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©2012 Secondary Solutions - 3 - Things Fall Apart Literature Guide
About This Literature Guide

Secondary Solutions is the endeavor of a high school English teacher who could not seem to find appropriate materials to help her students master the necessary concepts at the secondary level. She grew tired of spending countless hours researching, creating, writing, and revising lesson plans, worksheets, quizzes, tests and extension activities to motivate and inspire her students, and at the same time, address those ominous content standards! Materials that were available were either juvenile in nature, skimpy in content, or were moderately engaging activities that did not come close to meeting the content standards on which her students were being tested. Frustrated and tired of trying to get by with inappropriate, inane lessons, she finally decided that if the right materials were going to be available to her and other teachers, she was going to have to make them herself! Mrs. Bowers set to work to create one of the most comprehensive and innovative Literature Guide sets on the market. Joined by a middle school teacher with 21 years of secondary school experience, Secondary Solutions began, and has matured into a specialized team of intermediate and secondary teachers who have developed for you a set of materials unsurpassed by all others.

Before the innovation of Secondary Solutions, materials that could be purchased offered a reproducible student workbook and a separate set of teacher materials at an additional cost. Other units provided the teacher with student materials only, and very often, the content standards were ignored. Secondary Solutions provides all of the necessary materials for complete coverage of the literature units of study, including author biographies, pre-reading activities, numerous and varied vocabulary and comprehension activities, study-guide questions, graphic organizers, literary analysis and critical thinking activities, essay-writing ideas, extension activities, quizzes, unit tests, alternative assessment, online teacher assistance, and much, much more. Each Guide is designed to address the unique learning styles and comprehension levels of every student in your classroom. All materials are written and presented at the grade level of the learner, and include extensive coverage of the content standards. As an added bonus, all teacher materials are included!

As a busy teacher, you don’t have time to waste reinventing the wheel. You want to get down to the business of teaching! With our professionally developed teacher-written literature Guides, Secondary Solutions has provided you with the answer to your time management problems, while saving you hours of tedious and exhausting work. Our Guides will allow you to focus on the most important aspects of teaching—the personal, one-on-one, hands-on instruction you enjoy most—the reason you became a teacher in the first place.

Secondary Solutions—The First Solution for the Secondary Teacher!®
www.4secondarysolutions.com
How to Use Our Literature Guides

Our Literature Guides are based upon the National Council of the Teachers of English and the International Reading Association’s national English/Language Arts Curriculum and Content Area Standards. The materials we offer allow you to teach the love and full enjoyment of literature, while still addressing the concepts upon which your students are assessed.

These Guides are designed to be used in their sequential entirety, or may be divided into separate parts. Not all activities must be used, but to achieve full comprehension and mastery of the skills involved, it is recommended that you utilize everything each Guide has to offer. Most importantly, you now have a variety of valuable materials to choose from, and you are not forced into extra work!

There are several distinct categories within each Secondary Solutions Literature Guide:

- **Teacher’s Guide**—A variety of resources to help you get the most out of this Guide as well as the text you are teaching. The Teacher’s Guide includes a sample Teacher’s Agenda, Summary of the Play or Novel, Pre- and Post-Reading Ideas and Activities and Alternative Assessment, Essay and Writing Ideas, Rubrics, complete Answer Key and more. Look for the Teacher’s Guide at the end of this Guide. Pre-Reading Ideas and Activities are located at the beginning of the Guide.

- **Exploring Expository Writing**—Worksheets designed to address the exploration and analysis of functional and/or informational materials and of the historical aspects of the text
  - Author Biography, including heritage, beliefs, and customs of the author
  - Historical Context, including allusions and unique diction, comparison of situations across historical eras, analysis of theme relevant to the historical era
  - Biographies of relevant non-fictional characters
  - Relevant news and magazine articles, etc.

- **Comprehension Check**—Similar to Exploring Expository Writing, but designed for comprehension of narrative text—study questions designed to guide students as they read the text.
  - Questions focus on Reading Comprehension and Analysis and cover a wide range of questioning based on Bloom’s Taxonomy

- **Standards Focus**—Worksheets and activities that directly address the content standards and allow students extensive practice in literary skills and analysis. Standards Focus activities are found within every chapter or section. Some examples:
  - Literary Response and Analysis, including Figurative Language, Irony, Flashback, Theme, Tone and Mood, Style, and Aesthetic Approach, etc.
  - Writing Strategies, including Developing Thesis Statements, Audience and Purpose, Sentence Combining, Concise Word Choice, Developing Research Questions, etc.

- **Assessment Preparation**—Vocabulary activities which emulate the types of vocabulary/grammar proficiency on which students are tested in state and national assessments. Assessment Preparation activities are found within every chapter or section. Some examples:
  - Writing Conventions, including Parts of Speech, Precise Word Choice, Punctuation
  - Vocabulary and Word Development, including Context Clues, Connotation/ Denotation, Word Roots, Analogies, Literal and Figurative Language

- **Quizzes and Tests**—Quizzes are included for each chapter or designated section; final tests as well as alternative assessment are available at the end of each Guide.

Each Guide contains handouts and activities for varied levels of difficulty. We know that not all students are alike—nor are all teachers! We hope you can effectively utilize every aspect our Literature Guides have to offer—we want to make things easier on you! If you need additional assistance, please email us at customerservice@4secondarysolutions.com. Thank you for choosing Secondary Solutions—The First Solution for the Secondary Teacher!
Things Fall Apart
Pre-Reading Activities and Ideas
The following are suggested activities to supplement the study of Things Fall Apart prior to the reading the novel:

1. Read Chinua Achebe's short story "The Sacrificial Egg" aloud as a class. Discuss how the themes of religion and beliefs permeate the narrative.
2. Lead students in a discussion of fear of failure. What is a fear of failure? Has a fear of failure ever led them to make a choice that they later regretted? Have students create artistic representations showing what fear of failure means to them.
3. Have students research the Igbo people and culture. Using information from their research, have students create models of a typical Igbo compound. Models should include details of daily life, such as roles of men, women, and children, in addition to typical architecture and layout of compounds.
4. Discuss the nature of fatal flaws with students. Have students identify a celebrity who has recently been in the news. What is his or her fatal flaw? How does the media's portrayal of this fatal flaw influence his or her reception by the public? How does the fatal flaw limit his or her choices? Have students create a public service announcement about the dangers of this fatal flaw. If time allows, students can create videos of their PSA's.
5. Have students research and create a field guide to the flora and fauna of West Africa. Students can either focus on domesticated or wild plants and animals, or both. Entries in the guide should include a picture, common name, scientific name, and short description.
6. There are many rich and varied instructional folktales that are told throughout West Africa. Have students work in groups to locate a West African traditional tale and present it as a Readers' Theater.
7. Have students divide into teams and research the issue of colonization of Africa from various perspectives, i.e. an indigenous African, a citizen of the colonizing empire, a merchant, a religious leader, etc. Once they have completed their research, students can present their findings in the form of a panel discussion.
8. Have students research various modern-day African peoples, including their religious beliefs, lifestyles, economic activities, and political organization. Have students present their findings in the form of informative posters.
9. Have students research the Nigerian Civil War, also known as the Biafran War, and the role that poets and writers like Chinua Achebe and Christopher Okigbo took in the war. Using the information they collect, students can create propaganda posters in support of either side of the war.
10. Have students research traditional West African musical instruments like the djembe. Then have them create reconstructions of the instruments to present to the class in the form of a museum exhibit.
The story of Chinua Achebe’s youth is a story that is symbolic of the postcolonial period in Nigeria. His father, Isaiah, was orphaned at such a young age that he never remembered his own parents. Raised by his maternal uncle, a respected Igbo elder, Isaiah witnessed the first arrival of Christian missionaries in their village. Though his uncle was unimpressed by their proselytizing, Isaiah was taken in by the new religion and soon converted. For Chinua, the rift of Christianity and traditional religion between his father and his uncle was symbolic of the struggle of Africans to retain their own identities during and following the colonial period.

Born in British-occupied Nigeria in 1930, Achebe’s own childhood was built around this same rift. His mother and father were both Christians. Their hometown of Ogidi included many Christian converts, whom the many non-Christians viewed with “indulgent amusement” (Achebe, British-Protected Child 12). They did not understand the converts or the religion to which they adhered. Still, Achebe recalls traditional sights and sounds of the village, such as the masquerades of the Nwafor Festival, with fondness:

For eight whole days we saw [the masquerade performers], from a reasonable distance, because they and their attendants carried bundles of whips with which they occasionally punished themselves to prove their toughness and certainly punished you if you were available. We would keep count of the masquerades we saw every day and then compare our grand total with the previous year. In a good year, the number would be well over a hundred (Achebe, British-Protected Child 12).

At age twelve, Achebe left home to attend school. He first attended Central School in the village of Nekede, where his older brother was a teacher. A few years later, Achebe was accepted to attend Government College in Umuahia, a school established by the colonial administration to educate Nigeria’s future elite, and indeed it did. Christopher Okigbo, Gabriel Okara, ElechiAmadi, Chukwuemeka Ike, I.N.C. Aniebo, and Ken Saro-Wiwa, all prominent names in modern Nigerian literature, attended Government College at or about the same time as Achebe. He recalls a curious rule by the school’s principal which forbade the reading of textbooks after classes on three days of the week. Instead, the boys were encouraged to read novels and magazines in their free time, which they did with gusto. It was here that Achebe read Treasure Island, Tom Brown’s School Days,
The Prisoner of Zenda, David Copperfield, and other great works of British literature. Although the works they read had little to do with their daily lives, and many even portrayed the battles of “heroic white men” against “repulsive natives,” Achebe later said of this odd education, “It all added up to a wonderful preparation for the day we would be old enough to read between the lines and ask questions” (Achebe, British-Protected Child 21).

In 1948, graduating a year early, Achebe entered college at the newly established University College (now the University of Ibadan). He began his studies in medicine, but quickly changed to history, English and theology, interests that are reflected in the themes of his works. While at Ibadan, Achebe wrote short stories and essays that were published in the school’s newspaper. It was during this time that he developed a suspicious attitude toward European literature, which portrayed Africans as savages who were “sinister and stupid, or at the most, cunning” (Achebe, “African literature as restoration” 7).

After college, Achebe had a brief stint as a teacher, after which time he was offered and took a job with the Nigerian Broadcasting Service in Lagos. In Lagos, Achebe began work on his first novel, which would be among the first examples of true Nigerian literature. In 1957, after completing a handwritten copy, Achebe sent his treasured work, Things Fall Apart, to a London typing service, accompanied by a small fee. The company set the work into the corner, and promptly forgot about it. Were it not for the intervention of a friend several months later, who upon visiting London went to the office of the typing service and demanded to know what had been done with Achebe’s work, there is no telling if the work might have been lost forever.

Despite numerous early rejections by publishers who claimed there was no market for literature by an African, the novel was finally published in 1958, at a mere 2,000 copies. Other novels followed, including No Longer at Ease (1960), Arrow of God (1964), and A Man of the People (1966). As with Things Fall Apart, Achebe’s later novels revolve around themes of colonialism, colonial oppression, and Igbo identity. Contrary to what one may think, Achebe does not discount the value of the colonial influence in Nigeria, without which he would not have received the education that allowed him to become a novelist nor the benefits of the English language in which he writes. Education and a universal language, after all, were the gifts of the “oppressor” which eventually allowed Nigerians to unify and throw off the yoke of colonialism.

