

Honors 10 English 2018 - 2019
Summer Reading Assignment
Ms. Buehler buehlerd@fcpsk12.net
Ms. Gilbert gilbertk@fcpsk12.net

Google Classroom Code: ohg8vcg

What will you read? *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe

What is your purpose for reading this novel?

One purpose of literature is to provide a view of the world through a different lens than our personal experience would allow. *Things Fall Apart* is a unique novel; the author is Nigerian and the novel's setting and subject focuses on a real ethnic group of Nigeria called the Ibo (also spelled Igbo) living in the village of Umuofia around the turn of the 19th century. The story centers around their culture and the effect of change and outside influence on both individuals and society. Achebe wrote the story to provide a different, fresh, and "inside" perspective of African culture and history that contrasts with previous novels written from the perspective of Europeans or other Westerners (people from cultures of the Western part of the world, such as Americans). As you read, don't judge the characters or their actions from a 21st century, American perspective; open your mind to different views and values. Achebe makes it easy to immerse ourselves into the Ibo culture by including tribal names, vocabulary, proverbs, and storytelling to shape our understanding of the cultural concepts of the Ibo people. When reading the novel, we are not "cultural tourists," but participants in the daily life in the village of Umuofia. This novel choice corresponds with the first unit of study we will tackle in the fall: a unit that focuses on the tradition of oral literature and how it both shapes and reflects cultural identity and values. Your objective is to note and gather information pertaining to that idea of cultural identity.

What is the assignment?

The assignment requires you to look beyond the surface of the text and think about it deeply. During 1st quarter, we will explore how differing cultures throughout time have both distinct and shared values, and how these are expressed across time and culture through literature. For this reading, you have been given categories related to cultural values. As you read, you should not only employ active, engaged reading, but also note detail in the story that provides insight into each of the categories and choose quotes that reveal these details. You will then use your notes to respond to five out of the six prompts given. Your notes will also be used when you get to class for various assessments.

ASSIGNMENT BREAKDOWN

- 1) **Read the novel independently.** As good readers always do, you should employ active reading strategies (summarize, predict, visualize, connect, question, clarify, evaluate, etc.) and annotate. It is always a good idea to mark the text with marginal notes as you read. Sticky notes/tabs are helpful to mark pages so they are easy to return to.
- 2) **Use the [Cultural Categories Note-Taker](#)** to record your ideas about each category with thorough, insightful, and specific **quoted** references from the novel. You are selecting areas of the novel where you think cultural ideas or values in that category are revealed. Make sure to properly use quotation marks for your quotes and to cite the page number in parentheses. *Remember that you will take an open-notes test when you come to class; this note-taker will be essential to your success on this test!*
- 3) **Write a paragraph response to five of the six given prompts.** The Cultural Categories Note-Taker may help you provide textual support for each prompt. You may need to seek additional textual evidence beyond what you included in the note-taker. The paragraph responses may be typed or handwritten, but utilize the rubric to ensure you meet the standards for usage and mechanics, organization, and textual support. Each response must be a paragraph in length. Check Google Classroom for a [model paragraph response](#).

Prompts: Remember to choose five!

What surprises you about life in an African tribal community? What preconceptions did you bring to your reading that were either reinforced or changed?

Achebe's characters tell traditional folk tales and intersperse their conversation with Igbo words, phrases and sayings. How does this use of language convey a sense of Igbo culture? Explain the importance of folktales in the informal education of the children.

Gender roles vary by society. Although the Igbo culture is patriarchal, are women less valuable than men? An African proverb states, "It takes a village to raise a child." How does this statement reflect the polygamous structure of Okonkwo's family and the care of the children in the Igbo community?

How does pre-colonial life in Umuofia differ from Western society? Are there similarities? Cite examples of any similarities and differences in societal structures.

At the end of Chapter Twenty, Obierika tells Okonkwo, "He [the white man] has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart." What are the human consequences of the collision between the two cultures. How does the imposition of the new religion start unraveling the threads of the Igbo culture?

Think about the following quote: "When the missionaries came, the Africans had the land and the Christians had the Bible. They taught us to pray with our eyes closed. When we opened them they had the land and we had the Bible" - Jomo Kenyatta (in Mazrui 149-150) Share your reaction to the quote.

When is this due?

The Culture Category Note-Taker and the 5 prompt responses are due on the 1st day of class. Bring your printed or handwritten copy, which you will turn in at the beginning of class.

How will it be graded?

I expect you to seek evidence as you read this book in its entirety, engage in the reading, think deeply about what you are reading, and share those thoughts with others. I look for responses that demonstrate insight and reflection, show an understanding of the purpose for the reading, and encompass the entire story. There are five required paragraph responses. Each paragraph response is worth 20 points for a total of 100 points. See the [rubric](#) for details on how this will be assessed. The Culture Category Note-Taker is worth 100 points.

Remember:

- Any quotes, paraphrasing, or summary should lead to analysis and the analysis should outweigh the summary in the prompt response. Ensure you include a citation for any quotes, paraphrasing, or summary.
- Do not make judgments about the book or its subject matter: "This was a great book..." or "The author did a great job at..."
- YOUR thoughts and ideas matter. Do not regurgitate something from a classmate or the internet. Do not plagiarize; it is unacceptable and will result in a zero for the assignment.
- Use your best grammar and spelling as is befitting 10th grade students. Your grade will be based on quality of responses to the prompts (see rubric.)
- Good luck! I look forward to reading your responses!

Note: The [Paragraph Written Response Rubric](#), [Model Paragraph Response slideshow](#), and [Culture Category Note-Taker](#) are also available on Google Classroom.