Americanah

1. Identity card

Title: *Americanah*

Author: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Date of publication: 2013

Genre: Contemporary novel / Bildungsroman

Historical and Cultural Context: Set between Nigeria, the United States and the United Kingdom, the novel explores migration, race, identity and belonging in a globalised world. Through the experiences of its characters, Adichie examines the realities of immigration and the construction of identity across cultures.

2. Plot summary

In a nutshell: the novel follows Ifemelu and Obinze, two young Nigerians whose lives take different paths after leaving their home country. Ifemelu emigrates to the United States, where she experiences racism and cultural differences, while Obinze struggles as an undocumented immigrant in the United Kingdom. Years later, both return to Nigeria and reflect on identity, love and the meaning of home.

Key Moments:

- ➜ Ifemelu leaves Nigeria for the United States.
- ➜ She starts a successful blog about race in America.
- ➜ Obinze lives illegally in the United Kingdom.
- ➜ Ifemelu returns to Nigeria after many years.
- ➜ Ifemelu and Obinze reunite.

3. Main characters

Name	Role	Symbol
Ifemelu	protagonist	identity, self-discovery
Obinze	Ifemelu's ex-boyfriend	belonging, migration
Aunt Uju	Ifemelu's aunt	adaptation, resilience
Curt	Ifemelu's boyfriend	privilege, cultural difference

4. Major themes and links to the LLCER program

Première – Rencontres

How does the novel illustrate this theme?

- ➜ Encounters with different cultures shape the characters' identities.
- ➜ Relationships challenge stereotypes and cultural assumptions.
- ➜ Migration creates new perspectives on oneself and others.

Key examples

- ➜ Ifemelu's life in the United States.
- ➜ Her relationships with Curt and Blaine.
- ➜ Obinze's experience in the United Kingdom.

Terminale – Voyages, territories and borders

How does the novel illustrate this theme?

- ➜ The novel explores migration across countries and cultures.
- ➜ It questions the meaning of home and belonging.
- ➜ Borders become both physical and symbolic obstacles.

Key examples

- ➜ Ifemelu's migration to the United States.
- ➜ Obinze's undocumented life in Britain.
- ➜ Ifemelu's return to Nigeria.

5. Key quotes and key words

"Race doesn't really exist for you because it has never been a barrier. Black folks don't have that choice."

migration – identity – race – belonging – diaspora – discrimination – home

6. Author's message

- ➜ Identity is shaped by culture and experience.
- ➜ Migration transforms the way people see themselves and others.
- ➜ Race and discrimination influence everyday life.
- ➜ Home is not only a place but also a sense of belonging.