Between 1960 and 1966, while still working for the Nigerian Broadcasting Company, Achebe met and married Christie Okoli. They had three children before a military coup and the massacre of thousands of Igbo living in northern Nigeria forced the Achebe family to flee to the safer southeastern region of the country. In May of 1967 this region attempted to secede from the rest of Nigeria to form the independent Igbo state of Biafra. This was the beginning of the Nigerian Civil War. Although Achebe did not fight in the war, he represented the independent state of Biafra as an ambassador to the nations of Europe and the Americas, attempting to spread the
message of Igbo independence. In January 1970, the military leaders of Biafra surrendered to the Nigerian government.

The failed revolution left Achebe troubled and disheartened. Although he and other revolutionaries were allowed to return to their homes and lives, they returned to squalor and strict scrutiny. Achebe was forced to undergo clearance by military authorities who "regarded the inhabitants of the Eastern zone as a defeated group" (Ezenwa-Ohaeto 154). Still, Achebe regarded himself and others of the revolution proudly, “…never, not even once, did I suggest that we made a mistake. And I’ll never submit, that we made a mistake" (Udenwa 34). Achebe returned to ordinary life as a Professor at the University of Nigeria. In March of 1970, Achebe’s fourth child, a girl, was born.

In 1972, Achebe was offered a professorship at the University of Amherst in Massachusetts. He accepted and moved his family to the United States. A short four years later, he returned to Nigeria with his family and became active in the politics of his country. In 1979, Achebe received the first ever Nigerian National Merit Award. In 1987, his novel Anthills of the Savannah was a finalist for the Man Booker Prize.

A tragic accident on March 22, 1990 came close to ending Achebe’s career when the car he was riding in flipped on the road to Lagos, pinning him beneath the vehicle and crushing his spine. As a result, Achebe was paralyzed from the waist down and would require the use of a wheelchair for the rest of his life. Unbeaten, Achebe recovered from his injuries and went on to take the position of Charles P. Stevenson Professor of Languages and Literature at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. He is currently the David and Marianna Fisher Professor in the Department of Africana Studies in Providence, Rhode Island, and it is from this post he continues to speak, write, and advocate for Africa and African literature into the present day.
Things Fall Apart
Comprehension Check: Author Biography—Chinua Achebe

Directions: Using the article on Achebe, answer the following questions fully on a separate piece of paper.

1. Why did Achebe and his friends view the masquerades of the Nwafor Festival from a “reasonable distance”?

2. How did the rift within his own culture characterize Achebe’s early experiences? What other rifts characterize Achebe’s life?

3. In paragraph two, what is meant by “indulgent amusement”?

4. Achebe said, “It all added up to a wonderful preparation for the day we would be old enough to read between the lines and ask questions…” What does Achebe imply with this statement about his boyhood education?

5. What change in perspective toward colonial literature did Achebe experience during his college years?

6. Study the dictionary entry for the word “cunning” below. Explain in your own words why Achebe objected to the portrayal of natives as “cunning.”

   cunning adj
   : dexterous or crafty in the use of special resources (as skill or knowledge) or in attaining an end <a cunning plotter>
   : displaying keen insight <a cunning observation>
   : characterized by wiliness and trickery <cunning schemes>
   : prettily appealing

7. How do the themes of Achebe’s novels reflect his early experiences growing up in Nigeria?

8. What “gifts” did colonial rule bring to the people of Nigeria? How did these “gifts” influence Achebe’s life and work?

9. What effects did the Nigerian Civil War have upon Achebe and others like him? Was the treatment he received from the Nigerian government fair? Justify your answer.

10. In the opening quotation, Achebe says “art must...provide a means to domesticate that which is wild.” Agree or disagree with this statement. Provide examples from your own knowledge and experience of art to support your argument.
**Things Fall Apart**  
**Historical Context: Africa**

Despite an illusion created by traditional Mercator projection maps, Africa is the second largest continent behind Asia. It is an incredibly diverse continent in which over 1,000 different languages, including English, French, and Arabic, are spoken. For purposes of study, Africa can be divided into five distinct regions based on common cultural and geographic features: north, east, central, southern, and west.

As early as 3100 B.C.E., North Africa was home to the Ancient Egyptians. This area north of the Sahara has maintained a long and continuous association with Europe and the Arab world. As a result, a large number of modern day North Africans practice Islam and have physical characteristics that resemble southern Europeans and people of Arab descent. The countries of North Africa have largely urban populations.

Just south of Egypt, East Africa is an area of stunning geography and diverse peoples. The East African Rift, or Great Rift Valley, cuts through the length of the region from north to south. This geographic trench is 3,700 miles long and can be viewed from space. It has yielded some of the most groundbreaking finds in the study of human evolution, including the discovery of “Lucy” a 3 million year old australopithecine skeleton of a human ancestor. In modern day, East Africa is home to large cities and small bands of nomadic cattle herders, such as the Maasai people. Economically, it is the meeting point of Arab, Asian, and African traders.

Central Africa is a region of lush rain forests. Its modern day countries include Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Central African Republic. The people of these regions are historically farmers, although many today live and work in large cities. Central Africa was the gravely misrepresented setting of Joseph Conrad’s novella *Heart of Darkness*, which portrayed the area at the time as primitive and sparsely populated. By the time of Conrad’s novella, the area had already established over 400 years of contact and trade with Europeans, starting in 1482 when Portuguese explorer Diego Cão discovered the River Congo. Additionally, Christianity was widely practiced throughout the region by the time of Conrad’s novella, and the Kingdom of Kongo had been in existence as the central power for nearly 500 years.

Like other parts of Africa, southern Africa has had a long and tumultuous history since colonization. Prior to European conquest, southern Africa was host to a
number of kingdoms, including the Sotho Kingdom, Zulu Kingdom, and the kingdom of Great Zimbabwe. These kingdoms rose and fell as they skirmished with neighbors for land and trading rights. The arrival of Europeans put more pressure on the already fractured groups. As settlers scrambled for land and resources, native peoples were caught in the middle, often killed or forced into slavery. A strong sense of white superiority pervaded the area and lasted into the late 20th century in the form of harsh segregation policies like apartheid.

West Africa is geographically divided into desert, savannah, and forest. The northern desert and savannah regions are dry and largely unsuitable for farming, so they are home to a variety of herders and traders. In these regions, Islam is widely practiced. In the southern forest regions of West Africa, farming is a more common economic activity than herding. A combination of factors allowed the people of West Africa to develop large civilizations and extensive trading relationships long before the arrival of Europeans. First, their use of iron tools allowed them to cultivate more extensively, increasing the size of their settlements. Second, an abundance of natural resources, like gold, which were very early on in demand by their European and Arab neighbors, created trade opportunities which brought wealth into the region. Trans-Saharan trade fueled the growth of the Kingdom of Ghana, as well as the empires of Mali and Songhay in the 11th through the 13th centuries.

**Apartheid** was the social and political system of extreme racial segregation utilized by South Africa from 1948 to 1994. The system placed all South Africans into one of three groups: Bantu (black African), Coloured (of mixed race), or white. Policies created under apartheid limited where people could live, work, conduct business, and use public facilities, all based on race. Apartheid also prohibited marriage between races, created separate educational systems based on race, and limited the rights of black Africans to own land, among other things.
Things Fall Apart
Comprehension Check: Historical Context – Africa

Directions: Using the Historical Context article on Africa, answer the following questions fully on a separate piece of paper.

1. Look at a Mercator projection map. What illusions can you detect in this kind of map? If time allows, compare the Mercator projection to a Robinson Projection and to a Winkel Tripel Projection. What similarities and differences do you note among the three? Design a chart to organize your observations.

2. What features are used to divide Africa into its five regions? Why do you suppose language is not used?

3. What evidence demonstrates North Africa’s long and continuous history of contact with the Arab and European worlds?

4. What is the importance of the Great Rift Valley?

5. What modern day groups most likely claim interest in the politics of East Africa? How might their interests be at odds with one another?

6. Explain the roots of apartheid in southern Africa. How might apartheid have created hostility between people of differing races in South Africa?

7. What factors contributed to the growth of large civilizations in West Africa?

8. Why do you think southern Africa did not see the same growth of large, centrally organized civilizations as West and Central Africa before colonization by Europeans?

9. Develop a timeline of inhabitation of Africa based on the article. What conclusions can be drawn based on the information on your timeline?

10. The term “the dark continent”, originally used by the explorer Henry Stanley, was used in the 19th and 20th century by Europeans to describe the largely unknown or mysterious center of Africa. Based on the reading, how is this descriptor an erroneous one?
**Things Fall Apart**

**Historical Context: Colonialism and the Colonial Period in Africa**

In 1884 at the Conference of Berlin, in order to end conflicts created by the “Scramble for Africa,” major European powers negotiated their claims to the continent and its resources. Maps were drawn up that outlined the territories allotted to Great Britain, France, Portugal, and Belgium. Not a single African was present at the conference, and not a single African was consulted about the process that would ultimately direct the fates of nearly 90% of African territories.

By the time these powers agreed to meet, Europeans had effectively surrounded the continent. France and Italy had established colonies across the northern coast of Africa along the Mediterranean. Great Britain and France were establishing themselves on the west coast and Britain particularly in the southern reaches of the continent. Portugal had control over a large portion of the east coast, and Belgium’s King Leopold II had established a frightful dominion in the central Congo region.

With colonies on virtually every coast, Europeans were poised to exploit what they saw as a continent rife with natural resources and a population ready to become avid consumers of European goods. Although Europeans had engaged in trade with Africans for gold, rubber, palm oil, and cocoa enthusiastically since the end of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, their increasing need for raw materials and the often difficult process of acquiring them from natives led many in Europe to believe that there was a need to establish control in the region before their economic competitors sought to do the same.

Getting beyond the coasts was proving challenging. The difficult and often unfamiliar terrains of Africa combined with a host of local diseases to which the Europeans were particularly susceptible, kept most colonists restricted to the coastal areas. Hardy and intrepid explorers who soon became known as heroes in their homelands set out to conquer the continent and discover pathways which later colonizers would follow into the interior. Some were motivated by fame and others by the desire to spread religion. One of the best known explorers was Dr. David Livingstone, who traveled extensively throughout southern Africa. Of his travels and the people he met along the way Livingstone said, “What the African will become after this awfully hard lesson is learned, is among the future developments of Providence. When He, who is higher than the highest, accomplishes His purposes, this will be a wonderful country...” (Livingstone, 1874).

