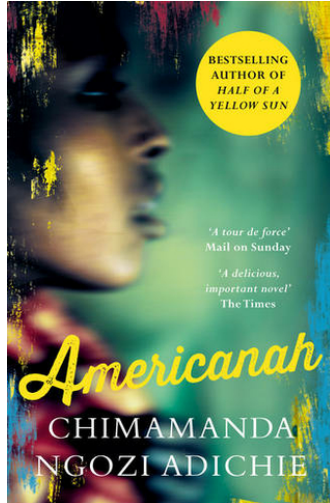




Prison Reading Groups

## Americanah

By Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



The tale of childhood sweethearts at school in Nigeria whose lives take different paths when they seek their fortunes in America and England. Ifemelu, a spirited young girl with strong opinions, and her teenage boyfriend, Obinze, who grow up with romanticised notions of the west. Ifemelu takes up an opportunity to continue her postgraduate studies in Philadelphia, USA. Some years later, Obinze, too, goes in search of a better life, but to Britain.

We, the readers, feel the sense of displacement, the triumphs, the defeats; felt by both, and their struggles with their "foreignness". We also experience how they develop their own identities in two countries with different histories, class structures and attitudes. The book also takes an insightful look at modern attitudes to race in all three continents and touches on issues of empowerment, identity, loss and loneliness.

Obinze ultimately is deported back to Nigeria, and in time becomes a highly successful and wealthy businessman, marrying someone else. Ifemelu becomes an accomplished and successful blogger in the US, and returns to Nigeria to find her feet again with her writing.

The final section of the book deals with their longing to re-establish contact in Nigeria. Thirteen years after they parted, after so long apart and with so many changes, how will they approach meeting face to face again?

### The Author

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, is a highly accomplished and reputed Nigerian author born in Enugu, Nigeria. She has a bachelor's degree in communication and political science from Eastern Connecticut State University, a master's degree in creative writing from Johns Hopkins University, and also has studied African history at Yale University. And she has also received a MacArthur Foundation fellowship.

Ms Adichie's books have also achieved the Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 2005, the Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction in 2007, and the "Best of the Best" Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction.

### Discussion Questions

- This story is a moving love story between Ifemelu and Obinze. Did you like how the story finally ended?

- *Americanah* explores the subject of what is home and where is home. Do you think this book answers those questions?

- Are Ifemelu's blogs her way of expressing her experience as an immigrant living in the US?

- Obinze was born into Nigerian middle class privilege but goes to the UK in search of a better life, and ends up being deported. What did you think about his UK experience?

- The author uses the word "Americanah" to refer to native Nigerians who return to Nigeria from USA pretending to be "Americanised". Has Ifemelu become an "Americanah"?

- Would you or would you not recommend this book to others?

*Thank you to our volunteer Neville for choosing this title and creating the resource.*