

# Things Fall Apart



## Chapter 1

1. List 5 characteristics of Okonkwo.
2. List 5 characteristics of Unoka.
3. What is the principle reason for Okoye's visit to Unoka?
4. What traditional object is a symbol of Unoka's hospitality to Okoye?
5. How did Ikemefuna come to live in Okonkwo's village?
6. One of the most famous lines in the novel is "proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten." What does this phrase mean?
7. As you read the novel, keep a list of African proverbs quoted in the novel on the worksheet provided.



## Chapter 2

1. What was the subject of the marketplace meeting?
2. What was the price Mbaino paid for peace?
3. On a separate page, draw and label a diagram of Okonkwo's compound from the description given.
4. In this polygamous culture, each household is enclosed in a compound. each wife lives in a hut with her children and the husband visits each wife in turn, though he has his own hut as well. Children are often cared for communally. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this form of social structures? Create a table listing the advantages and disadvantages.
5. What was Okonkwo's greatest fear?
6. What effect does night have on the people of Umuofia?
7. Why does Okonkwo dislike his own son, Nwoye, so much?
8. Describe Okonkwo's attitude toward women.



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9. What seems to be Achebe's (the author's) attitude toward this culture so far? What are some passages that may give clues to his attitude toward the culture?



## Chapter 3

1. Why did Unoka consult the oracle, Agbala?
2. What was Agbala's response?
3. Why did Unoka not receive a proper funeral and burial?
4. What was the purpose of Okonkwo's visit to Nwakibie?
5. Why was Okonkwo uneasy with the story of the palm wine tapper Obaiko's visit to the oracle?
6. What is ironic about the 8 week drought that destroyed Okonkwo's first planting of yams?
7. How is awareness of rank observed in the drinking of palm wine?
8. What is the relationship of women to agriculture in the Ibo culture?



## Chapter 4

1. A man without title was called a woman in the Ibo culture. What does that tell us about the status of women?
2. Why did Okonkwo beat his youngest wife?
3. Why was he punished for beating his wife?
4. What was the purpose of the Week of Peace before planting?
5. What are some of Okonkwo's virtues?
6. Describe Okonkwo's relationship with Ikemefuna.
7. What are the limits of power of the village rainmaker?

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## Chapter 5

1. What does Okonkwo's beating of his second wife tell you about his character?
2. How did Okonkwo's second wife, Ekwefi, come to be his wife?
3. What do we learn about Obiageli in this chapter?
4. What is Okonkwo's attitude toward the feasts?



## Chapter 6

1. What is the importance of the silk-cotton trees to the people of Umuofia?
2. What does Ekwefi mean when she says that she thinks the Ezinma, her daughter, has come to stay?
3. What roles does Chielo play in the village?



## Chapter 7

1. How do Okonkwo's stories differ from those of his first wife?
2. Why did Umuofia welcome the locust swarm so excitedly?
3. What news does Ezeudu bring to Okonkwo?
4. Who kills Ikemefuna?
5. How is Ikemefuna killed?
6. How has Nwoye begun to "act like a man"?
7. Why do you think Achebe does not translate the song that Ikemefuna remembers as he walks to his execution?



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8. Nwoye remembers having the same feeling that he had after Ikemefuna's death. What triggered that feeling from the past?



## Chapter 8



1. What worries Okonkwo about Nwoye?
2. Who does Okonkwo say had the right spirit to be a great man?
3. Why does Okonkwo question the strength of Ndulue as a young man?
4. Bride-price is the converse of a dowry. Common in many African cultures, it involves the bridegroom's family paying substantial wealth in cash or goods for the privilege of marrying a young woman. How might this system make women more valuable than a dowry system?
5. How is the bride-price negotiated in Umuofia?
6. Why might the Ibo people suppose that white men have no toes?
7. What attitudes are associated with white men in this chapter?



## Chapter 9

1. What happened to Ekwefi's children that were born before Ezinma?
2. What was the traditional explanation for what happened to Ekwefi's other children?
3. What was done to stop the cycle?
4. What is an ogbanje?
5. Why does Ekwefi prize her daughter so much?
6. What attitudes toward children does the belief in ogbanje reflect?
7. According to legend, why do mosquitos buzz around people's ears?

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## Chapter 10

1. What is the case against Uzowulu?
2. Who hears the case?
3. What is their verdict?
4. What would your verdict have been? Why?
5. In Ibo culture, whole families are involved in marriage. In American culture, a man and woman may marry independently of their families and even against their families' wishes. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each system? Create a table listing the advantages and disadvantages of the Ibo system.



## Chapter 11

1. Summarize Ekwefi's story about the tortoise and the birds.
2. What is the moral of the fable?
3. What values does it reflect?
4. Who came to take Enzinma away? Why?
5. What was Ekwefi's reaction?
6. What was Okonkwo's reaction?



## Chapter 12

1. How does Enzinma return to Okonkwo's compound?
2. What happens when a cow gets loose?
3. What are the attitudes of the people of Umuofia toward the large market town of Umuike?
4. How is the importance of family emphasized in the uri ceremony?

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## Chapter 13

1. How does the one-handed egwugwu praise the dead man?
2. What crime does Okonkwo commit?
3. What was his punishment?
4. How is the crime related to Okonkwo's past?



## Part One Essay

Write an essay (Bare-Bones minimum of 5 paragraphs) discussing the role of one of the following in the culture of the people of Umuofia:

- women
- hospitality
- religion
- family/kinship
- death

