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Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

Things Fall Apart

by Chinua Achebe

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Things Fall Apart

To The Teacher

In order to allow the teacher maximum flexibility in his or her approach, we have grouped the prompts by sections. The teacher may, therefore, assign specific prompts or allow the students to select one or more prompts from each section

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Response Journal

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

Date_____

[illegible]

Part One

Chapter One

1. As you may know, William Butler Yeats was a famous Irish poet who lived from 1869 to 1939. Many parts from his poems are quoted even today, as witness the title of Chinua Achebe's novel. Below are other full or partial lines from Yeats' poems. Beside each write 1) the title of the poem from which the words come, and 2) in complete sentences, a paragraph which tells what that poem is about. The first one is given as a sample. Please follow that format. You may need to use the Internet.

- a. "Too long a sacrifice
Can make a stone of the heart."
From: Easter, 1916

This poem is written about the Irish Rebellion against the ruling British in Ireland in 1916.

- b. "An aged man is but a paltry thing.
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless..."
From:

- c. "When you are old and grey and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire..."
From:

Response Journal

2. The author of *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe, though a superb writer, has never won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Between the years 1986 and 2003, however, there have been four African winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature. Research the names of these African winners. Beside each name list:
 - a. the year in which the writer won,
 - b. the country from which the writer has come, the name of one of the books that he or she has written.
3. If you leaf back through the pages of Chapter One, you will see that none of the unfamiliar words are explained. Many of the words are, of course, unique to Africa, and particularly to the country and time in which this novel is set, Nigeria in the late 1800s. Another African writer, J. M. Coetzee, in his latest book, *Elizabeth Costello*, has one of his character say the following:

“African novelists may write about Africa, about African experiences, but they seem to me to be glancing over their shoulder all the time they write, at the foreigners who will read them. Whether they like it or not, they have accepted the role of interpreter, interpreting Africa to their readers.”

Imagine you are asked to defend either of the opinions listed below in a class debate about the paragraph above in relation to *Things Fall Apart*. You may take a position of agreeing or disagreeing. Base your opinion on Achebe’s writing in the first chapter and on Coetzee’s comments. Write out the speech you would give to the class defending your opinion.

Choose either position to write about:

- A. *Things Fall Apart* seems to be written primarily for the enjoyment and understanding of African readers.
- B. *Things Fall Apart* seems more directed to non-African readers to bring them an understanding of Nigerian tribal society.

Chapter Two

4. The life of the village of Umuofia is simply but beautifully drawn in this novel. Look closely at this chapter to see how the pride in the values of the community is understated in describing its possessions and ways. To distinguish between that time and the present time, list the things which were present only in the African society of the 1890s. Beside it, list which equivalent things would be present in today's times. Please follow the format below, where the first item is given as a sample.

Past time

Palm oil lamp

Present time

Electric lamp

5. We all are deeply interested in how our country is governed as well as war and peace. In this chapter we see how the Umuofia people govern themselves and how peace or war is decided in the village. Imagine that you have firm views about how government should work in issues of war or peace. Keeping the way of the Umuofias in mind in these matters, write a letter to the President of the United States telling him of your feelings about our government today. You also might want to offer advice to him about any situation in the world. Be sure that your letter is respectful as you state your opinions. You could begin your letter as follows:

President _____
The White House
Washington, DC
Dear President _____,

Response Journal

6. We read that “Okonkwo ruled his household with a heavy hand.” We know also that Okonkwo is greatly admired for his strength in the village, but is also feared. There are examples in this chapter of how unkindly Okonkwo treats his wives and children. Imagine you are either one of Okonkwo’s wives or one of his children. Think of what you want to communicate to Okonkwo and write out what you would be telling him.

Chapter Three

7. Scholars often discuss the basis for different forms of literature. One type mentioned is the tradition of written literature found predominantly in European cultures. In Africa, however, it is different. An exception to this is the ancient literature of Ireland. Literature there has its basis in the oral tradition and was found more commonly among tribal cultures where the stories and history of the culture were spoken, remembered, and passed on orally instead of being written down in books. Reread Chapter Three. List two paragraphs in the chapter that you feel would be more pleasurable and important to hear out loud, in the oral tradition. When you finish that, write a few sentence telling why you feel your choice would work better if spoken aloud.
8. The language of the novel, is liberally laced with Ibo words and phrases. It is also written simply and directly in an English that is highly descriptive and dignified. This is so even if the story being told concerns the gods and goddesses of the Ibo and their unique tribal customs. Read the last two paragraphs of Chapter Three carefully. Try your hand at writing an added last paragraph in the manner of Achebe. Your paragraph could begin as follows:

Okonkwo felt his face becoming hot with his anger. He wished...

