatur), *global challenges*, *stories of migration and cross-cultural encounters*

Medien: *LearningApps*, Video(link)s

Zusätzlich benötigt: Kurzgeschichte „*The Thing Around Your Neck*“ von Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Auf einen Blick

1. Stunde

Thema: Introduction – Reasons for migration

M 1 **Why do Nigerians migrate to other countries? – Reading a newspaper article /** einen Zeitungsartikel verstehen und aus diesem und einem Video die Gründe für die nigerianisch-amerikanische Migration extrahieren (EA)

Benötigt:

- Laptop/Tablet und Beamer/Whiteboard zum Ansehen des TEDx Talks und zum Bearbeiten der *LearningApps*-Aufgabe

Hausaufgabe: die Kurzgeschichte „*The Thing Around Your Neck*“ bis zur dritten Unterrichtsstunde lesen

2. Stunde

Thema: Ch. N. Adichie – Focus on the author and her work

M 2 **Who is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie? – Meeting the author /** biografische Hintergründe zur Autorin erarbeiten (EA) und ein Video zum Thema „*Nigerian culture and religion*“ analysieren sowie Bezüge zur Kurzgeschichte herstellen (EA, PA, PL)

3. Stunde

Thema: *The Thing Around Your Neck* – Focus on comprehension

M 3 ***The Thing Around Your Neck* – Exploring the narrative /** die Kurzgeschichte lesen (EA, PL), inhaltlich erfassen und erste Aspekte diskutieren (PL)

Hausaufgabe: schnelles Lesen der Geschichte und die nigerianischen sowie die US-amerikanischen Elemente darin identifizieren (*task 4*)

Benötigt:

- ggf. digitale Endgeräte für die Bearbeitung in *LearningApps*
- Kurzgeschichte als Kopie oder als Originaltext

4. Stunde

Thema: *The Thing Around Your Neck* – Focus on intercultural identity

What is typical Nigerian and typical American? – Nigerian-American influences in the short story / aus der Kurzgeschichte (inter)kulturelle Elemente anhand globalen und detaillierten Leseverstehens sichern (EA), Migration und interkulturelle Aspekte visualisieren (GA)

Benötigt:

- Kurzgeschichte als Kopie oder als Originaltext

5. Stunde

Thema: *The Thing Around Your Neck* – Focus on the protagonist

M 5 **Who is Akunna? – The main character** / die Protagonistin charakterisieren, die Erzählperspektive beleuchten und reflektieren (EA) und Motive zum Thema „Migration“ ermitteln (GA)

Hausaufgabe: Vorbereiten der *expert task*: Interviewfragen überlegen bzw. ggf. eigene Erfahrungen skizzieren (*task 4*)

6. Stunde

Thema: *The Thing Around Your Neck* – Focus on intercultural elements

M 6 ***The Thing Around Your Neck* – As a Nigerian, why do you migrate and intercultural encounter?** / die Migrationserfahrungen der Protagonistin im Kontext zu Migrationserfahrungen anderer *African Americans* setzen (EA, PA); Motive für Migration, Stereotype und Fehlvorstellungen besprechen und vergleichen (EA)

Benötigt:

- ggf. digitale Endgeräte für die Bearbeitung und Sichtung der Onlinematerialien



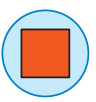




Minimalplan

Die drei thematischen Bausteine der Unterrichtsreihe kann die Lehrkraft unabhängig voneinander einsetzen. Dadurch ergeben sich drei thematisch-inhaltliche Schwerpunkte:

Baustein 1: Fokus auf den Inhalt und die Autorin der Kurzgeschichte **M 2–M 4**

Baustein 2: Fokus auf Migration und Interkulturalität **M 1, M 5 und M 6**

Erklärung zu den Symbolen

	Dieses Symbol markiert differenziertes Material. Wenn nicht anders ausgewiesen, befinden sich die Materialien auf mittlerem Niveau.	
	einfaches Niveau	 mittleres Niveau
		 schwieriges Niveau
	Zusatzaufgaben	 Alternative
		 Selbsteinschätzung



Who is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie? – Meeting the author

M 2

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, the author of the short story *The Thing Around Your Neck*, is an educated Nigerian born woman living in Lagos (Nigeria) and the USA. She is a very renowned Nigerian author and feminist who has gained international acclaim for her novels, essays, talks and short stories.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie – About the author

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was born in Nigeria in 1977. Her father was a professor at the University of Nigeria where she started to study medicine. At the age of 19, Adichie continued her studies in the USA where she graduated with a degree in Communication and Political Science. A few years later, she continued her studies and earned a master's degree in creative writing as well as in African History from Yale University. Adichie was awarded with several prestigious prizes and honours. In 2003, her first novel *Purple Hibiscus* and in 2013, her most famous novel *Americanah* were published, both novels awarded with several book awards. *The Thing Around Your Neck* belongs to a collection of short stories which was published under the same name.

The Danger of a Single Story in 2009 belongs to Adichie's most famous talks. In 2015 the TIME Magazine called Adichie one of the most influential people in the world.

