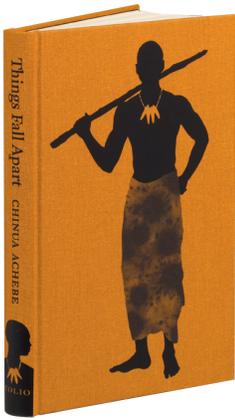


## Things Fall Apart Study Questions



### Chapters 1-4

1. Why was Okonkwo famous?
2. Describe Unoka.
3. Why had the men of Umuofia called a meeting?
4. Where does the story take place?
5. What influence did the oracle have on decisions made in Umuofia?
6. What were Okonkwo's greatest fear and greatest passion?
7. What upset Okonkwo most about his son, Nwoye?

8. What did Okonkwo bring home from his trip to Mbaino?
9. How did Okonkwo begin his prosperous career?
10. How did Ikemefuna react to living with Okonkwo's family?
11. What unheard of thing did Okonkwo do during the Week of Peace?
12. How did the people view yams?

### Chapters 5-7

1. Describe the Feast of the New Yam.
2. Who was Okonkwo's favorite child, and what did he often say about the child?
3. What unacceptable thing did Okonkwo do just before the Feast of the New Yam?
4. Who was Chielo, and why was she important?
5. What sport did the villagers enjoy watching during their feasting?
6. What influence did Ikemefuna have on Nwoye?
7. How did Okonkwo feel about Ikemefuna's influence on Nwoye?
8. How did the villagers feel about the coming of the locusts, and what did they do about it?
9. What did the village decide to do with Ikemefuna?
10. Who struck the last blow to Ikemefuna, and why?

### Chapters 8-10

1. What did Okonkwo do whenever he thought of his father's weakness and failure?
2. What did Okonkwo tell himself about his part in Ikemefuna's death?
3. What did Obierika tell Okonkwo about his part in Ikemefuna's death?
4. Describe the meeting to determine Obierika's daughter's bride price.
5. The men began discussing rumors about white men. Who did the men think the white men were?
6. Describe the relationship between Ekwefi and Ezinma.
7. Describe Ekwefi's difficulties in getting pregnant.
8. What did the medicine man tell Okonkwo after the death of Ekwefi's second child?
9. Describe the burial of Ekwefi's third child, and the reason for it.
10. Explain the significance of Ezinma's *iji-uwa*.
11. How did Okonkwo cure Ezinma's *iba* illness?
12. What was the purpose of the ceremony described in Chapter 10?

### Chapters 11-13

1. What did Chielo want with Ezinma?
2. What did Ekwefi do?
3. What did Okonkwo do when Chielo took Ezinma?
4. What was the purpose of the *uri* ceremony?
5. What was the significance in the amount of wine the family brought?
6. What happened at the end of the ceremony?
7. Describe Ezeudu's funeral.
8. How did the author describe a man's life?
9. What happened during the frenzy?
10. What was the result of Okonkwo's action?
11. What was the reason for the clan's actions against Okonkwo?
12. What did Obierika think about after this calamity, and what was his conclusion?

### Chapters 14-19

1. Where did Okonkwo take his family to live?
2. How did Okonkwo feel about his circumstances?
3. Why did Uchendu talk to Okonkwo about the Mother Supreme?
4. Who came to visit Okonkwo during the second year of exile, and why?
5. Briefly retell the story of the destruction of Abame.
6. What was Obierika's reaction to the story?
7. What event did Obierika describe on his next visit, two years later?
8. Who had Obierika found among the missionaries?
9. What was the iron horse?
10. Where did the missionaries in Mbanta build their church, why were they given that particular piece of land, and what happened to them?
11. What was it about Nwoye's actions that disturbed Okonkwo so much?
12. What group wanted to be admitted to the Christian church, and what happened?
13. Describe the incident with the sacred python.
14. What did Okonkwo do before he left Mbanta when his exile was ended?
15. What was the one elder's message to those at the feast?

### Chapters 20-25

1. How did Okonkwo feel about his return to the clan?
2. What message did Okonkwo give to his sons and daughters after Nwoye left the family?
3. Describe the changes that had come to Umuofia in the seven years that Okonkwo was in exile.
4. Okonkwo asked Obierika why the people had lost their power to fight. What was Obierika's reply?
5. How did many of the other villagers feel about these changes?
6. What was Mr. Brown's conclusion about the religion of the clan? How did he act to gain converts?
7. About what was Okonkwo grieving?
8. Describe the conflict started by Enoch.
9. What was the result of the action taken by the *egwugwu*?
10. How did Okonkwo feel when he returned from the white man's prison?
11. Why did the men meet in the marketplace?
12. What event happened in the marketplace?
13. What happened to Okonkwo?
14. What did Obierika tell the Commissioner?
15. What was the Commissioner's reaction to the incident?