9. We learn that Okonkwo's tribe, as well as Okonkwo himself, believed that "Yam, the king of crops, was a man's crop." Research the history of the yam. You will find it interesting. Recap its history in a paragraph that would be easily understood by a young child so that he or she would also find it interesting. Finish up your paragraph by telling why you think some of the Ibo of Africa believed it to be the king of crops and "a man's crop."

Chapter Four

10. As we learn in this chapter, Okonko has risen to be one of the lords of the clan. His character flaws, despite this renown in his rise from humble beginnings, are beginning to show to the people of the village. Reread this chapter to appraise the type of person Okonkwo actually is. In the format below, analyze Okonkwo's character so you may be able to more fully understand him. The first one is given as an example.

Character Trait

Example showing this trait

1. killing another man's spirit

by calling him a woman

11. Okonkwo was so feared when he went to settle with the enemy village that the villagers agreed to the alternative to war, the giving of a virgin and a boy to the Umuofia village. Imagine you are a civil rights lawyer who has been hired by the families of the girl and the boy who are to be taken away from their homes and families. They are to be brought to Umuofia as virtual slaves. Write the opening argument you would be presenting to an imaginary jury pleading for the enemy village not to send the children away to Umuofia. You could begin your opening argument as follows:

Ladies and Gentlemen of the jury, a terrible thing is about to be done to a young girl and a young boy.

Things Fall Apart

12. You probably have listed as one of Okonkwo's less desirable traits the fact that he treated his wives and children badly. This is very apparent in the incident concerning his youngest wife, who went to a friend's house to braid her hair and returned home late. But that incident shows you something else: the loyalty and kindness of Okonkwo's three wives to each other. Complete the following conversation you might have with a classmate who is also reading this novel:

Classmate: I think it's admirable that there is no apparent jealousy between Okonkwo's wives. I couldn't be like that, I tell you. She even lies to Okonkwo to save Ojiugo! What do you think of those poor wives?

You:

Chapter Five

13. This chapter is a fine example of the richness of the spiritual beliefs of the Umuofia people and their sacred rites and festivities. Glance back through the chapter for descriptions of these customs on the Feast of the New Yam. Following the format below, compare the Feast of the New Yam with our present day Thanksgiving. The first one is given as an example.

The Feast of the New Yam

Village gives thanks to Ani, goddess of fertility.

Thanksgiving Holiday

People thank God for their harvest.

14. Learning to briefly sum up the characters in novels is a useful skill to cultivate. This chapter, with its many varied characters, lends itself well to improving your skills in this area. Below is a list of names of some of the characters in this chapter. Beside each name, list what role they play in the novel, and what you believe is their strongest characteristic. The first one is done for you.

1. Ikemefuna—boy taken captive as peace settlement: obedient, but fearful
2. Ekwefi—
3. Ezinma—
4. Nwoye—
5. Nwoye's mother—
6. Obiageli—
7. Nkechi—

Things Fall Apart

15. As you read along in this novel, you will find how the relationships between Okonkwo and his wives and children are managed. Remember that these marriage practices were operating in the late 1800s in Africa, before the coming of colonists and missionaries from other parts of the world. Even in America during this period of history, polygamy in some religious organizations was practiced. Give some serious thought to the idea of the historical practice of polygamy, especially the way in which it is practiced in the village of Umuofia. Imagine you have been asked to write an editorial on the subject of polygamy for the “New York Times,” and you have visited Umuofia before you begin to write it. Write a three-paragraph editorial expressing your opinion. Give the editorial a title.

Chapter Six

16. The description of the festival wrestling match in this chapter is very exciting. We still today find authentic wrestling matches in high schools and colleges. These are serious, not phony and fixed like professional wrestling is on TV. As a research project using your school or local library or the Internet, search for information on wrestling. Write two paragraphs about it. The first should be a brief history of the sport. The second paragraph should be a brief summary about any differences you have detected between the Umuofia festival wrestling match and a high school or college wrestling match of today.

17. As you probably have noticed, the women of Umuofia have very sisterly and interconnected relationships. The conversation between Chielo, the priestess of Agbala, and Ekwefi at the wrestling matches is a good example of this. Chielo even calls Ekwefi's daughter Ezinma, "my daughter." Think about the relationships between women or girls that you have observed. Without using real names, write a paragraph about the relationship between any two women or girls you know which you feel would qualify as "sisterly." Try to give as complete a background of the two women or girls as you can. Also, cite some examples of the things that show how the two people act sisterly with each other.

Chapter Seven

18. The importance of the Umuofia concept of manhood flows through this novel, as you have observed from your reading. Okonkwo is particularly concerned about manhood because of his shame about his own father. Okonkwo feels his father, Unoka, was a weakling and not a real or honorable man. Complete the following conversation which Ikemefuna and Nwoye might have had about manhood after the evening they spent with Okonkwo in his *obi*.

Nwoye: My father sure does like those stories of violence and bloodshed. I wouldn't dare to tell him that I like my mother's stories better. All he thinks about is making me into a man, whatever that is.