Following the path of these explorers, concessionary companies, such as the British East Africa Company, were granted control as representatives of their governments and allowed to create policy and enact taxation in those areas. The companies hoped to gain significant profits through their enterprise, and the European governments were not forced to repeat the mistakes they had made in the colonizing of the Americas. Because they had seemingly no one to answer to, the companies often enacted harsh laws and used brutal forced labor by natives. It was not long, however, before their cruel treatment decimated local populations and created outrage in Europe.
By this time, the widespread use of quinine to prevent and treat malaria allowed colonists to explore further inland. Now that Europeans were no longer susceptible to the deadly disease, the colonists were able to establish more control over the native populations. The failure of concessionary companies along with the increase in the size of the land and populations under their control required colonial governments. Colonial governments utilized both direct and indirect control of their colonies. Direct control meant that colonies were divided into districts to which an administrator was appointed. These regional administrators controlled taxation, labor and military recruitment, public works, local courts, and education, among other things. This policy was used in French West Africa and the Belgian Congo. In both areas district lines often cut across previously existing ethnic lines and District Administrators worked to dethrone resistant “great chiefs” and appoint in their place more favorable local chiefs. Many problems arose from direct rule, including an insufficient number of colonial administrators relative to the populations under their control, slow and sometimes nonexistent communication across vast areas under colonial control, and problems establishing legitimacy among native populations due to the administrators’ lack of understanding of local languages and customs.

Indirect control attempted to solve the problems of direct rule by establishing control through traditional African authorities. In West Africa, the British had great success with this policy in the northern parts of their colonies, where native central governments had already previously wielded control over vast territories. This alternative method was cheaper than direct rule, since they did not have to pay the African rulers, but allowed them to raise money by taxing their subjects instead. Additionally, at least in theory, the practice would respect native customs, lines of power, and the “sanctity of the tribe.” Unfortunately, the idea that native peoples could be sorted and categorized into distinctive “tribes” with set regional boundaries and customs was flawed. In reality, the cultural identities of Africans are not always as neatly delineated as the colonial administrators had hoped. In regions like southern West Africa, where power was never centralized, but instead was in the hands of individual village councils, colonial administrators appointed individual rulers. These “warrant chiefs” usually had no experience in administration and were often replaced by more favorable appointees if they failed to live up to the colonial governor’s expectations.

Colonialism was not concluded in Africa until the end of the 20th century. This occurred piecemeal throughout the continent in a series of revolutions that drove colonial governments from the countries they had established. These countries, which were formed without the consent of their people and represented a collection of fractured cultural groups, were unstable from their inception. The long process of recovery from colonial rule is still underway throughout the continent.
Things Fall Apart
Comprehension Check: Historical Context—Colonialism and the Colonial Period in Africa

Directions: Using the Historical Context article on Colonialism and the Colonial Period in Africa, answer the following questions fully on a separate piece of paper.

1. What was the purpose of the Conference of Berlin?

2. How did explorers like Dr. David Livingstone help to open up the continent for European exploration?

3. How did the introduction of quinine affect colonial policy?

4. What were the negative consequences of using concessionary companies?

5. What are the benefits of indirect rule versus direct rule? What advantages do you think direct rule would have over indirect rule?

6. What assumptions underpinned the policy of “the Bible and the plough”? How might this policy create additional conflict between colonizers and colonized?

7. Why did colonial governments appoint warrant chiefs in southern West Africa?

8. How could one counter the argument that colonialism destroyed traditional structures?

9. The year is 1882. Develop a brief argument from the perspective of a European merchant as to why your government should participate in the “Scramble for Africa.”

10. Find a present day newspaper article reporting on events out of Africa. Hypothesize how the events or people in the article would be different if Europe had not colonized the continent.
Things Fall Apart
Historical Context: Nigeria

The country of Nigeria was officially created in 1914, when the British amalgamated the existing “three Nigerias” – Lagos Colony, the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria – into a single administrative colony. Independent Nigeria is currently made up of 36 administrative states. It is three times the size of California, and it has the largest population of any modern African country.

Pre-Colonization
Prior to colonization, the area of modern day Nigeria was comprised of many independent states under various forms of government, with first settlements dating back thousands of years. The first evidence of inhabitation in what would become the modern day country dates back to c. 12,000 B.C.E. during the Stone Age. Iron-smelting sites unearthed by archaeologists suggest that around c. 500 B.C.E. the region entered its Iron Age. The ability to extract and work with iron allowed West African peoples to make better tools and weapons that would give them an economic and military advantage over their neighbors. This advance represents a developmental landmark that would lead to the growth of large civilizations. With tools of iron, farmers were able to cultivate more land, thereby making it possible to feed larger populations with fewer land resources. By 200 C.E., these civilizations began to appear in the form of cities and villages.

The first large kingdoms of Nigeria arose between 1000 and 1500 C.E. while Europe was still working its way out of the Dark Ages. The kingdoms of Oyo and Benin both relied on strong central administrations and military power to maintain control over vast regions. The Oyo Kingdom was established by the Yoruba people. Its location made it possible for the Kings of Oyo to control trade routes between the Hausa Muslims to the north and the people of the Niger Bend. In the 15th century, the oba, or king, of Benin established trade with Portugal and brought guns to his kingdom. Until the 19th century, Benin, like many other African Kingdoms, was heavily involved in slave trade, providing Europeans with captives in exchange for guns, cloth, alcohol, tobacco, and other items.

While the northern regions were heavily centralized, the cultures of the southern regions, among them the Igbo (Ibo), Isoko, Urhobo, and Ibibio, were built around non-centralized villages and towns. In these towns and villages, power was often distributed among elders who had gained the authority and respect of their people over their lifetimes. The non-centralized towns had no standing armies.

Whether centralized or non-centralized, the peoples of Nigeria share common characteristics that have allowed them to interact and trade with one another over many centuries. The people tend to be polygamous with large families that ensure the availability of labor, since the family is the main unit of production. Slavery existed in the region at the time of European arrival; however, slaves were
considered part of the family unit and could regain their freedom – a sharp contrast to New World slavery.

The economies of Nigeria have always had a strong agricultural base, though some rely more heavily on farming while others tend toward herding. Many skilled craftworkers working with iron, ceramic, leather, and textiles provided necessary manufactured goods that were traded throughout the region. The location of trade was a central, open air marketplace that served either the village or the area. Village markets were open daily. Area markets that served a number of villages were open only on certain market days that did not compete with nearby area markets. Thus, they were not competitive with one another. These area markets drew merchants across a string of villages following their market days. In this way, trade within the region was linked to areas as far away as across the Sahara desert.

The Arrival of the Europeans
The first contact with Europeans came in the late 15th century with the arrival of Portuguese traders seeking a safe route to India. Although the Portuguese promoted Christianity wherever they traveled, they did not make the spread of religion one of their primary goals. Their interests remained purely economic. In 1480, a Portuguese ship left the area with 400 slaves aboard as part of their return cargo. This officially marked the beginning of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Over the next 400 years, over 6 million people were exported from the areas of modern day Nigeria to work on New World plantations. The consequences for the region were devastating and far reaching. Many Africans who participated by providing slaves formed a new wealthy elite that undermined the agricultural base. In exchange for captives, they received European goods, especially guns, which gave them the power to capture more slaves. The non-centralized regions with no standing armies were especially hard hit. They experienced extensive population loss, which deprived them of the most virile of their populations. Over time, agriculture and trade suffered as the necessary manpower to maintain them was depleted. People in non-centralized villages also became less trusting of strangers, who often had no interest in trading anything other than slaves.

Growing British Power
By 1807, when the British Parliament outlawed the slave trade, the area of West Africa that would become Nigeria was effectively devastated. Still, between 1807 and 1870, nearly one million additional slaves were illegally taken from the region. In an attempt to end the slave trade, the British navy patrolled the coasts in search of slave ships, although conflicts over the trade continually drew them into the coastal port of Lagos. They negotiated treaties and worked to resolve erupting conflicts. Untraded slaves were made to work producing raw materials for British export.

Two of the main exports from this region were palm oil and palm kernels, which the area of the Niger Delta produced abundantly. In addition to being useful in the production of soaps and candles, palm kernels were popular a cattle fodder and
palm oil was used to grease machinery in the large factories that had sprung up across Europe. The British saw their colonial interests in Nigeria as a chance to gain control over the “palm trade”.

In 1861, the British established a consular authority in Lagos which was to interfere in local politics if they threatened British interests in the region. To maintain their power, the British used a system of indirect rule, whereby colonial officials advised local rulers and offered gifts in exchange for their cooperation. In the southern non-centralized regions, “warrant chiefs” were appointed to see that British interests were protected. The goal was to minimize opposition to British rule. Eventually, indigenous laws that were not conducive to colonization were thrown out entirely. “Courts of Equity” took the place of local customs to determine judicial matters and ensured that local politics and economic activities favored the British. In 1897, the British successfully invaded the empire of Benin, ensuring that theirs was the only centralized power in the southern region.

In the north, the Royal Niger Company, a concessionary company formed under a charter of the British government, attempted to follow in the footsteps of the British East India Company and pursue trading interests in the Niger region. Unfortunately, the company’s interests were short-lived for after conquering several small emirates and establishing treaties with the Sultan of Sokoto and the Emir of Gwandu they sold their interests to the British government. The West African Frontier Force was quickly formed and Captain Frederick Lugard was made High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria. Lugard’s forces quickly conquered the northern emirates and installed kings who would be sympathetic to the British.

The Resistance
The people of Nigeria were not naïve about the British encroachment into their territories. Especially in the northern areas with centralized governments, news of colonial activity in other parts of Africa was widespread. Many people, even in the non-centralized areas, fought colonial control with every means at their disposal. Among the Igbo, a secret society known as the Ekumeku arose to fight British colonial control. Although they had some success, the British put down the movement by arresting its leaders and destroying their villages. Attempts were also made to spread resistance by means of pamphlets and newspapers which spoke out against the British colonial invasion.

In the end, the British were better mobilized with better weapons. Although the resistance never fully ended, many people saw the futility of resistance in the face of a stronger power. Some saw colonization as a chance for modernization, and, indeed, Nigerians did experience certain gains during this period. The British expanded trade in the region and established missionary schools. The school system created a new elite class of professionals based on a Western model. Scholarship gained value and many native languages were committed to writing for the first time, allowing histories to be recorded as they hadn’t been before. Lastly, through their struggles against colonial power and their expanded ties to the largest
region, the people of Nigeria gained a sense of nationalism that would eventually give them the strength to become an independent nation.

**Modern Nigeria**

On October 1, 1960, after hardships and scarcities imposed by economic depression of the 1920s and 30s, the first and second World Wars, and numerous labor union strikes, Nigeria gained independence after nearly 70 years of colonial rule. Since its independence, Nigeria has seen years of instability interspersed with brief periods of democratic rule. The republic established in 1963 was ended after only three years by a military coup. A series of power changes followed over the next 33 years, during most of which time military dictators held the reins of the country.

In 1967, Nigeria experienced civil war when the largely Igbo southwestern region attempted to secede to form the independent state of Biafra. The rebellion ended in 1970, when the leaders of the revolution surrendered. It is estimated that up to 3 million people died as a result of fighting, disease, and starvation during the 30 month conflict.

A military dictatorship remained in control throughout this time and afterwards. In 1999, Nigerian democracy was re-established with the election of Olusegun Obasanjo.
Things Fall Apart
Comprehension Check: Historical Context—Nigeria

Directions: Using the Historical Context article on Nigeria, answer the following questions fully on a separate piece of paper.

1. How did the developmental landmark of the Iron Age help lead to the development of large settlements in early Nigeria?

2. What factors allowed the Kingdoms of Oyo and Benin to establish control over large regions of the Niger Bend?

3. Use the chart below to compare and contrast the effects of the slave trade on large kingdoms versus non-centralized villages. What conclusions can you draw from your chart?