Tasks

1. Read the short biography of author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in the text. Then watch the following extracts of her famous TED Talk *The Danger of a Single Story* and focus on the tasks. Extract 1: 0:00–2:30, Extract 2: 4:12–6:45
https://raabe.click/TED-Talk_The-Danger-of-a-Single-Story [last access: 13/3/2024]
2. Tick whether the statements a)–e) are true or false.



	Statement	True	False
a)	Adichie started writing at quite a young age.		
b)	Adichie's early stories were mainly influenced by Nigerian storytelling.		
c)	At university Adichie faced a lot of American African prejudices.		
d)	Many American people do have a one-sided view on other countries.		
e)	Literature has the power to influence a country's (hi)story.		

3. With a partner, respond to the tasks a) and b):
a) Briefly outline the connection between Adichie's biography, her famous TED Talk and her short story *The Thing Around Your Neck*.
b) Sum up the major experiences young African women often have when they immigrate to the USA. You can use information from the TED Talk, the article you read, the short story as well as your own ideas.
4. Discuss in class: what might be possible reasons for Adichie to continue her studies in the USA?
5. Critical thinking: have you ever been abroad? Describe your experience to a partner and compare your results with family Jonga's experiences of the USA.

What is typical Nigerian and typical American? – Nigerian-American influences in the short story

M 4

The Thing Around Your Neck is an American-Nigerian short story combining typical elements of Nigerian culture with elements of the American (Western) world. Both clash when Akunna, the Nigerian protagonist, tries to find her place in the USA.

Info box: Elements of Western culture in Nigeria

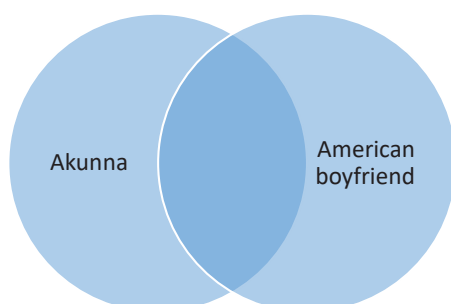
Nigeria is Africa's most populated country. It became independent in 1960. Before its independence, it was occupied by British forces and became a British protectorate in 1901. Due to the strong Western influence, Nigeria's official language (in addition to more than 250 ethnic groups and their own languages and dialects) is English. Many Nigerians have used this connection to the Western world as well as their language skills to leave Nigeria and migrate to America to become part of the Western world and its way of life.

Tasks

1. Have a close look at the short story again and take notes on the major contrasts of Akunna's life in Nigeria and her situation in the USA. What is described as typical American and typical Nigerian? Give text references.

Themes	Typical Nigerian	Typical American (Western)
food and lifestyle		
education		
friends and family		
work		

2. Romantic relationships often derive from both people having something in common. The relationship between Akunna and her white American boyfriend is based on (cultural) differences and similarities. Copy the VENN diagram below on a sheet of paper. In groups of 3-4, have a close look at the short story again (pp. 121–126) and fill in the diagram.



The Thing Around Your Neck – A typical Nigerian short story of migration and intercultural encounter?

M 6

The Thing Around Your Neck describes the migration story of a young Nigerian woman. Migration from Nigeria (or Africa) to the USA has been a significant phenomenon influenced by various factors including education, economic opportunities or family unification. Is the short story a typical story of migration? Here, you will find background information that will help you to understand the short story better.

Focus on the documentary *Black N Black: African immigrants vs. African Americans*

African Americans are descendants of those brought to America through transatlantic slave trade or other reasons, while African immigrants are individuals who have chosen to migrate to the USA for various reasons. One of the reasons is the fulfilment of their (economic or social) American Dream. Both groups have a diverse cultural heritage shaped by the influence(s) of their countries of origin. Zadi Zokou's documentary *Black N Black* explores the relationship between African Americans and African immigrants who both suffer from stereotypes and misconceptions as well as their reasons for being or migrating to the USA.

Source: *BlackNBlack*/Zadi Zokou <http://blacknblackthemovie.com/about-the-documentary/> [last access: 13/3/2024]

1. Watch the trailer of the documentary *Black N Black* and take notes on the perceptions of African Americans and African immigrants on their lives and the USA.
https://raabe.click/Trailer_Documentary_Black-N-Black [last access: 13/3/2024]
2. Compare your findings with a partner.
3. Reasons for migration:
 - a) Read the list of reasons for migration. In groups of questions (vocabulary or content), work with a partner and look up unknown words and phrases.
 - b) Think about the trailer of the documentary you have just watched as well as the short story and tick the reasons for migration that are mentioned:

<i>Black N Black</i> (documentary)	<i>The Thing Around Your Neck</i> (short story)
<input type="checkbox"/> Economic opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic opportunities
<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Family reunification	<input type="checkbox"/> Family reunification
<input type="checkbox"/> Diversity Visa Lottery programme	<input type="checkbox"/> Diversity Visa Lottery programme
<input type="checkbox"/> Asylum and refugee status	<input type="checkbox"/> Asylum and refugee status
<input type="checkbox"/> Skilled migration	<input type="checkbox"/> Skilled migration
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural and diaspora connections	<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural and diaspora connections
<input type="checkbox"/> Challenges	<input type="checkbox"/> Challenges
<input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities

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