Ikemefuna: Do not speak against the man I call "Father," Nwoye. Even though I was brought here to ransom the peace three years ago, our father has treated me like his son in those years. And as for being a man...

19. Okonkwo has been told suddenly that the time has come for Ikemefuna to be killed. The author of this novel does not tell us what Okonkwo's feelings are when he learns of the decision—only that he was surprised. You know from your reading that Okonkwo has developed a great fondness for Ikemefuna. Imagine you are the author Achebe. In this section, find the paragraph that ends with, "He calls you his father." Write a new paragraph, explaining the true feelings you think Okonkwo must have had when he learned that the boy he has thought of as his son was to be killed.
20. Reading about the killing of Ikemefuna is quite shocking in its violent brutality. *Things Fall Apart* was written in 1959, but today we find even more shocking violent acts described or shown in books, magazines, in video games, on television, and in films. Where do you stand on the depiction of violence in the various media? Put your opinion in the form of a letter to the editor of your school newspaper.

Chapter Eight

21. We see the effect on Okonkwo of Ikemefuna's killing. Okonkwo cannot eat, and he cannot sleep. It seems that he is in shock over the loss of the boy who has become like a son to him. But another factor in his withdrawal from others may be his guilt over his part in the killing of the boy. The author, Chinua Achebe, does not write any internal dialogue for Okonkwo describing his feelings of guilt. The author prefers that the reader draw that conclusion from his behavior. Imagining yourself as the author, write a paragraph of internal dialogue following the paragraph that ends with "spread down his body." Before you begin writing your paragraph, go back to the scene where Ikemefuna is killed and study Okonkwo's part in it. Either begin your paragraph with Okonkwo thinking, "Why, why did this..." or use a beginning sentence of your own.
22. The question of "manhood" comes up again in this chapter. In Okonkwo's mind, the admirable qualities of manhood require "the right spirit." Okonkwo sees that "spirit" in his ten-year old daughter, Ezinma, and he wishes she were a boy. He does not see his son, Nwoye, as one who will make his father proud in his manhood. Okonkwo says he sees "too much of his mother in [Nwoye]." What is your opinion of Okonkwo's fatherhood and its effect on Ezinma and Nwoye? Imagine you are a psychologist who has been asked to evaluate Okonkwo's fatherhood of these two children and his effect on them. Write down the evaluation you might have made in the notes you keep in Okonkwo's file. Begin your evaluation as follows:

Patient's Name: Okonkwo

Date: October 20, 1890

The question has arisen as to the effect of the patient's fatherhood on two of the children of the patient's three wives. The children's names are Ezinma and Nwoye.

Things Fall Apart

23. The second part of this chapter describes in detail how the marriages of the children of the Nigerian villages of the past were arranged. They are obviously very different than the marriage practices in our country today.

Write an email to a cousin who lives in another state, telling him or her about the marriage arrangements in the novel and what you think of them. Include in your email what you think of the way the young people in your culture marry and any changes you might like to see.

Chapter Nine

24. All societies have rituals surrounding medicine and the birth of children. Until recently, in our society, the practice of “churching” a woman after childbirth to wash away any “uncleanness” was common. Reread this chapter to find the myths, superstitions, and rituals concerning food, sickness, and childbirth. Make a list describing them, being sure to use complete sentences for each of the items on your list. Below is an example:

Mosquito bite: Okonkwo’s mother told him a story of why mosquitoes bite one’s ears. It has to do with Mosquito asking Ear to marry him and how Ear humiliated him.

25. We know how much Okonkwo loves his daughter, Ezinma. But, as is very apparent in this chapter, Ezinma also has a close, deep, and loving relationship with her mother. This relationship seems deeper than an ordinarily relationship between mother and daughter. Imagine you are a feature writer for the New York Times newspaper. You have been told to write about the mother-daughter bond. You need only write the first part of your article, which will be called: “Mother and Daughter Love in Nigeria: The Story of Ekwefi and Ezinma.” You might begin your article as follows:

Some mothers and daughters get along like two peas in a pod. Other mother-daughter relationships are fraught with problems. But the story of...

26. We now have gotten to know three of the major characters in this novel quite well. It seems a good time for you to make a portrait of one of them based on what he or she looks like in your mind’s eye. Choose to draw either Ekwefi, Ezinma, or Okonkwo. Make your drawing on unlined paper and on the largest piece of paper you have in your classroom. Your teacher may be able to give you some simple basics of sketching a portrait. You may be able to consult an art technique book in your school library. If you have access to colors in any medium when you have finished your portrait, color it in.