4. What was the purpose of the “Courts of Equity”? As a native person, what might your response be to these courts?

5. What effects of colonization later became factors in the modernization and independence of Nigeria?

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<th>Slave Trade</th>
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©2012 Secondary Solutions - 21 - Things Fall Apart Literature Guide
From The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African
Written by Himself

Manners, Customs, and Administration of Justice

My father was one of those elders or chiefs I have spoken of, and was styled Embrenche; a term, as I remember, importing the highest distinction, and signifying in our language a mark of grandeur. This mark is conferred on the person entitled to it, by cutting the skin across at the top of the forehead, and drawing it down to the eye-brows; and while it is in this situation applying a warm hand and rubbing it until it shrinks up into a thick weal across the lower part of the forehead. Most of the judges and senators we thus marked; my father had long bore it: I had seen it conferred on one of my brothers, and I was also destined to receive it by my parents. Those Embrence, or chief men, decided disputes and punished crimes; for which purpose they always assembled together. The proceedings were generally short; and in most cases the law of retaliation prevailed. I remember a man was brought before my father, and the other judges, for kidnapping a boy; and, although he was the son of a chief or senator, he was condemned to make recompense by a man or woman slave. Adultery, however, was sometimes punished with slavery or death; a punishment which I believe is inflicted on it throughout most of the nations of Africa: so sacred among them is the honour of the marriage bed, and so jealous are they of the fidelity of their wives. Of this I recollect an instance:—a woman was convicted before the judges of adultery, and delivered over, as the custom was, to her husband to be punished. Accordingly he determined to put her to death: but it being found, just before her execution, that she had an infant at her breast; and no woman being prevailed on to perform the part of a nurse, she was spared on account of the child. The men, however, do not preserve the same constancy to their wives, which they expect from them; for they indulge in a plurality, though seldom in more than two.
Marriage Ceremony, and Public Entertainments

Their mode of marriage is thus: both parties are usually betrothed when young by their parents, (though I have known the males to betroth themselves). On this occasion a feast is prepared, and the bride and bridegroom stand up in the midst of all their friends, who are assembled for the purpose, while he declares she is thenceforth to be looked upon as his wife, and that no other person is to pay any addresses to her. This is also immediately proclaimed in the vicinity, on which the bride retires from the assembly. Some time after she is brought home to her husband, and then another feast is made, to which the relations of both parties are invited; her parents then deliver her to the bridegroom, accompanied with a number of blessings, and at the same time they tie round her waist a cotton string of the thickness of a goose-quill, which none but married women are permitted to wear: she is now considered as completely his wife; and at this time the dowry is given to the new married pair, which generally consists of portions of land, slaves, and cattle, household goods, and implements of husbandry. These are offered by the friends of both parties, besides which the parents of the bridegroom present gifts to those of the bride, whose property she is looked upon before marriage; but after it she is esteemed the sole property of her husband. The ceremony being now ended, the festival begins, which is celebrated with bonfires, and loud acclamations of joy, accompanied with music and dancing.

We are almost a nation of dancers, musicians, and poets. Thus every great event, such as a triumphant return from battle, or other cause of public rejoicing is celebrated in public dances, which are accompanied with songs and music suited to the occasion. The assembly is separated into four divisions, which dance either apart or in succession, and each with a character peculiar to itself. The first division contains the married men, who in their dances frequently exhibit feats of arms, and the representation of a battle. To these succeed the married women, who dance in the second division. The young men occupy the third; and the maidens the fourth. Each represents some interesting scene of real life, such as a great achievement, domestic employment, a pathetic story, or some rural sport; and as the subject is generally founded on some recent event, it is therefore ever new. This gives our dances a spirit and variety which I have scarcely seen elsewhere. We have many musical instruments, particularly drums of different kinds, a piece of music which resembles a guitar, and another much like a stickado. These last are chiefly used by betrothed virgins, who play on them on all grand festivals.

Mode of Living and Dress

As our manners are simple, our luxuries are few. The dress of both sexes is nearly the same. It generally consists of a long piece of callico, or muslin, wrapped loosely round the body, somewhat in the form of a highland plaid. This is usually dyed blue, which is our favourite colour. It is extracted from a berry, and is brighter and richer than any I have seen in Europe. Besides this, our women of distinction wear golden ornaments; which they dispose with some profusion on their arms and legs. When our women are not employed with the men in tillage, their usual occupation is spinning and weaving cotton, which they afterwards dye, and make it into garments. They also manufacture earthen vessels, of which we have many kinds. Among the rest, tobacco pipes, made after the same fashion, and used in the same manner, as those in Turkey.

Our manner of living is entirely plain; for as yet the natives are unacquainted with those refinements in cookery which debauch the taste: bullocks, goats, and poultry, supply the greatest part of their food. These constitute likewise the principal wealth of the country, and the chief articles of its commerce. The flesh is usually stewed in a pan; to make it savoury we sometimes use also pepper, and other spices, and we have salt made of wood ashes. Our vegetables are mostly plantains, eadas, yams, beans, and Indian corn. The
head of the family usually eats alone; his wives and slaves have also their separate tables. Before we taste food we always wash our hands; indeed our cleanliness on all occasions is extreme; but on this it is an indispensable ceremony. After washing, libation is made, by pouring out a small portion of the food, in a certain place, for the spirits of departed relations, which the natives suppose to preside over their conduct, and guard them from evil. They are totally unacquainted with strong or spirituous liquors; and their principal beverage is palm wine. This is gotten from a tree of that name by tapping it at the top, and fastening a large gourd to it; and sometimes one tree will yield three or four gallons in a night. When just drawn it is of a most delicious sweetness; but in a few days it acquires a tartish and more spirituous flavour: though I never saw any one intoxicated by it. The same tree also produces nuts and oil. Our principal luxury is in perfumes; one sort of these is an odoriferous wood of delicious fragrance: the other a kind of earth; a small portion of which thrown into the fire diffuses a most powerful odour. We beat this wood into powder, and mix it with palm oil; with which both men and women perfume themselves.

Buildings and Manufacturers

In our buildings we study convenience rather than ornament. Each master of a family has a large square piece of ground, surrounded with a moat or fence, or enclosed with a wall made of red earth tempered; which, when dry, is as hard as brick. Within this are his houses to accommodate his family and slaves; which, if numerous, frequently present the appearance of a village. In the middle stands the principal building, appropriated to the sole use of the master, and consisting of two apartments; in one of which he sits in the day with his family, the other is left apart for the reception of his friends. He has besides these a distinct apartment in which he sleeps, together with his male children. On each side are the apartments of his wives, who have also their separate day and night houses. The habitations of the slaves and their families are distributed throughout the rest of the enclosure. These houses never exceed one story in height: they are always built of wood, or stakes driven into the ground, crossed with wattles, and neatly plastered within, and without. The roof is thatched with reeds. Our day-houses are left open at the sides; but those in which we sleep are always covered, and plastered in the inside, with a composition mixed with cow-dung, to keep off the different insects, which annoy us during the night. The walls and floors also of these are generally covered with mats. Our beds consist of a platform, raised three or four feet from the ground, on which are laid skins, and different parts of a spungy tree called plaintain. Our covering is calico or muslin, the same as our dress. The usual seats are a few logs of wood; but we have benches, which are generally perfumed, to accommodate strangers: these compose the greater part of our household furniture. Houses so constructed and furnished require but little skill to erect them. Every man is a sufficient architect for the purpose. The whole neighbourhood afford their unanimous assistance in building them and in return receive, and expect no other recompense than a feast.

As we live in a country where nature is prodigal of her favours, our wants are few and easily supplied; of course we have few manufactures. They consist for the most part of calicoes, earthen ware, ornaments, and instruments of war and husbandry. But these make no part of our commerce, the principal articles of which, as I have observed, are provisions. In such a state money is of little use; however we have some small pieces of coin, if I may call them such. They are made something like an anchor; but I do not remember either their value or denomination. We have also markets, at which I have been frequently with my mother. These are sometimes visited by stout mahogany-coloured men from the south west of us: we call them Oye-Eboe, which term signifies red men living at a distance. They generally bring us fire-arms, gunpowder, hats, beads, and dried fish. The last we esteemed a great rarity, as our waters were only brooks and springs. These articles they barter with us for odoriferous woods and earth, and our salt of wood ashes. They always carry slaves
through our land; but the strictest account is exacted of their manner of procuring them before they are suffered to pass. Sometimes indeed we sold slaves to them, but they were only prisoners of war, or such among us as had been convicted of kidnapping, or adultery, and some other crimes, which we esteemed heinous. This practice of kidnapping induces me to think, that, notwithstanding all our strictness, their principal business among us was to trepan our people.

Religion
As to religion, the natives believe that there is one Creator of all things, and that he lives in the sun, and is girted round with a belt that he may never eat or drink; but, according to some, he smokes a pipe, which is our own favourite luxury. They believe he governs events, especially our deaths or captivity; but, as for the doctrine of eternity, I do not remember to have ever heard of it: some however believe in the transmigration of souls in a certain degree. Those spirits, which are not transmigrated, such as our dear friends or relations, they believe always attend them, and guard them from the bad spirits or their foes. For this reason they always before eating, as I have observed, put some small portion of the meat, and pour some of their drink, on the ground for them; and they often make oblations of the blood of beasts or fowls at their graves. Though we had no places of public worship, we had priests and magicians, or wise men. I do not remember whether they had different offices, or whether they were united in the same persons, but they were held in great reverence by the people. They calculated our time, and foretold events, as their name imported, for we called them Ah-affoe-way-cah, which signifies calculators or yearly men, our year being called Ah-affoe. They wore their beards, and when they died they were succeeded by their sons. Most of their implements and things of value were interred along with them. Pipes and tobacco were also put into the grave with the corpse, which was always perfumed and ornamented, and animals were offered in sacrifice to them.

Conclusion
As to the difference of colour between the Eboan Africans and the modern Jews, I shall not presume to account for it. It is a subject which has engaged the pens of men of both genius and learning, and is far above my strength. The most able and Reverend Mr. T. Clarkson, however, in his much admired Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, has ascertained the cause, in a manner that at once solves every objection on that account, and, on my mind at least, has produced the fullest conviction. I shall therefore refer to that performance for the theory, contenting myself with extracting a fact as related by Dr. Mitchel. "The Spaniards, who have inhabited America, under the torrid zone, for any time, are become as dark coloured as our native Indians of Virginia; of which I myself have been a witness." There is also another instance of a Portuguese settlement at Mitomba, a river in Sierra Leone; where the inhabitants are bred from a mixture of the first Portuguese discoverers with the natives, and are now become in their complexion, and in the woolly quality of their hair, perfect negroes, retaining however a smattering of the Portuguese language. These instances, and a great many more which might be adduced, while they shew how the complexions of the same persons vary in different climates, it is hoped may tend also to remove the prejudice that some conceive against the natives of Africa on account of their colour... Let the polished and haughty European recollect that his ancestors were once, like the Africans, uncivilized, and even barbarous. Did Nature make them inferior to their sons? and should they too have been made slaves? Every rational mind answers, No. Let such reflections as these melt the pride of their superiority into sympathy for the wants and miseries of their sable brethren, and compel them to acknowledge, that understanding is not confined to feature or colour.
Things Fall Apart
Comprehension Check: Olaudah Equiano – Ibo Slave

Directions: Using the article by Olaudah Equiano, answer the following questions fully on a separate piece of paper.

