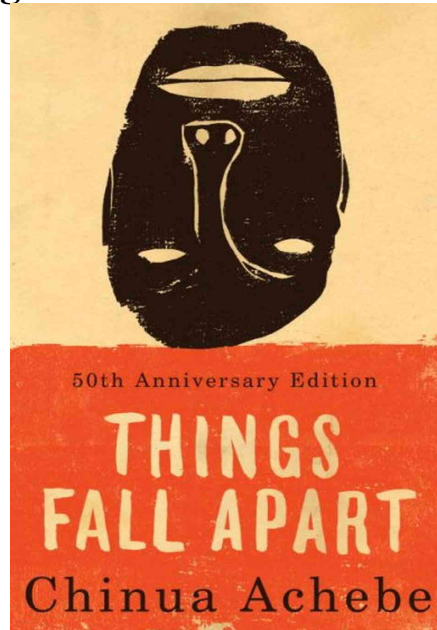


DMHS- Department of English
2018 Summer Assignment World Literature I
Incoming Juniors- Grade 11 College Prep



All junior students are required to read the novel, *Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe. The novel explores the impact of colonialism on the noble and rigid traditional culture of Nigeria. The story traces the life of Obi Okonkwo, the leader of his village. Through the novel's events, we witness the rise and fall of Okonkwo. His own ambition is what gains him notoriety and success, but we soon come to realize that his own ambition, and desire to preserve tradition lead to his own destruction.

Assignments:

1. **Discussion Questions:** Answer the following questions about the text. These questions will help you focus on important aspects of the text, which will be discussed in class. They will also help you better understand what you are reading and prepare you to write your essay.
2. **Essay:** Throughout the novel, we witness Okonkwo's struggle to uphold the traditional beliefs of his society. Write a 2-3 paged essay in which you analyze the importance and impact religion and cultural beliefs played in shaping Okonkwo's choices. How did his strong religious and cultural beliefs prevent him from accepting the changes in his village? How did his own resistance lead to his own downfall? Use the entries from your journal to support your essay writing.

Things Fall Apart - Discussion Questions

Chapters 1-2

1. What is Okonkwo famous for in his clan of Umuofia?
2. How does Okonkwo feel about his father, Unoka? Why?
3. According to Achebe, what emotion dominates Okonkwo's life? What is the source of this emotion?
4. What were Okonkwo's greatest fear and greatest passion?
5. What effect does night have on the villagers? How do they deal with their fear of snakes at night?
6. What was the cause and nature of the conflict with Mbaino?
7. What are Okonkwo's main characteristics?
8. In what ways does Okonkwo overcompensate for his father's weaknesses?
9. <u>LITERARY TERM – FLASHBACK</u> – Why do you think Achebe introduced Okonkwo as an adult and then flashback to an earlier time, focusing on Okonkwo's father?

Things Fall Apart - Discussion Questions

Chapters 3-4

1. How do you feel about Okonkwo so far?
2. What is the Week of Peace? What does Okonkwo do to break it?
3. Describe the relationship between Nwoye and Ikemefuna.
4. How does Okonkwo feel about Ikemefuna? Why is he unable to express his feelings to the boy?
5. In a sentence or two, explain the concept of <i>chi</i> . What is the meaning of the proverb "When a man says yes, his chi says yes also"?
6. What is Okonkwo's attitude towards men who are less successful than him?
7. What upsets Okonkwo most about his son, Nwoye?
8. Do you think parents should expect their children to be like them? Should parents be prepared to see their children turn out to be different from themselves?
9. <u>LITERARY TERM – FORESHADOWING</u> – What do you think the incident of Okonkwo shooting at his second wife might foreshadow?

Things Fall Apart - Discussion Questions Chapters 5-6

1. Who is Chielo and why is she important?
2. What kind of woman is Ekwefi?

Things Fall Apart - Discussion Questions

Chapters 7-8

1. Why is Okonkwo asked not to participate in the killing of Ikemefena?
2. What role does Okonkwo play in Ikemefuna's death? Why does he act this way?
3. How does Okonkwo feel about his daughter Ezinma?
4. What is Okonkwo's friend Obierika's response to the plot against Ikemefuna? What reason does he give for his response?
5. In your opinion, did Ikemefuna know he was going to be killed? Give evidence for your opinion.
6. How did Nwoye react to the death of Ikemefuna? How did Okonkwo react?
7. What effect do you think the death of Ikemefuna will have on the relationship between Nwoye and his father? Why?
8. Why do you think the Africans thought the white men had no toes?
9. What is the difference between the tales Okonkwo told to the boys and those Nwoye's mother told to the younger children?
10. <u>LITERARY TERMS – SETTING</u> – Reread the description of the forest scene as Ikemefuna is being led to his death. How did the description of the setting contrast with and also reinforce the action that took place?