Chapter Ten

27. Chinua Achebe uses Nigerian words as an ordinary part of his writing. As you have discovered, a glossary is provided at the end of the book for most of these foreign words, but not all. Try your hand at being a translator. Copy down each sentence containing an italicized Nigerian word. Substitute an equivalent English word for the italicized word, underlining your English translation word or words. You may use the glossary, of course, and your imagination for words not in the glossary.
28. Legal trials in the village of Umuofia in the late 1800s are certainly very different than trials conducted in any courthouse in America today. But there are also some similarities. Reread this chapter; look for similarities and differences between the trial described in the novel and one you have seen either at a courthouse or on television or film in the present day. Follow the format below.

Umuofia Trial

Evil Forest

Present Day Trial

Judge

29. Imagine you have been accused of stealing a cow from a farm in a village neighboring Umuofia. You can choose to have a trial conducted by nine *egwugu* and their leader, Evil Forest, or a trial in a modern court in your town. Write a paragraph about which you would choose. Be sure to give detailed reasons for your choice. Be sure also to explain which trial setting you feel would give you the best chance of being acquitted and why.

Chapter Eleven

30. As you will have noticed, this novel has many wonderful folk stories. Two of the most detailed and engrossing are contained in this chapter. Choose which of the two stories—Ekwefi’s or Ezinma’s—that you like best, and reread it. Imagine you have been asked to design the cover for a children’s book based on the story you have chosen. Using a piece of unlined paper, draw and color a front cover of the book jacket. It might be a good idea to borrow a fiction book from the library with a cover that you find attractive for inspiration. Make sure your printing of the title and author’s name are interesting and appropriate and that your illustration is vivid, colorful, and takes up most of the book jacket so it makes a lasting impression.
31. The story of Ezinma being taken to the Agbala in his house “in the hills and the caves” is chilling. We know from the chapter what Ekwefi and Okonkwo did after Ezinma was carried away by Chielo. Imagine that you are the parent of a ten-year-old girl, and the same thing happened to you in the village of Umuofia. You can choose to be either Ekwefi or Okonkwo. Write a paragraph detailing your internal and/or external reaction to Chielo’s demand. Then explain what you actually did, why you did it, and how the whole situation ended.
32. In this chapter, we learn a bit about the relationship between Ekwefi and her husband, Okonkwo, and how they came to be together. Imagine that you are the other two wives of Okonkwo and are sitting together making foo-foo for an upcoming feast. You both have observed the relationship of Ekwefi and Okonkwo over the years. Complete the following conversation about Ekwefi and Okonkwo’s relationship:

First Wife: Those two! Sometimes I think he loves her desperately and other times I think he just loves beating her. What do you think of them?

Second Wife: Well, the way they first met each other was pretty romantic, I’ll have to admit, but...

Chapter Twelve

33. Much is written about the food of Umuofia in this novel. Make a list of all the different crops, animals used for food, nuts, drinks, and recipes in the novel. Beside each item you list, tell how that item is used. When you finish, write a few sentences giving your opinion about the diet of the villagers and which foods or drinks you might like to try yourself.
34. Ceremonies are a large part of the life of Umuofia. Obierika's daughter's *uri* is certainly a festive occasion. The whole village is invited to the feast, as well as all of the bride's parents, relatives, and *umunna* (her extensive group of kinsmen). Think of the ceremonies various groups of people in our country have in modern times. Which ceremony that you know of from your own experience or having learned of from the news or television would be as festive and large as the *uri* of Obierika's daughter? Write a paragraph about that ceremony, and include a comparison with the *uri* ceremony you learned about in this chapter.
35. Write the script for a television program about Obierika's *uri*. Include a detailed description of what the audience sees as the drama opened, as well as the narrator's opening lines. Follow the format below:

Opening Visuals: Village. Outside

Narrator: In this African village...

Chapter Thirteen

36. The ceremonies connected with death in the clans of Umuofia are vividly described in this chapter. There seems to be a good deal of violence involved. Ezeudu's funeral, for instance, turns out to be much less than anyone expects. Imagine you have been at Ezeudu's last rites. Complete the following paragraph where you describe what happens there to your family:

You: You would not believe it! First those drums which would split your ears. Then...

37. So much of village life in Umuofia seems peaceful, but we now see another violent incident with Okonkwo at its center. Think back to all the other times Okonkwo is involved in a violent act in the novel. Make a list of them, using complete sentences. After you have finished your list, write a brief paragraph about the reasons you feel Okonkwo has committed these violent acts. There may be different reasons for the different violent acts he commits. For instance, his acts against women may be different from those against children or men, and may have different reasons at their root.
38. Okonkwo's accidental killing of Ezeudu's sixteen-year-old son is met with a punishment unique to clan customs. Imagine you are an American reporter on a visit to Umuofia when the tragedy happens. You know that the punishment for this killing is very unlike that given for a similar crime in the United States. You file a story with your newspaper telling what happened and comparing the punishment Okonkwo receives with what would happen to an American man in the same circumstances. The headline of your newspaper article could be, "Banished! The Story of a Killing and Its Aftermath."