1. Based on Equiano’s description of the laws and justice system of his people, infer a hierarchy of values that their society is based on.

2. Equiano describes many activities and traditions of his people. To which, if any, of these activities do you believe an 18th Century European reader might be able to relate? Explain your answer.

3. What does Equiano mean when he refers to the “doctrine of eternity” and “transmigration of souls”?

4. To what cause does Equiano attribute the difference in skin tone between Africans and Europeans? What fallacies exist in his argument?

5. What is Equiano’s primary argument against slavery in its European form?

6. One of the facets of slavery was that it dehumanized its victims. How might Equiano’s narrative be effective or ineffective in re-humanizing captured Africans?

7. In light of Equiano’s description of his people, evaluate the following statement. “Let the polished and haughty European recollect that his ancestors were once, like the Africans, uncivilized and even barbarous.” What biases are evident in this statement? How might the statement be viewed as ironic?
**Name ___________________________  Period _______**

**Things Fall Apart**  
**Standards Focus: Allusions**

**Epigraph**  
Source: “The Second Coming”, William Butler Yeats  
Significance: Yeats’ poem is the source from which Achebe takes the novel’s title. In the poem, Yeats expresses a belief that the 2,000 year era of Christianity is at an end. This is a particularly meaningful parallel since in *Things Fall Apart* the Igbo people face the potential destruction of their gods and beliefs.

“He remembered the story she often told of the quarrel between Earth and Sky long ago, and how Sky withheld rain for seven years…” p. 53  
Source: Igbo oral tradition  
Significance: Nwoye listens to his father tell “masculine stories of violence and bloodshed” while remembering sadly the tales his mother used to tell, like the story of the quarrel between the Earth and the Sky. The story serves to characterize the differences between Nwoye and his father — e.g. Okonkwo loves violence while Nwoye enjoys creativity. In the larger myth, the conflict between the Earth and Sky symbolizes the growing conflict between father and son. Nwoye can also be seen as the vulture in the parable, who flies away in shame “to a distant land, from where he espied a fire.” A man is making a sacrifice, and so the vulture eats the entrails left over from the slaughter. Later, Nwoye will ally himself with a religion which may also be seen as feasting on those things the Igbo have thrown away, such as infant twins and the ‘dreaded osu,’ who the Christians welcome into the church.

“…giant trees and climbers which perhaps had stood from the beginning of things, untouched by the axe or bushfire.” p. 59  
Source: *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad  
Significance: Conrad’s novel, which no doubt was one of Achebe’s motivations for writing *Things Fall Apart*, notoriously portrays Africa as primitive and her people in no less than racist terms. Conrad writes, “Going up that river was like traveling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings.” (*Heart of Darkness*, 46) Ironically, the passage in *Things Fall Apart* that contains this reference describes the journey of the village men as they prepare to sacrifice Ikemefuna, an act Achebe portrays in savage terms.

**Locusts** - “For although locusts had not visited Umuofia for many years, everybody knew by instinct that they were very good to eat.” p. 56; “[The Oracle] said that other white men were on their way. They were locusts…” pp. 138-139  
Source: The Bible: Exodus  
Significance: In Exodus, God sends ten plagues to devastate Egypt and convince the pharaoh to free the Israelites from slavery. The eighth plague is a plague of locusts. God orders the pharaoh, “Let my people go, so that they may worship me. If you refuse to let them go, I will bring locusts into your country tomorrow. They will cover the face of the
ground so that it cannot be seen. They will devour what little you have left after the hail, including every tree that is growing in your fields. They will fill your houses…” (Exodus10:3-6)

In *Things Fall Apart* the arrival of the first very real swarm of locusts is met with excitement. The people realize that the locusts are edible and delicious. This is an ironic contradiction to the plague of locusts in Exodus. The second reference refers to the arriving white men as “locusts.” In later chapters we see that they do, indeed “devour what little” Okonkwo has left and even invade his house when they convert Nwoye.

“Eze elina, elina! (King, do not eat [it], do not eat!)
Sala (Sala)
Eze iilikwa ya (King, if you eat it)
Ikwaba akwa oligholi (You will weep for the abomination)
Ebe Danda nechi eze (Where Danda [white ant] installs king)
Ebe Uzuzu nete egwu (Where Uzuzu [Dust] dances to the drums)
Sala (Sala)” (Obiechina 209)

Significance: This is the song sung by Nwoye as he walks in the forest toward his doom. It is a well-known song among the Igbo, and would be recognized, though Achebe does not offer a translation into English. Seeing the translation gives us a hint as to the importance of this song in foreshadowing events to come. The king in the song, like Okonkwo, is warned not to do something which will break a cultural taboo. For Okonkwo, this means participating in the killing of one who calls him “father.” The song tells us Okonkwo will “weep for the abomination” if he goes through with his task, and that “white ants” will install a king. In the end, Okonkwo and the King will be “dust” dancing to a lone drum.

“The only course open to Okonkwo was to flee from the clan….He could return to the clan after seven years.” p. 124

Source: The Bible: Exodus

Significance: In the biblical Exodus, Moses leads his people out of Egypt. It is on this journey that God reveals himself to Moses and offers the Israelites a Covenant: follow His law, and he will lead them to the Promised Land. Likewise, in Achebe’s novel, it is during his period of “exodus” that the Christians reveal themselves and offer a covenant of their own: follow our God, and we will offer you protection and prestige. Unlike Moses, Okonkwo refuses the covenant and returns after exile to find that his “Promised Land” has been desecrated by the newcomers.

“Mother Kite once sent her daughter to bring food…” p. 140

Source: Igbo oral tradition

Significance: This tale, told after the story of Abame, is usually told to explain why kites will eat chickens, but not ducks. In the novel, it is translated into a reminder of a cardinal rule of Igbo society — that is that travelers are meant to be protected and allowed to pass unharmed. Within the Igbo belief system, travelers are protected by some of the most
ferocious deities, and so injuring a traveler “who says nothing,” in other words who is minding his own business, is an affront to the gods.

“...brothers who lived in darkness and fear, ignorant of the Love of God. It told of one sheep out on the hills, away from the gates and from the tender shepherd’s care.” p. 146

Significance: The reference to Jesus as a shepherd is taken from the Book of John, in which Christ is quoted as saying, “I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and I'm known by my own; even as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep, which are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will hear my voice. They will become one flock with one shepherd.” (John 10:11-18)

In this passage from Things Fall Apart, Nwoye first hears the sermons of the Christians and is drawn into the “fold” by it. It is significant that the song the Christians sing is of “brothers who lived in darkness,” which is an internal reference to an earlier passage in the book which says Nwoye and Ikemefuna “sat in darkness” as they listened to the war-like tales of their father. Nwoye recognizes himself in the song, and this is what captivates him.

“Blessed is he who forsakes his father and mother for my sake” p. 152

Significance: Mr. Kiaga welcomes Nwoye into the church with these words, which resemble Matthew 19:29; “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.” During the time of Jesus, those who chose to follow him were often required to leave home and family, to give up everything with the promise of receiving “a hundred times as much” and eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven. In this passage, Nwoye has chosen to turn his back on his father and culture in order to follow the Christians.

“He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision.” p. 156

Significance: Mr. Kiaga directly quotes Psalm 2:4 in response to the new converts’ fears that allowing osu among them will cause them to be ridiculed by the people of the village. The passage tells us that, despite the goings on or protests of men, God’s plans will continue on, with or without them. It is meant to be a call for faith, but also signals to the reader that the force of Christianity is unstoppable, despite the protests of the Igbo. Whether they want it or not, God is coming to their lands.

“...an abominable religion has settled among you...” p. 167

Significance: During their exodus in the desert, Moses leaves the Israelites to commune with God on Mount Sinai. In his absence, the people begin to worship a false god in the form of a
golden calf. It is also during Okonkwo’s absence that the people of Umuofia begin to worship what he considers a “false god.”

“...like a madman had cut the anklet of his titles...” p. 174

Source: The Bible: Isaiah 3:16

Significance: In Isaiah, God says, “The women of Zion are haughty, walking along with outstretched necks, flirting with their eyes; tripping along with mincing steps, with ornaments jingling on their ankles.” (Isaiah 3:16) This passage considers the jewelry of the women as false adornments, displays of pride and wickedness. Because they do not cast them off, God casts them off for them by condemning their people to slavery.

Upon Okonkwo’s return he learns that Ogbuefi Ugonna, a respected man of the village, has joined the Christians, cutting off his anklets as a symbol that he is turning away from his old beliefs. Okonkwo chooses not to and, like the women of Zion, will face God’s wrath.

“He saw things as black and white.” p. 184

Source: Heart of Darkness, Joseph Conrad

Significance: Conrad’s novel repeatedly uses the theme of black versus white to distinguish between the civilized and the primitive. Marlowe refers to the native men who accompany him as “black fellows” (Conrad 140) and “our blacks” (Conrad 141). He makes no distinction between different tribal or cultural groups. For Marlowe and Conrad, just like Mr. Brown, there are only two types of men: “black and white. And black was evil.”

“He spoke in his sermons...about wheat and tares.” p. 184

Source: The Bible: Matthew 13:30

Significance: Matthew 13 contains a parable in which a servant asks his master if they should pull the weeds from the wheat fields while they are still small. The master replies, “Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.” If the wheat in this analogy is the faithful, then the tares (or weeds) are sinners and non-believers. In other words, one should not try to cull out sinners from his followers, because, when the time comes, Christ will make that distinction.

It is ironic that Mr. Brown would speak of “wheat and tares,” since this passage of the Bible instructs followers to be accepting of all and allow Christ to make his own judgments.

“He believed in slaying the prophets of Baal.” p. 184

Source: The Bible: 2 Kings 10:19

Significance: In the Christian Bible, “Baal” is a name given to any number of patron deities of the cities of the ancient Hebrew world. In 2 Kings 10:19, Jehu plans to slay all the prophets of Baal, and orders, “Now summon all the prophets of Baal, all his ministers and all his priests. See that no one is missing, because I am going to hold a great sacrifice for Baal. Anyone who fails to come will no longer live.”

In this passage, Mr. Brown is equated with Jehu, who is willing to use deception to draw his enemies in before he destroys them. We know Mr. Brown is not to be trusted.
Things Fall Apart
Standards Focus: Proverbs

A proverb is a short pithy saying in general use, stating a general truth or piece of advice.

Directions: Read each of the following proverbs, pausing for a few moments after each one to see if you can interpret its meaning.