Things Fall Apart - Discussion Questions

Chapters 9-10

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| 1. The relationship between Ekwefi and her daughter Ezinma is extraordinarily close. State two ways in which this is so. |
| 2. An <i>ogbanje</i> is a changeling, a child who repeatedly dies and returns to its mother. How can humans defeat an <i>ogbanje</i> 's wickedness? |
| 3. Where is Okonkwo during the ceremony in Chapter 10? What clues in the text tell you the answer? |
| 4. What are the main functions of the <i>egwugwu</i> ceremony? |
| 5. The nine Umuofia judges wear <i>egwugwu</i> masks and the nine U.S. Supreme Court Justices wear black robes. Compare and contrast the Ibo and American legal systems, stating at least two similarities and two differences. |

Things Fall Apart - Discussion Questions

Chapter 11

1. What animal does Ekwefi tell a folktale about? What is the moral of this folktale?

2. Why do you think Achebe included this folktale?
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Things Fall Apart - Discussion Questions

Chapters 12-13

1. Why does the drum's news send a cold shiver over Okonkwo?
2. What terrible accident occurs at the funeral?
3. Why do you think Achebe does not name the slain youth?
4. Do you think Okonkwo deserves his punishment? Why or why not?
5. After the accident, what must Okonkwo and his family do? What happens to Okonkwo's house the next day?

Things Fall Apart - Discussion Questions

Chapters 14-15

1. Okonkwo's mother's kinsmen help him start farming. Cite two ways in which they help.
2. What disaster happened to the Abame clan? How did it happen? How does this incident summarize the experience of colonization?
3. What do the Ibo mean by an "iron horse"?
4. How did Okonkwo feel about his circumstances?
5. How does Okonkwo's lack of understanding of the importance of women reflect on him? What does it say about him?

Things Fall Apart - Discussion Questions

Chapters 16-17

1. What is Uchendu's reason for giving the missionaries part of the Evil Forest?
2. Why does Okonkwo threaten to kill Nwoye? What does Nwoye do as a result?
3. What attracts Nwoye to the new religion? Do you think Nwoye's religious decision shows strength or weakness? Why?
4. State one way in which the Europeans misunderstand Ibo culture and one way in which the Ibo misunderstand the Europeans.
5. Do you think was appropriate for Christian missionaries to evangelize in Ibo villages?

Things Fall Apart - Discussion Questions

Chapters 18-19

1. What do you think will happen when Okonkwo returns to Umuofia?
2. Describe the incident with the sacred python.
3. What role did outcasts play in bringing Christianity to Iboland?
4. Why could the clan not kill the converts?
5. How does Okonkwo show his thanks to Mbanta at the end of his seven-year exile?
6. In the conflict between the missionaries and the clan, which side do you think Achebe takes, if any? Give evidence for your opinion.

Things Fall Apart - Discussion Questions

Chapters 20-22

1. How has Umuofia changed during Okonkwo's exile? Give three specific examples.
2. How does Enoch spark a conflict in Umuofia? What does the clan do about it?
3. Compare and contrast the two missionary leaders (Mr. Smith and Mr. Brown).
4. According to Obierika, the clan could easily drive out two white men. Why then, does he feel the clan is falling apart?
5. According to Achebe, Mr. Smith sees the world in terms of black and white and feels that black is evil. In your opinion, is this attitude still widespread today? What effects does such an attitude have?

Things Fall Apart - Discussion Questions

Chapters 23-25

1. What happens when six men from Umuofia are called to the District Commissioner's office? What punishment does the District Commissioner prescribe? How do the guards treat the six men?
2. How does Okonkwo die?
3. What help does Obierika request from the District Commissioner? Why?
4. What kind of person do you think the District Commissioner is? Describe your view of his personality in two to three sentences.
5. In the last paragraph of the novel, the point of view shifts although the narrative is still third-person. Whose point of view is shown in this paragraph? Why do you think Achebe made this shift? What tone or attitude does Achebe in this paragraph?