Part Two

Chapter Fourteen

39. Okonkwo and his three wives and their children are beginning a new life in Mbanta. Moving to a new place is not easy for children. It involves becoming part of a new community and making new friends. Missing old friends and family is also painful. Imagine you are one of Okonkwo's children and that you keep a secret journal where you write down your most private thoughts and feelings. Write the entry for your first night in Mbanta when you are feeling lonely for your Umuofia home and friends. Be sure to include your feelings about your father, Okonkwo, who is responsible for your having to leave you friends and home in Umuofia.
40. This chapter contains deeply moving words of praise for women, especially mothers. It concludes with lovely words from a song about the death of any woman:
- "For whom is it well, for whom is it well?
There is no one for whom it is well."*
- Consider your own feelings about losing a woman who is meaningful to you. Write a six-line poem about a loss of that woman or about your feelings of praise for women in general. Your poem need not rhyme, but it should be in a six-line poem format.
41. Uchendu, a wise old man of Okonkwo's new village, feels that Okonkwo needs to be given some advice about his negative attitude. After the *isa-ifi* ceremony, Uchendu tells Okonkwo that he is feeling sorry for himself and should snap out of it. Feeling sorry for oneself is not very productive, but we have all indulged in the feeling at one time or another. Relate an experience you have had that made you feel sorry for yourself. Be sure to give details of the experience, but you do not have to use real names. Conclude your narrative by telling how the situation finally worked out.

Chapter Fifteen

42. The coming of the white man to the village of Abame begins the change that colonization is going to bring to the villages. The colonization of African countries by European ones is historically complex. To help with your understanding of the colonization of Nigeria, research this period of Nigerian history. You can find the information you need in an encyclopedia, in a book on African or Nigerian history, on the Internet where you key in the phrase “Nigerian history,” or on any search engine (www.google.com is one of the best). When you have finished your research, write a paragraph about the colonization of Nigeria which includes the following information:
1. When did the first white men come to Nigeria and what country were they from?
 2. For what reasons did the Europeans wish to colonize Nigeria?
 3. How did the Nigerians respond to the attempts at colonization?
 4. What, if anything, was good for Nigeria in the colonization?
 5. How long did rule by another country last in Nigeria? When did Nigeria finally achieve independence from the colonizers?
 6. What were the positive and negative results of colonization?
43. Throughout the novel, you have read of the hospitable, yet relatively formal way in which visitors are received whenever they come to one another’s homes. Think about the ways in which we entertain visitors when they come into our homes today. Imagine that your family has invited a group of your relatives to come to dinner at your home. Beginning at the time they arrive at your front door, describe the day of your get-together. Be sure to include all the details of the food and drink you served during the visit. What do the children at the gathering do? What about the adults? Finally, tell how much or how little you enjoy these get-togethers.

Things Fall Apart

44. Okonkwo's friend, Obierika, does Okonkwo a great service by taking care of his (Okonkwo's) yam crop in Umuofia, selling it, and bringing the money to Okonkwo. Imagine that a younger brother, sister, or friend has had an argument with their best friend and has told you he or she will *never* speak to the best friend again. Knowing the value of friendship as you do, write what you would tell that young person about treasuring their friends, even when there is a disagreement. You could begin your advice to the young person by saying:

You: *Never?* Never is a long time, my young friend (or sister or brother)...

Chapter Sixteen

45. We learned in the previous chapter that "white men" had come to Umuofia after Okonkwo and his family had gone into exile. Nearly two years later, when Obierika visits Okonkwo in Mbanta, he tells him that missionaries have come to Umuofia, and that Nwoye, Okonkwo's son is now with the missionaries.
- The coming of Christian missionaries from Europe to Umuofia is an important part of the novel. Before beginning this assignment, read about the history of the missionary movement in an encyclopedia. Then, imagine you are the English minister in charge of recruiting missionaries to convert Africans to Christianity. Make up a large advertisement you would place in "The London Times" asking for applicants to undertake this work. Your name and the organization information are as follows:

Reverend Thomas Rees-Miller of the religious organization, The Spirit of Christianity Church, 4 Thames Lane, London, SW I, England. Include the requirements and qualities required of the applicants and the name and address for submitting an application.

Chapter Seventeen

46. Okonkwo's son, Nwoye, has joined the Christian congregation in Mbanta. Imagine you are Nwoye and realize that doing this will greatly displease your father. You decide to brave your father's wrath and to tell him what you have done. You know you have to prepare your argument to explain your conversion to Christianity. Write what you will say when you go to your father's *obi*. Begin as follows:

Nwoye: I salute you, Father. May I talk with you? I hope...

Chapter Eighteen

47. The story of the *osu*, Mbanta's outcasts, and the Christian missionary church is a shocking one to the clan members. Imagine you are one of the outcasts. When you go back to the area in the village reserved for outcasts, you tell your wife what happened to you in the church that day. Write a dialogue between you and your wife about what you have done and what might happen to the family because of your action.