Chapter 1
1. He who brings kola brings life, p. 6
2. Proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten, p. 7
3. The sun will shine on those who stand before it shines on those who kneel under them, p. 8
4. If a child washes his hands he can eat with kings, p. 8

Chapter 2
When the moon is shining the cripple becomes hungry for a walk, p. 10

Chapter 3
1. Let the kite perch and let the eagle perch too. If one says no to the other, let his wing break, p. 19
2. A toad does not run in the daytime for nothing, p. 20
3. An old woman is always uneasy when dry bones are mentioned in a proverb, p. 21
4. The lizard that jumped from the high iroko tree to the ground said he would praise himself if no one else did, p. 21
5. You can tell a ripe corn by its look, p. 22
6. A proud heart can survive a general failure because such a failure does not prick its pride, p. 24

Chapter 4
1. Looking at a king’s mouth one would think he never sucked at his mother’s breast, p. 26
2. Those whose palm-kernels are cracked for him by a benevolent spirit should not forget to be humble, p. 26
3. When a man says yes his chi says yes also, p. 27
4. They called him the little bird nza who so forgot himself after a meal that he challenged his chi, p. 31

Chapter 8
1. A chick that will grow into a cock can be spotted the very day it hatches, p. 66
2. A child’s fingers are not scalded by a piece of hot yam which its mother puts into its palm, p. 67
3. When mother-cow is chewing grass its young ones watch its mouth, p. 70
4. If I fall down for you and you fall down for me, it is play, p. 73
Name ______________________________________  Period ______

Chapter 11
A baby on its mother’s back does not know that the way is long, p. 101

Chapter 15
There is nothing to fear from someone who shouts, p. 140

Chapter 17
Blessed is he who forsakes his father and mother for my sake, p. 152

Chapter 18
He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, p. 156

Chapter 19
1. I cannot live on the bank of the river and wash my hands with spittle, p. 165
2. An animal rubs its itching flank against a tree, a man asks his kinsman to scratch him, p. 165
3. A child cannot pay for its mother’s milk, p. 166

Chapter 22
1. Narrow is the way and few the number, p. 184
2. As a man dances, so the drums are beaten for him, p. 185

Chapter 24
Whenever you see a toad jumping in broad daylight, then know something is after its life, p. 203

Activity #1: Survey friends and family to create a list of five to eight modern-day proverbs and their meanings. Present your findings in a poster, web page, PowerPoint, etc.

Activity #2: Research the meanings of five of the proverbs from the list. Once you have identified the message, use your own background knowledge or research to find a similar saying from another culture. Present your findings in a poster, web page, PowerPoint, etc.
Things Fall Apart
Vocabulary List

Directions: Use a dictionary or the author’s words to find the meanings of the following words from Things Fall Apart. Your teacher will direct you to do this lesson either as you read each chapter, or as a pre-reading activity. Whatever method your teacher chooses, be sure to keep this list and your definitions to use in vocabulary exercises and to study for quizzes and tests.

Chapters 1-3
1. haggard, p. 4
2. plaintive, p. 6
3. mirth, p. 7
4. prowess, p. 8
5. amiss, p. 9
6. capricious, p. 13
7. idleness, p. 13
8. incipient, p. 13
9. abomination, p. 18
10. meagre, p. 22

Chapters 4-6
1. alone, p. 27
2. provoked, p. 29
3. repentant, p. 31
4. deftly, p. 32
5. arduous, p. 34
6. poignant, p. 34
7. tentative, p. 38
8. subdued, p. 42
9. taut, p. 48
10. miscalculation, p. 50

Chapters 7-8
1. kindled, p. 52
2. feigned, p. 52
3. emissary, p. 53
4. rebuked, p. 54
5. harbingers, p. 56
6. copiously, p. 56
7. expelled, p. 66
8. threshold, p. 68
9. suitor, p. 70
10. haggle, p. 73

Chapters 9-11
1. audacity, p. 76
2. devoid, p. 77
3. listless, p. 79
4. communal, p. 87
5. pandemonium, p. 88
6. esoteric, p. 88
7. approbation, p. 91
8. delectable, p. 98
9. consolations, p. 103
10. vigor, p. 104

Chapters 12-13
1. tripods, p. 112
2. closefisted, p. 116
3. sediment, p. 120
4. lamentation, p. 120
5. tremulous, p. 121
6. infirm, p. 122
7. rites, p. 122
8. tumult, p. 122
9. inadvertent, p. 124
10. calamity, p. 125

Chapters 14-16
1. refuge, p. 129
2. requisite, p. 129
3. banished, p. 135
4. fugitives, p. 138
5. beckoning, p. 138
6. omenous, p. 140
7. converts, p. 143
8. benevolently, p. 145
9. enthralled, p. 146
10. parched, p. 147

Chapters 17-19
1. persevered, p. 148
2. sinister, p. 148
3. infant, p. 150
4. impudent, p. 150
5. perturbed, p. 151
6. miscraint, p. 152
7. annihilation, p. 153
8. degenerate, p. 153
9. impotent, p. 154
10. revered, p. 157

Chapters 20-21
1. flourished, p. 171
2. amends, p. 172
3. resilient, p. 172
4. buoyant, p. 173
5. arrogant, p. 174
6. mean, p. 175
7. dispensation, p. 178
8. restrain, p. 178
9. expedient, p. 178
10. prestige, p. 182

Chapters 22-23
1. sacraments, p. 184
2. desecrated, p. 186
3. uninitiated, p. 186
4. imminent, p. 188
5. discordant, p. 188
6. pacified, p. 191
7. dominion, p. 194
8. pauper, p. 195
9. sonorous, p. 196
10. appeal, p. 197

Chapters 24-25
1. astir, p. 199
2. warder, p. 199
3. derived, p. 200
4. orator, p. 202
5. sacrilege, p. 203
6. tumultuous, p. 205
7. superfluous, p. 206
8. resolute, p. 207
9. primitive, p. 207
10. pacification, p. 209
**Things Fall Apart**  
**Anticipation Activity**

*Directions*: Read the statements below carefully. Each one is related to themes or conflicts you will read about in *Things Fall Apart*. In the column to the right, rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement on a scale of 1 to 6, 1 being "Strongly Disagree" and 6 being "Strongly Agree." Be prepared to support your reasoning.

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<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
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<td>Success in life comes from working hard.</td>
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<td>Manhood is first and foremost defined by one's ability to protect and provide for his family.</td>
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<td>There are specific ways in which a man should act, and any divergence can be judged as a sign of weakness.</td>
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<td>Cultural change is inevitable; therefore, people should be less devoted to tradition.</td>
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<td>Cultures can be classified as more primitive or less primitive.</td>
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<td>Fear can be a positive force, motivating people to follow moral paths.</td>
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<td>It's always appropriate to help those who are needy, whether or not they ask for help.</td>
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<td>When dealing with other cultures, traditional systems should always be respected, even if those systems violate our conception of right and wrong.</td>
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<td>One's destiny cannot be changed.</td>
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<td>A culture that is less technologically advanced than ours will generally have a less advanced form of government.</td>
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<td>A child should follow the religion of his parents.</td>
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<td>Justice is universal.</td>
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<td>How one says something is less important than what is said.</td>
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<td>One's reputation is an easy thing to lose, and a hard thing to replace.</td>
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<td>A man is either great or wicked. He cannot be both great and wicked at once.</td>
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Things Fall Apart
Anticipation Activity – Teacher’s Page

Before the lesson, or while students are completing their charts, write the numbers 1 through 6 on the board, giving ample space between each.

Once students have finished, read the first question aloud and instruct students to stand beneath the number that represents their response. Once students are in place, give them a chance to look up and down the line to get a sense of how others responded. (You may even want to take a digital image of the group to compare with at the end of the novel.)

Use the chart below to record students’ responses. At the end of the novel, you will repeat the activity and compare results.

Choose a student near either the “Strongly Agree” or “Strongly Disagree” end and ask him or her to justify the response he or she gave. Next, select a student at the opposite end of the spectrum and pose the same question. Give other students the chance to respond, as well.

Continue on to the next questions in the same fashion. Note varying opinions, but do not establish or hint at a “right” or “wrong” answer for any.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>2 Disagree</th>
<th>3 Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>4 Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>5 Agree</th>
<th>6 Strongly Agree</th>
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Keeping track of all the characters in Things Fall Apart can be difficult. This is a very basic map of the relationships between major characters and places found throughout the book. Use this map to help you as you read. Note: Not all the characters in the book are listed here. You may want to add new characters and their relationships to the map as you read.
**Things Fall Apart**  
**Active Reading Guide**

Reading for study is a different process, requiring different skills than reading for pleasure. To be an active reader, one must analyze elements of plot, character, and language in order to later synthesize an opinion or claim about the work. Professionals who study and work with literature use active reading skills regularly. The successful active reader takes notes, both mentally and literally, as he or she reads a work of literature.

**Directions:** As you read each chapter, use your observations, including mental notes, to complete the Active Reading Guide that your teacher will give you. A sample chart is shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter(s)</th>
<th>Key Plot Points</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Proverbs</th>
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<td></td>
<td><em>In this section, record key events as they occur in each section of the novel. Remember to write in detail. This will help you to complete the Comprehension Check Questions.</em></td>
<td><em>In this section, record key vocabulary, not including those that are defined for you in the book's glossary. Make sure to record the page number and a definition in your own words based on the context in which it is used.</em></td>
<td><em>In this section, record any proverbs you find. Also, give a short description of what you think the proverb means, or how it relates to the story. Note: Not every chapter will contain proverbs, though many will.</em></td>
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**Character Development**

*In this section, record details of character development. For example, the author may reveal something about a character’s past, or a character may do something that is particularly meaningful. Do not focus just on Okonkwo, the main character, but also pay attention to the characters who surround him, offer him advice, or introduce conflicts.*

**Reflections**

*In this section, take some time to record your thoughts about the section you just read. What are your impressions of the characters or plot so far? Was there a passage or bit of language that you found meaningful or that gave you trouble? What do you expect will happen in the coming chapters? Also, record any questions you have that can be addressed in class discussions.*
**Things Fall Apart**  
Chapters One – Three  
*Active Reading Guide*

**Directions:** Use this page to record notes as you read *Things Fall Apart*. If you need more room, copy the chart onto a separate piece of paper and attach it to this worksheet.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Chapter(s)</th>
<th>Key Plot Points</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Proverbs</th>
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<th>Character Development</th>
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<th>Reflections</th>
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Directions: In order to demonstrate your understanding of the chapters you read, answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. Use complete sentences. You may refer to your Active Reading Guide for assistance.

Chapter One
1. How did Okonkwo gain his fame throughout the nine villages?
2. Why does Okonkwo have no patience with his father?
3. What two things make Unoka happy?
4. How do the people of the village view Unoka?
5. Why did Okoye come to visit Unoka?
6. Why did Unoka change the subject when the conversation turned to talk of the impending war?
7. Why is it ironic that Unoka responded to Okoye’s request by saying, "The sun will shine on those who stand before it shines on those who kneel under them"?
8. Why is it significant that among the Ibo, "if a child washed his hands he could eat with kings"?
9. How does his relationship with his father set Okonkwo up to experience conflict in the future?
10. The final two sentences in this chapter foreshadow a coming conflict saying, "And that was how [Okonkwo] came to look after the doomed lad who was sacrificed to the village of Umuofia by their neighbors to avoid war and bloodshed. The ill-fated lad was called Ikemefuna." What do you suppose this means? Make a prediction, based on your knowledge from the first chapter, about the coming conflict.

Chapter Two
1. How was the town called together to meet?
2. Why is a snake called a string at night?
3. Why were the townspeople called together? What decision did they make?
4. What is the "active principle" of the clan’s potent war-medicine?
5. What does Okonkwo fear more than anything? How is this fear reflected in the choices he makes?
6. Why did a playmate call Okonkwo's father agbala?
7. Why is Nwoye, Okonkwo's eldest son, developing into a "sad-faced youth"?
8. The book tells us that the agadi-nwayi of Umuofia forbids the clan to fight "a fight of blame," but also tells us that the conflict with Mbaino was just a war. What do you think "a fight of blame" is? How is "a fight of blame" different from what is happening between Umuofia and Mbaino?

