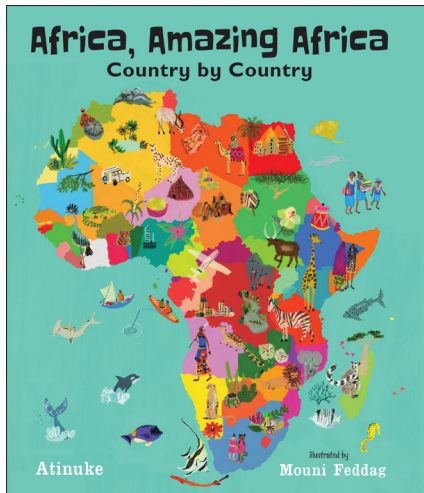
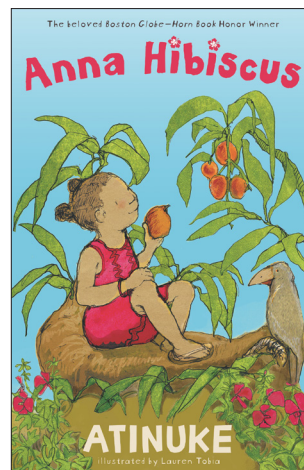




Atinuke was born in Nigeria and spent her childhood in both Africa and the United Kingdom. She started her career as an oral storyteller of tales from the African continent; now she writes about contemporary life in Nigeria. Atinuke lives in West Wales.



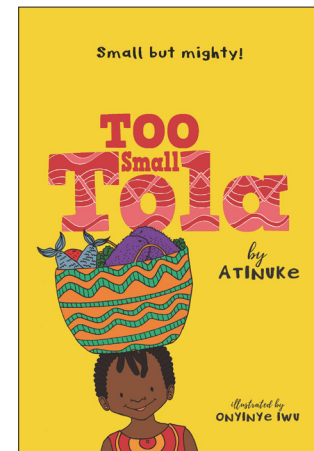
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Invite students to get to know Atinuke by visiting <https://www.teachingbooks.net/qlh4p9i>. On her website, she shares about her background, interests, and work. As students read Atinuke's books, encourage them to consider how her Nigerian identity informs much of her work. Ask students:

- What are you learning about West Africa and West African identities?
- In what ways are tradition and community important in Atinuke's stories?
- What lessons do the main characters learn? Who teaches those lessons?
- What lessons have you learned from this story? How can you apply these lessons to your life?

EXPLORATION OF PLACE AND IDENTITY

Many of Atinuke's books are set in Nigeria. As students read and enjoy her books, there are several ways to invite them to think deeply about the interconnectedness of place and identity. Students can explore the overarching question *How is place—where you live or have lived—part of your identity?* Students can continue thinking about place and identity in the following ways:

- *Africa, Amazing Africa*
Invite students to explore information about Africa's geography, history, people, animals, and culture.
- *Anna Hibiscus* and *Too Small Tola*
Invite students to consider how the setting helps them to understand the characters and plot more deeply.

STORY PLAY

Provide opportunities for students to act out Atinuke's stories. Invite students to:

- Act out an entire story, a turning point, or a favorite scene
- Try to create the mood or tone of the story through voice, facial expression, and action
- Explore perspective and point of view as they story play
- Think about how characters' feelings, thoughts, and motivations change throughout a story
- Explore characters' traits and how these traits impact the decisions they make

ORAL STORYTELLING

"We humans love stories. We read them, watch them, listen to them, play them in computer games, tell them about our lives. It is one of the ways we make sense of the world. Oral storytelling was how our species first enjoyed stories. I perform traditional oral stories from the African continent and diaspora. These stories are hundreds, if not thousands, of years old—their wisdom is profound, and they are still totally relevant to our modern lives. Adults often assume storytelling is for children. They are surprised by how moved they are—to both laughter and tears—by the stories I tell." —Atinuke (<https://atinuke.co.uk/story-telling/>)

Oral storytelling celebrates tradition, community, and the wisdom of elders of many groups of people. Consider oral storytelling as a culturally responsive classroom tool that honors, validates, and supports the process, craft, language, and identities of students.

Share examples of Atinuke's storytelling: Atinuke storyteller Tipingee (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=guisZPDLffk>) and Atinuke storyteller Monkey and Shark (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qbjAGp5-m-8>). Invite students to talk with family members about stories that are important to their heritage and cultural identity. Then encourage students to compose and tell own their stories as creators. Have students consider:

- How is place important to your story and the identities of the characters?
- What message or lesson does your story convey?
- How do you want to share your story?



Watch the Candlewick Black Creators series to learn more about Atinuke.
BlackCreatorsSeries.candlewick.com

Tip sheet developed by Dr. Sonja Cherry-Paul, founder of Red Clay Educators