Outcast Wife: Fool! You are a big fool! I cannot believe ...

48. This chapter ends with what the clan perceives as a punishment from the gods for the accused killer of the sacred python, Okoli. Imagine you are Achebe, the author. Write a detailed paragraph about what you think will now happen between the Mbanta clan and the missionary churchgoers. In your paragraph, include your thoughts about whether violence will take place, whether more converts will be made, and whether Nwoye will return to Mbanta. Be sure to include what you think might happen between Okonkwo and the missionary church. You do not have to look ahead in the novel. Your imagination is all you will need for this paragraph.

Chapter Nineteen

49. This chapter contains a description of the farming practices of the women of Okonkwo's family as well as that of this Nigerian section of Africa. Farming practices in our country in modern times are different. Imagine that you decide to become an independent, small farmer. Describe in paragraph form the following:
1. Where and how large the farm you want will be and why you want to be a farmer.
 2. The kind of farm it will be, and each thing grown or raised on it.
 3. The buildings that will be on your farm, including your home, in detail.
50. You will notice that during the feast in this chapter, a toast is made. Imagine there is to be a feast for some occasion or holiday in your home and all your relatives, friends, and neighbors will be there. Write out the toast you plan to make, explaining what your feast is celebrating and thanking all the guests for coming. You might include some humor in your toast, but try to make it as honest and sincere as you can.

Part Three

Chapter Twenty

51. It is in this chapter that we see spelled out most clearly the differences between clan governance and that brought by the white men from Europe. Think back through the novel to the ways the clans govern themselves and administer their system of justice. Then, contrast this with the government and justice that the white men brought. Make a list of each of these following the format below. The first is given as an example.

Umuofia Governance

Elders decide on justice

European Governance in Umuofia

Commissioners decide justice

52. We find little songs in many of the chapters of this novel. Try your hand at writing a four-line refrain that could be sung. For instance, your song could be sung by Ezinma and her half sister Obiageli about their decision to wait until they return to Umuofia to marry. If you would rather choose something else to write your song about, feel free to do so.

Chapter Twenty-One

53. One of the marks of a great writer is the ability to show characters changing or refusing to change. The results of these behaviors make for a rich, deep novel. This chapter summarizes Okonkwo's changes (and also his refusal to change). Imagine you are asked to summarize what Okonkwo is like: 1) when the novel opens, 2) during the novel, and 3) after his seven years' exile. Write your answer in paragraphs, titling them Part I, Part II, and Part III.
54. Your teacher has scheduled a class debate and chosen you for the team. You have the choice of defending one of the two following topics:
- I. The Christian missionaries should never have come to Umuofia.
 - OR
 - II. It is a very good thing for the village of Umuofia and their clan that the Christian missionaries chose to come there.

You do not have to write out the speech you give defending your point of view. You do, however, have to make out a set of notes that you will use as cues to what you are going to say when it is your turn to debate. Make sure that your notes contain at least five items (add more if you can) that you will use to defend your point of view.

Chapter Twenty-Two

55. The story of the arrogant new minister, Mr. Smith, and his church would have made the front page if the Umuofia had a newspaper. Imagine that it does, but that photography has not come yet to Umuofia. Instead of photos, the newspaper has illustrations. Draw the picture included with the story of the red-earth church's destruction. Use a piece of unlined paper for your illustration. Some suggestions might be to include Mr. Smith standing beside the wreckage, along with some of his church members and children and some of the Umuofia arsonists hiding behind trees in the background.

Chapter Twenty-Three

56. The first sentence in this chapter is, "For the first time in many years Okonkwo had a feeling that was akin to happiness." Choose another story or passage in the novel that describes a time when Okonkwo has "a feeling that was akin to happiness." Copy the passage about this, being sure to give the page number on which you find the incident. Be sure also that you copy your choice exactly, using quotation marks for the passage(s).
57. The District Commissioner resorts to trickery to disarm and arrest the six elders, including Okonkwo, after a meeting is requested. Complete the following dialogue between yourself and a classmate about this deceitfulness:

You: I thought it was against Christian beliefs to lie. That Commissioner lied through his teeth!

Classmate: You can say that again. But you'd think Okonkwo...

Chapter Twenty-Four

58. Okonkwo says, “We killed twelve of their men and they killed only two of ours....Those were days when men were men.” What are your feelings about the connection between war, killing, and manhood? Write about that in a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. Complete the following letter with your opinion:

To: Letters to the Editor

In a novel called *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, the main character, Okonkwo, says, “We killed twelve of their men and they killed only two of ours....Those were days when men were men.” I think this statement is...