9. Based on what you know of Okonkwo's household, how will the young man fair in this new environment? How would you feel if it had been you?

10. Was the sacrifice that Mbaino had to make in order to avoid war a fair and just one? Explain your answer.

Chapter Three
1. According to Chika, the priestess of Agbala, why does Unoka always have a miserable harvest?
2. How and where did Unoka die?
3. Why did Okonkwo go to Nwakibie?
4. What was Nwakibie's response to the request Okonkwo brought him?
5. What makes sharecropping such a difficult way of "building a barn"? Why did Okonkwo use this method?
6. What troubles did Okonkwo face in his first year of sharecropping?
7. Okonkwo believes that hard work will always earn prosperity and laziness will earn failure. How do the events of his first year of sharecropping contradict this belief?
8. Early in the chapter, the priestess of Agbala tells Unoka, "...when a man is at peace with his gods and his ancestors, his harvest will be good or bad according to the strength of his arm." Considering the events of the chapter, what does this tell us about Okonkwo? Explain your answer.
9. According to his father, why was Okonkwo able to survive his terrible first year of farming?
10. What do you think Unoka means when he says, "It is more difficult and more bitter when a man fails alone"? What does this foreshadow for the tragic hero?
**Things Fall Apart**  
*Chapters One – Three*  
**Standards Focus: Tragedy**

**Tragedy** is a form of literature that originated in the ancient Greek world 2,500 years ago. It is a form of storytelling based on human suffering. Although the modern idea of tragedy can be summarized as "When bad things happen to good people," a tragedy in the Greek sense has very specific and unique elements. Chinua Achebe used the elements and structure of Greek tragedy in fashioning his novel *Things Fall Apart*.

**Tragic hero** – The protagonist of a tragedy, the tragic hero is a "great man" in the sense that he represents the values and morals of his culture. According to Aristotle, the tragic hero is not a perfect man. In fact, his very human flaws are exactly what make him so appealing to the audience. The misfortunes of the tragic hero are brought about "not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty."

**Hamartia** – The hero's tragic flaw, known as *hamartia*, is the element of the hero's character which will ultimately lead to his downfall. Often, we think of this in relation to Achilles' heel, which many people believe was the Greek hero's tragic flaw, when in fact it was Achilles' pride in confronting his own army's leader, Agamemnon, that actually undid him.

**Hubris** – The extreme pride, or arrogance, that causes the hero to vastly overestimate his own importance or position is *hubris*. In classical Greek tragedies, *hubris* might lead a hero to challenge the gods or the laws of his own society out of a mistaken notion that he cannot be wrong.

**Peripeteia (peripety)** – The reversal of fortune that occurs in a tragedy is known as *peripeteia*, or peripety. This reversal does not come as a result of the hero's actions or choices, rather it is entirely external and out of the hero's control.

**Anagnorisis** – Following the reversal of fortune, the tragic hero will undergo *anagnorisis*, or recognition, about human fates and destinies. It is this recognition, this moment when everything becomes clear, in combination with the hero's *hamartia*, or tragic flaw, that creates the pathos, or downfall.

**Downfall** – Every tragic hero experiences a downfall at the end of his story. The downfall is a result of the combination of the hero's own tragic flaw and circumstances beyond his control. The goal of the downfall is to bring about feelings of pity and fear in the audience, because we see in the events the possibility of our own downfalls.

**Catharsis** – The goal of Greek tragedies was not to entertain, but to provide emotional cleansing, or catharsis, for the audience. The downfall of the hero allows the audience a safe and controlled outlet for otherwise pent-up emotions of pity and fear.
Name _______________________________  Period ________

Part A

Directions: Think of a well-known book or movie that can be classified as a tragedy, according to the Greek confines. Answer the questions below referring to this book or movie.

1. Who is the tragic hero? In what ways would he or she be considered a "great" person within his or her own culture?

2. What is the hero’s tragic flaw, or hamartia? How does this flaw influence his or her choices when faced with a conflict?

3. Does your tragic hero exhibit hubris, or arrogance? Give an example.

4. What peripety, or reversal of fortune, does the hero experience? How is this reversal outside the hero’s control?

5. What realization, or recognition, causes the hero to fall?

6. What downfall does the hero experience? In what ways does this downfall cause the audience to feel pity and/or fear?

7. How did the hero’s downfall cause you to experience a catharsis, or emotional release?

Part B

Directions: In the boxes below, draw a picture or write an original definition or explanation that will help you remember the meanings of each of the key terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential elements of Greek Tragedies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tragic Hero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tragic Flaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peripety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anagnorisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downfall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catharsis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Things Fall Apart
Chapters One - Three
Assessment Preparation: Recognizing How Words Are Related

Recognizing how words are related and the subtle differences between them can be a very handy skill when it comes time to unlock those tricky multiple-choice questions you often find on standardized tests.

Directions: Look at the word groups below. For each, circle the word that does NOT belong with the other three. On the lines provided, explain why you chose the word you did.

1. haggard / fatigued / gaunt / affluent
   Explanation: ________________________________

2. wistful / sorrowful / plaintive / sober
   Explanation: ________________________________

3. malice / mirth / spite / nastiness
   Explanation: ________________________________

4. ineptitude / aptitude / prowess / talent
   Explanation: ________________________________

5. amiss / ideal / spot-on / accurate
   Explanation: ________________________________
Name ______________________________________  Period ________

6. inevitable / capricious / changeable / fickle

Explanation: __________________________________________

7. idleness / apathy / boredom / concern

Explanation: __________________________________________

8. wicked / incipient / criminal / immoral

Explanation: __________________________________________

9. dishonor / mystery / scandal / abomination

Explanation: __________________________________________

10. threadlike / meager / gauzy / fine

Explanation: __________________________________________

Extension: Using all of the words you circled, write a brief description of one of the characters in the first three chapters.
Name _______________________________________

**Things Fall Apart**

Chapters Four – Six

**Active Reading Guide**

**Directions:** Use this page to record notes as you read *Things Fall Apart*. If you need more room, copy the chart onto a separate piece of paper and attach it to this worksheet.

<table>
<thead>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Development</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Things Fall Apart**
**Chapters Four - Six Comprehension Check**

**Directions:** In order to demonstrate your understanding of the chapters you read, answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. Use complete sentences. You may refer to your Active Reading Guide for assistance.

**Chapter Four**
1. What did Okonkwo call Osugo at the kindred meeting?
2. How does Okonkwo display his affection for Ikemefuna?
3. What talents does Ikemefuna have that charm Nwoye?
4. What had his youngest wife gone to do that angered Okonkwo?
5. Why was Okonkwo forbidden to beat his wife?
6. According to Ezeani, who has Okonkwo insulted by his actions?
7. Why did people say that Okonkwo had no respect for the gods of the clan?
8. “At the beginning of the chapter an elder suggests that Okonkwo's "palm kernels were cracked for him by a benevolent spirit," yet the author immediately tells us "it was not really true." What do you think? Has Okonkwo's fortune been the result of luck in some portion, or is it all because of his hard work? Be sure to support your answer with examples.
9. How does Ikemefuna act as a buffer between Okonkwo and his true son, Nwoye? What would happen between the father and son if Ikemefuna were not there?
10. Does Okonkwo respect the rules and structure of the clan? Explain and provide examples to support your answer.

**Chapter Five**
1. For which deity is the Feast of the New Yam given?
2. Why is it that Okonkwo does not enjoy feasts?
3. What did Okonkwo find to be angry about?
4. What did his second wife say to anger Okonkwo? What was his response?
5. Do you think Okonkwo intended to shoot at his wife? Give evidence in support of your answer.

6. What great event is held on the second day of the New Yam festival?

7. How had Okonkwo won the heart of his second wife?

8. Why did Ekwefi answer "Is that me?" to the person calling outside her hut?

9. How did Obiageli break her water pot? What does Ikemefuna's response to the incident with the broken water pot reveal about his character?

10. How does Ezinma's relationship with her father differ from other family members' relationships with Okonkwo?

Chapter Six

1. What kind of spirits live in the ancient silk-cotton tree?

2. How is order kept before the wrestling match begins?

3. How is the power structure of the village reflected in the seating arrangements at the wrestling matches?

4. Who won the third wrestling match of the day? How did he do it?

5. Who did Ekwefi find she was shoulder-to-shoulder with at the wrestling match?

6. Why did the woman call Ezinma "my daughter"?

7. What do the women mean when they say Ezinma will "stay"?

8. What made the final match exciting even before it began?

9. Who won the final wrestling match? How did he win?

10. We know that Okonkwo won fame through all the villages when he threw "the Cat" as a young man. Why do you think the author has the villagers sing that Okafo "has thrown four hundred cats"?

11. In this chapter and the previous one, the author focuses more on the women of Okonkwo's family. What roles do the women and young girls fulfill in the village and in the family? How do these roles compare to roles of women and girls in your own culture?
Things Fall Apart
Chapters Four - Six
Standards Focus: Direct vs. Indirect Characterization

Authors of great literature employ a number of methods to reveal characters within their works. Two very important techniques are direct and indirect characterization.

Direct characterization occurs when an author directly reveals information about a character's personality or motivations.

Indirect characterization is more complex in that it asks the reader to draw a conclusion about the character's personality or motivations based on the character's social status, thoughts, actions, presence, language, and/or effect on others. These can be remembered using the acronym "STAPLE" outlined below.

Social status (or roles): whether or not a character has attained status within his or her society and to what level he or she has risen or fallen

Thoughts: the character's own internal dialogue or thoughts revealed to us by the narrator

Actions: what the character does or how he or she behaves in response to the external pressures placed upon him or her

Presence: the character's appearance relevant to his or her desires or motivations (Note: This does not include facets of appearance that are purely a result of biology or environment.)

Language: includes characteristics of speech as well as what he or she actually says

Effect on others: the response evoked in other characters that insinuates some additional knowledge of the character beyond what the narrator has presented

Directions: Draw a T-chart like the one given below, and then list examples of direct and indirect characterization from Chapters Four through Six of the novel Things Fall Apart. Be sure to provide the page number for each example. When your chart is complete, discuss your findings in a small group or with your class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Characterization</th>
<th>Indirect Characterization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: &quot;He had no patience with unsuccessful men,&quot; p. 4</td>
<td>Example: &quot;Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond,&quot; p. 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Things Fall Apart**  
Chapters Four – Six  
Assessment Preparation: Analogies

Analogies test your ability to recognize relationships between words. Being able to recognize relationships between words can help you to decode metaphors and define a word from context. As we will see, the Igbo themselves in *Things Fall Apart* can also be understood in terms of analogies.

The key to unlocking an analogy is to first determine the relationship between the words in the given pair.

**Example:**  
deity : divine :: human : _________

a. saintly  
b. empirical  
c. earthly  
d. adrift

In the completed pair, "divine" is an attribute, or essential characteristic, of a deity. Of the options given, which describes an essential characteristic of a human?

**Directions:** In order to decode the analogies below, first try to determine the relationship between the completed pair. You may use a dictionary or a thesaurus to help with unfamiliar words. Using that same relationship, find the word that best completes the other side.

