

Summer Reading Assignment

AP World History

Mrs. Schwan

1. These questions are to be submitted electronically (via email) to Mrs. Schwan by August 15<sup>th</sup>; [aschwan@mtparanschool.com](mailto:aschwan@mtparanschool.com)
2. All work should be typed, proofread, and in your own words. This assignment is to be completed independently.
3. The assignment is based on reading the book *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe.
4. The following questions should be answered AFTER completion of reading:
  1. Describe the **setting** (time, place, culture) of the novel. Attend to Achebe's presentation of the details of everyday village lifeways in Umuofia, the values and beliefs of the Igbo people, and the importance of ritual, ceremony, social hierarchy, and personal achievement in Igbo culture. How is social life organized? What are the important celebrations? What is the role of war, of religion, and of the arts?
  2. What are the important crops? What are the seasons? How does sharecropping work? What are the male and female designated crops, and why? What is the relationship of women to agriculture?
  3. Most traditional African cultures have considered twins magical or cursed. Twins are in fact unusually common among the Igbo, and some subgroups value them highly. However, the people of Umuofia do not and "throw" twins "away," though children are valued highly by the Igbo. We learn this shortly after Ikemefuna's death is recounted. What do Nwoye and Obierika think of these aspects of Umuofia culture?
  4. In Part I of the story, internal rivalries and disagreements have begun to erode the unity and integrity of the village. What are these internal conflicts? What part does the village leader Okonkwo play in the dissension? How does Okonkwo jeopardize his own authority within his community?
  5. Why does his friend Obierika visit Okonkwo in exile the first time? And the second time? What are Nwoye's motives for converting to Christianity? Trace the stages in the Africans' reactions to the Christian missionaries coming to Umuofia and Mbanta, and to the missionaries' evangelical efforts to convert the Africans. What kinds of Africans are attracted to the new religion and why? Why does Nwoye convert to Christianity?
  6. "The young church in Mbanta had a few crises early in its life" (ch. 18). What are these crises? Why are the people of Mbanta largely content to allow the Christians to remain in their midst at this point-the end of Part II?
  7. How has Umuofia changed over the seven years while Okonkwo has been in exile?

8. Okonkwo says that they should fight the white men and "drive them from the land." Obierika responds sadly, "It is already too late" (Ch. 20)-why? How has the white man been "very clever," according to Obierika? In what ways might Obierika be considered a transitional figure between the old and the new Igbo societies?
9. Compare the missionaries Mr. Brown and Mr. Smith.
10. Now that you've finished reading *Things Fall Apart* . . . How and why did things fall apart? Identify what you interpret to be major theme(s) and/or messages of *Things Fall Apart*.