59. There is a quotation from the Bible (Mark 3:25) which says, “If a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.” When Okonkwo decapitates the Commissioner’s messenger with a machete, his clansmen ask, “Why did he do it?” The battle of the old ways and the new has been joined by this terrible event. How do you think the quotation from the Bible applies to the situation of the clan in this chapter? Write a paragraph explaining what you think will happen to the clanspeople of Umuofia after this murder and whether they will stand together or be divided.

Chapter Twenty-Five

60. The portrait that Achebe paints of the District Commissioner is bitter and devastating. Imagine that the time is three years hence in Umuofia. You are a writer who is silently sympathetic to the Umuofians and know about the Commissioner's years of unfeeling governance in the village. The District Commissioner has applied to England for a promotion and has asked you to write a reference. Write the reference which begins as follows:

To Whom It May Concern:

I have known the District Commissioner for three years. I find him to be...

61. You have become well acquainted with Okonkwo through reading this novel. You probably have some feelings about him, his faults, his failings, and his shocking death. Imagine that you are picked to design some kind of memorial to him. Describe that memorial, and give your reasons for choosing it.

Things Fall Apart

W r a p - U p

62. Think about the characters who most affected you. Select one of the following characters from the novel whom you might like to have as each kind of relative:

Father:

Mother:

Sister:

Brother:

Uncle:

Aunt:

Beside each name, give one reason why you chose this person.

63. Below is a list of different book genres. Number your choices, with number one being the one you like most.

Historical Novels____

Action/Adventure____

Science Fiction____

Biographies____

Teen Novels____

How-To Books____

Horror Novels____

Fantasy____

Factual Books____

Classics____

64. Complete the sentences below:

The three things I liked best about Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* were:

The three things I liked least about Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* were:

Things Fall Apart

TEST

1. Okonkwo became famous in his village for
 - A. how tall he was.
 - B. the number of children he had.
 - C. the beauty of his four wives.
 - D. his early wrestling prowess.
 - E. his fierceness as a warrior.

2. The Week of Peace is best described as
 - A. a week when the clan members must not engage in any violent acts, so they do not anger the earth goddess and the harvest will be good.
 - B. a week of great celebration where all of the old yams are thrown away and the new yams are eaten for the first time.
 - C. a week of celebrating before the marriage between two families, characterized by the sacrificing of two goats.
 - D. a week where neighboring villages come together to engage in wrestling matches and exchange stories.

3. What does the following passage from the novel best illustrate?

“The drums were still beating, persistent and unchanging. Their sound was no longer a separate thing from the living village.”

 - A. the importance of the drums to gather the villagers together before going to war.
 - B. the drums serving as a means of communication over a long distance between the tribes.
 - C. that the drums are a symbol for the strength and power of the Ibo people; they symbolize the heart of the people.
 - D. the skill the Ibo people have at making musical instruments.

Things Fall Apart

4. This story can be called a tragedy because
 - A. it is a story of the disastrous downfall of Okonkwo.
 - B. it is the story of the destruction of the ancient Ibo customs and way of life.
 - C. the white missionaries do not come in time to save Ikemefuna.
 - D. Both A and B
 - E. A, B, and C
5. The story of the Earth and the Sky and how the Sky withheld rain for seven years is
 - A. a legend because it is part of the oral tradition and presents an account of an historical event from the village ancestors.
 - B. is a myth because it is a story handed down by oral tradition, features non-human characters, and explains the origin of rain.
 - C. a fable because it teaches the lesson that vultures cannot be trusted.
 - D. a proverb because it is very short and tries to convey the truth about the origin of rain.
6. Who believed that the yam was a man's crop?
 - A. Ekwefi
 - B. Okonkwo and his young son, Nyowe
 - C. Okonkwo and his tribe
 - D. Okonkwo's daughter, Ezinma
7. In the marriage rituals a bride price is determined by
 - A. a wrestling match between villages.
 - B. passing a basket of broomsticks back and forth between families, each adding and subtracting sticks until the final number of sticks in the baskets represents the number of bags of cowries in the bride price.
 - C. the beauty of the bride and the wealth of her father; the more wealth the father has, the more cowries in the bride price.
 - D. the mother of the bride, since marriage is mostly a woman's ceremony.

Response Journal

8. The nine egwugwu of the clan
 - A. are really men from the village masquerading as one of the nine ancestral spirits of the clan.
 - B. serve as the judge and jury in the village court system, deciding both domestic and land disputes.
 - C. are feared by the women of the clan, who run away when one is present.
 - D. Both A and B
 - E. A, B, and C

 9. Which of the following statements is true?
 - A. Okonkwo treated his wives and children badly.
 - B. Okonkwo was lazy like his father.
 - C. Ekwefi had only one pregnancy.
 - D. Okonkwo was proud of Nwoye all his life.