1. _________ : guilt :: apologize : mistake
   a. remorse
   b. compensate
   c. mirth
   d. atone

2. _________ : provoked :: sad : plaintive
   a. thrilled
   b. angry
   c. apathy
   d. regret

3. repentant : shameless :: _________ : feeble
   a. weak
   b. culpable
   c. potent
   d. haggard

4. master : deftly :: apprentice : _________
   a. nimbly
   b. clumsily
   c. cautiously
   d. capriciously
Name ______________________________________  Period ______

5. arduous : _________ :: exacting : precision
   a. ambiguity       c. amiss
   b. sloth           d. hard work

6. poignant : _________ :: capricious : whimsy
   a. touching        c. prowess
   b. discretion      d. composure

7. _________ : tentative :: desperation : hopeless
   a. caution         c. hope
   b. fickleness      d. skill

8. subdue : _________ :: arrest : crime
   a. bait            c. rebellion
   b. ally            d. concord

9. _________ : ethereal :: taut : inflexible
   a. rigid           c. earthly
   b. disembodied     d. plastic

10. miscalculation : catastrophe :: _________ : triumph
     a. accident       c. failure
     b. combat         d. success

Extension: Now that you understand how analogies work, consider the proverbs you have found thus far in Things Fall Apart. Can you see the analogy at work?

Example: Proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten.

Analogy: proverbs : words :: palm oil : food

Now, create four of your own analogies using the proverbs from the first six chapters.
Things Fall Apart
Chapters Seven - Eight
Active Reading Guide

Directions: Use this page to record notes as you read Things Fall Apart. If you need more room, copy the chart onto a separate piece of paper and attach it to this worksheet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Reflections</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Things Fall Apart
Chapters Seven – Eight
Comprehension Check

Directions: In order to demonstrate your understanding of the chapters you read, answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. Use complete sentences. You may refer to your Active Reading Guide for assistance.

Chapter Seven
1. How many years have passed since Ikemefuna first arrived in Okonkwo's household?
2. What is Okonkwo happy to hear Nwoye grumbling about?
3. Who was the emissary between Earth and Sky?
4. What kinds of stories does Nwoye prefer to hear? Why has he given them up?
5. What descended on the village in a thick cloud? How did the villagers view this?
6. What news does Ezeudu bring Okonkwo and what advice does Ezeudu offer?
7. How did Nwoye's mother respond when he told her Ikemefuna was going home? Why did she respond this way?
8. Why did Ikemefuna sing as he walked?
9. Why did Okonkwo use his machete? Why did he feel this was necessary?
10. How did Nwoye feel toward his father when he returned? What other event does he recall that caused him to feel this way?

Chapter Eight
1. Why did Nwoye leave his father’s hut when his father fell asleep?
2. How has the killing of Ikemefuna affected Okonkwo?
3. What was Okonkwo thinking about his daughter, Ezinma?
4. For what event was Obierika preparing?
5. How did Obierika respond when Okonkwo confronted him about not refusing to help kill the boy?
6. Why had the drum not sounded to announce Ndulue’s death?
7. Why doesn't Obierika tap his own palm tree?
8. For what were the broomsticks used?
9. According to the men, how is marriage handled in other clans?
10. Compare Obierieka and Okonkwo and their relationships with their respective sons.
An allusion is an implied or direct reference in a work of literature to another work of literature or to a person, place, or thing that may be real or fictional. If you think of a story as a conversation, allusions are references to other conversations.

If you have ever quoted a movie line or a song lyric while talking with friends, then you have used an allusion. When you do this, you expect that your friend will understand the reference, and so you don't have to say what movie or song you're quoting. They'll just get it. That's the way allusions work.

**Part A**

**Directions:** Think of a movie quote or song lyric that you have used in casual conversation recently. Using the table below, think about when and why you used that quote, as opposed to using your own words to express a thought. Answer the question that follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movie quote or song lyric</th>
<th>What is the original source of the quote/lyric?</th>
<th>Why did you use it? What special meaning does it have?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How do you and your friends use allusions to create special meanings and reinforce bonds? __________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

©2012 Secondary Solutions - 53 - Things Fall Apart Literature Guide
**Allusions in *Things Fall Apart***

Though allusions in casual conversation are most often drawn from popular culture, allusions in literature are usually drawn from the Christian Bible, other well-known works of literature (such as Shakespeare’s works), or historical events. This can make it hard to identify allusions if you are not familiar with the original works.

In *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe alludes to the Bible, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and to folk literature of the Ibo. Each type of allusion carries special meaning and reflects the author's attention to a particular audience.

**Directions:** Complete the chart below considering the given quotes from *Things Fall Apart*. You may use your book for help.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allusion</th>
<th>Original Source</th>
<th>What audience is the author addressing?</th>
<th>What special meaning does allusion have?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“He remembered the story she often told of the quarrel between Earth and Sky long ago, and how Sky withheld rain for seven years…” p. 53</td>
<td>Igbo oral tradition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“…giant trees and climbers which perhaps had stood from the beginning of things, untouched by the axe or bushfire.” p. 59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Going up that river was like traveling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings.” (Heart of Darkness p. 46)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“For although locusts had not visited Umuofia for many years, everybody knew by instinct that they were very good to eat.” p. 56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I will bring locusts into your country tomorrow. They will cover the face of the ground so that it cannot be seen. They will devour what little you have left after the hail, including every tree that is growing in your fields. They will fill your houses…”” (Exodus10:3-6)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Things Fall Apart
Chapters Seven - Eight
Assessment Preparation: Context Clues

Readers encounter unknown or unfamiliar words all the time. Context clues can help the good reader unlock the meaning of words without having to refer to a dictionary. Some common types of context clues are antonyms, synonyms, direct definitions, cause and effect relationships, examples, and inferences.

**Antonyms** can help determine the meaning of a word by telling us its exact opposite meaning.
Example: I can be quite _garrulous_ at times, whereas my sister is quiet in social situations.

**Synonyms** have the same meaning as the unknown word.
Example: I can be quite _garrulous_, and my talkative nature sometimes puts people off.

**Direct definitions** are sometimes provided, making it quite easy to determine a word's meaning in context.
Example: I can be quite _garrulous_, or excessively talkative, at times.

**Cause and effect relationships** can also provide clues to a word's meaning.
Example: I can be so _garrulous_ that my friend will often stick her fingers in her ears and walk away.

**Examples** can show us what the meaning of a word looks like in practice.
Example: I can be quite _garrulous_. One time, I talked for three hours straight, and when I finally stopped to take a breath, I couldn't remember what had started me talking in the first place.

**Inferences** are guesses we can make about a word's meaning based on other indirect clues in the sentence.
Example: My _garrulous_ manner got me through the interview, but turned out to be a problem when I actually got the job.

**Directions:** For each sentence below, determine which type of context clue is being used, and then write your own definition for the word.

1. He was like an elder brother to Nwoye, and from the very first seemed to have kindled a new fire in the younger boy.

   Type of context clue: _kindled_

   Your definition: _kindled_
2. Nothing pleased Nwoye more than to be sent for by his mother or another of his father's wives. On receiving such a message, Nwoye would feign annoyance and grumble aloud about women and their troubles.

Type of context clue: ____________________________
Your definition: ________________________________
______________________________________________

3. At last Vulture was sent to plead with the Sky. Whenever Nwoye's mother sang this song he felt carried away to a distant scene where Vulture, Earth's emissary, sang for mercy.

Type of context clue: ____________________________
Your definition: ________________________________
______________________________________________

4. ...and he knew that his father wanted him to be a man. And so he feigned that he no longer cared for women's stories. And when he did this, he saw that his father was pleased, and no longer rebuked him or beat him.

Type of context clue: ____________________________
Your definition: ________________________________
______________________________________________

5. At first, a fairly small swarm came. They were the harbingers sent to survey the land.

Type of context clue: ____________________________
Your definition: ________________________________
______________________________________________

6. Okonkwo sat in his obi crunching happily with Ikemefuna and Nwoye, and drinking palm wine copiously.

Type of context clue: ____________________________
Your definition: ________________________________
______________________________________________
7. Whenever the thought of his father's weakness and failure troubled him he expelled it by thinking about his own strength and success.

Type of context clue: ________________________________________

Your definition: ____________________________________________

8. She rose from her mat, took her stick, and walked over to the obi. She knelt on her hands and knees at the threshold and called her husband, who was laid on a mat.

Type of context clue: ________________________________________

Your definition: ____________________________________________

9. She was about sixteen and just ripe for marriage. Her suitor and his relatives surveyed her young body with expert eyes as if to assure themselves that she was beautiful and ripe.

Type of context clue: ________________________________________

Your definition: ____________________________________________

10. They haggle and bargain as if they were buying a goat or a cow in the market.

Type of context clue: ________________________________________

Your definition: ____________________________________________
**Things Fall Apart**  
**Chapters Nine – Eleven**  
**Active Reading Guide**

*Directions:* Use this page to record notes as you read *Things Fall Apart*. If you need more room, copy the chart onto a separate piece of paper and attach it to this worksheet.

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<tr>
<td>Reflections</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Directions: In order to demonstrate your understanding of the chapters you read, answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. Use complete sentences. You may refer to your Active Reading Guide for assistance.

Chapter Nine
1. How did Ear respond when Mosquito asked if she would marry him?
2. Why does Ekwefi wake Okonkwo early in the morning?
3. Why is Ezinma not allowed to eat eggs?
4. What happened to Ekwefi’s first nine children?
5. How did the names of Ekwefi’s children reflect her deepening despair?
6. Why did Okagbue mutilate the dead child?
7. What is an ogbanje child? What evidence justifies the belief that Ekwefi’s children are ogbanje?
8. How does Ezinma behave during the search for the iyi-uwa? What does her behavior say about her character?
10. Why do you think Okonkwo responded to his daughter’s illness the way he did?

Chapter Ten
1. What are the egwugwu?
2. How do the villagers respond to the arrival of the egwugwu?
3. What is distinctive about the second egwugwu?
4. What role do the egwugwu fulfill for the villagers in this chapter?
5. What is the dispute Ozowulu has brought?
6. What inferences can you make about the kind of man Ozowulu is?
7. What was the judgment of the egwugwu? Was it a fair one? Why or why not?
8. Based on what you know of Okonkwo's character, what opinion might he have offered to the egwugwu about the case before them?
9. Why was such a trifle brought before the *egwugwu*?

10. How does the system of justice described in this chapter compare and contrast with our U.S. system?

**Chapter Eleven**

1. How did the birds help Tortoise get to the feast in the sky? What did Tortoise ask to be called at the feast?

2. What message did Tortoise send to his wife?

3. What message did Parrot give to Tortoise’s wife?

4. What was the result of Tortoise’s journey to the feast in the sky?

5. What do you think is the moral or message of the story of the Tortoise and the Feast in the Sky?

6. Why did the priestess come to Okonkwo’s compound?

7. What reasons might Ekwefi have for following Chielo despite her fears and her husband’s assurances that everything would be fine?

8. What is *Ogbu-agali-odu*?

9. What did Ekwefi swear to herself when Chielo disappeared into the cave?

10. How are night and darkness characterized in the novel? What do you think the night symbolizes to the Ibo?