 10. The first Ibo woman joins the white church
 - A. to escape her abusive husband.
 - B. because she is unable to have children and is an outcast in Ibo society.
 - C. to save her unborn twins from being left in the Evil Forest to die.
 - D. because she likes the hymns sung at the white church.
 - E. Both A and D

 11. The clan does not kill the white missionaries, even though they do not want missionaries living in the Evil Forest because
 - A. it is against the law of the clan to kill any clan member, even the outcasts who have joined the white man's church.
 - B. they hoped the spirits in the evil forest would scare the whites away.
 - C. they are worried about killing a white man because white soldiers will come with their guns and wipe out the village, just as they did at the village of the Abame clan.
 - D. Both A and B
 - E. A, B, and C
-

Things Fall Apart

12. Okonkwo is a cruel man, yet he demonstrates his affection for his family by
- A. building a large house so he can eat dinner with all of his wives.
 - B. staying with Ezinma's mother at the Abgala shrine the night the priestess Chielo takes Ezinma from her mother's hut.
 - C. accepting his son's decision to join the white church.
 - D. Both A and B
 - E. A, B, and C
13. Mr. Brown does not like the Ibo's religion because
- A. they make sacrifices to smaller gods instead of only worshipping the main god, Chukwu.
 - B. Chukwu has many wives.
 - C. the masks of the egwugwu frighten the women and the children.
 - D. Both A and B
 - E. A, B, and C
14. Okonkwo commits suicide because
- A. he kills a clan member and does not want to be hanged by the white man's court.
 - B. he knows the ancient traditions of his clan are gone and so it no longer matters how he dies.
 - C. if he continues to fight the white man, eventually he will be fighting his own son.
 - D. Both A and B
 - E. A, B, and C
15. Okonkwo's father
- A. abandons his son when Okonkwo is a young boy.
 - B. only holds one title.
 - C. kills Okonkwo's mother in a fit of temper.
 - D. does not have many yams and is no good at growing them.
 - E. A, B, and C

Response Journal

16. There is an Ibo myth about a mosquito and a part of the body. Choose the body part.
- A. face
 - B. foot
 - C. back of neck
 - D. ear
17. A man's chi is defined as
- A. his relationship with the earth goddess, which determines his worth as a farmer.
 - B. his fate in the world predetermined at birth.
 - C. his personal god.
 - D. his ability to plant and harvest yams.
18. With which custom of the clan does Obierika disagree?
- A. A man should be punished for a "female crime."
 - B. A man needs more than one wife.
 - C. Kola nuts are served to visitors.
 - D. The practice of obtaining titles makes one a great man in the clan.
19. An Ibo man gets a message from the gods at the Agbala shrine by
- A. bringing yams to the priestess, who then proclaims the will of the gods.
 - B. crawling on his belly through the small entrance to the shrine and listening to the priestess proclaim the will of the gods.
 - C. sending his first wife to see the priestess, who tends the fire in the cave.
 - D. praying to his personal god or chi.
20. Which of the following incidents from the story is justified by the following proverb?
- "As the elders said, if one finger brought oil it soiled the others."
- A. Okonkwo's banishment for accidentally killing a clan member.
 - B. why the palm tree tapping is done by inexperienced young men.
 - C. why the women only get enough yams from her husband for one meal at a time.
 - D. the custom of the husband eating one dish prepared by each wife.

Things Fall Apart

Test
Student Answer Sheet

Name: _____

1. _____

11. _____

2. _____

12. _____

3. _____

13. _____

4. _____

14. _____

5. _____

15. _____

6. _____

16. _____

7. _____

17. _____

8. _____

18. _____

9. _____

19. _____

10. _____

20. _____

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Things Fall Apart

Test
Answer Key

1. ___D_

11. ___E_

2. ___A_

12. ___B_

3. ___C_

13. ___A_

4. ___D_

14. ___B_

5. ___B_

15. ___D_

6. ___C_

16. ___D_

7. ___B_

17. ___C_

8. ___E_

18. ___A_

9. ___B_

19. ___B_

10. ___A_

20. ___A_

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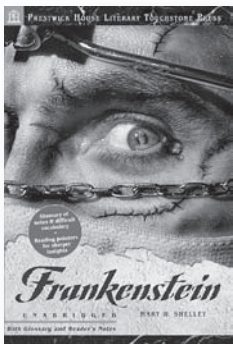
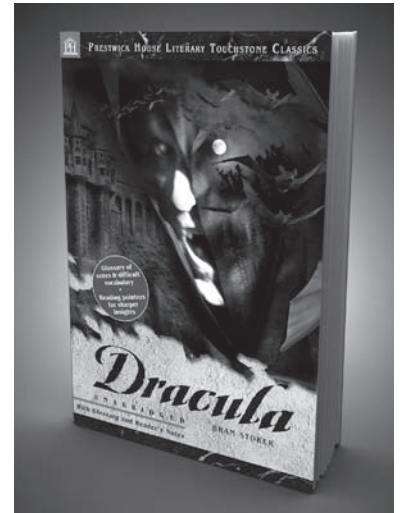
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