## Things Fall Apart Vocabulary

### General Vocabulary

*plantain* - A banana-like fruit, used as a staple food in tropical regions

*thatches* - Plant stalks or foliage, such as reeds or palm fronds, used for roofing

*cowries* - Any of various tropical marine gastropods of the family Cypraeidae, having glossy, often brightly marked shells, some of which are used as currency in the South Pacific and Africa

### Chapters 1-4

1. The drums beat and the flutes sang and the *spectators* held their breath.
2. In his day he was lazy and *improvident* and was quite incapable of thinking about tomorrow.
3. He wore a *haggard* and mournful look except when he was drinking or playing his flute.
4. An ultimatum was immediately dispatched to Mbaino asking them to choose between war on the one hand, and on the other the offer of a young man and a virgin as *compensation*.
- 5.& 6. And so when Okonkwo of Umuofia arrived at Mbaino as the proud and *imperious emissary* of war, he was treated with great honor and respect, and two days later he returned home with a lad of fifteen and a young virgin.
7. His wives, especially the youngest, lived in *perpetual* fear of his fiery temper, and so did his little children.
8. It was deeper and more intimate than the fear of evil and *capricious* gods and of magic, the fear of the forest, and of the forces of nature, red in tooth and claw.
9. Okonkwo's first son, Nwoye, was then twelve years old but was already causing his father great anxiety for his *incipient* laziness.
10. But he was struck, as most people were, by Okonkwo's *brusqueness* in dealing with less successful men.
11. Only a week ago a man had contradicted him at a *kindred* meeting which they held to discuss the next ancestral feast.
12. But it was really not true that Okonkwo's palm kernels had been cracked for him by a *benevolent* spirit.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ___ 1. spectators (Lat. <i>spec</i> – “look”)   | A. not providing for the future        |
| ___ 2. improvident (Lat. <i>pro</i> – “before” + <i>vid</i> – “see”)                  | B. lasting for eternity                |
| ___ 3. haggard  | C. characterized by doing good         |
| ___ 4. compensation (Lat. <i>com</i> – “together” + <i>pens/pend</i> – “weigh; hang”) | D. an agent sent in advance            |
| ___ 5. imperious (Lat. <i>in</i> – “toward” + <i>per</i> – “prepare”)                 | E. observers                           |
| ___ 6. emissary (Lat. <i>e</i> – “out” + <i>mit</i> – “send”)                         | F. related to a clan or tribe          |
| ___ 7. perpetual  | G. impulsive and unpredictable         |
| ___ 8. capricious   | H. abrupt and curt manner; blunt       |
| ___ 9. incipient (Lat. <i>in</i> – “into/toward” + <i>cip/cap</i> – “take”)           | I. arrogantly domineering; overbearing |
| ___ 10. brusqueness   | J. beginning to exist or appear        |
| ___ 11. kindred   | K. payment; reimbursement              |
| ___ 12. benevolent (Lat. <i>bene</i> – “well” + <i>vol</i> – “wish”)                  | L. appearing worn and exhausted        |

### Chapters 5-7

1. The new year must begin with tasty, fresh yams and not the shriveled and *fibrous* crop of the previous year.
2. All cooking pots, *calabashes*, and wooden bowls were thoroughly washed, especially the wooden mortar in which yam was pounded.
3. The drums rose to a *frenzy*.
4. Old men nodded to the beat of the drums and remembered the days when they wrestled to its *intoxicating* rhythm.
5. Within a short time the two *bouts* were over.
6. Nwoye would *feign* annoyance and grumble aloud about women and their troubles.
7. And when he did this he saw that his father was pleased, and no longer *rebuked* him.
8. They went back to their caves in a distant land, where they were guarded by a race of *stunted* men.
9. They were the *harbingers* sent to survey the land.
10. Okonkwo sat in his obi crunching happily with Ikemefuna and Nwoye, and drinking palm-wine *copiously*....

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ___ 1. fibrous  | A. forerunners                               |
| ___ 2. calabashes   | B. criticized; reprimanded                   |
| ___ 3. frenzy (Lat. <i>phren</i> – “mind”)                              | C. contests; matches                         |
| ___ 4. intoxicating (Lat. <i>in</i> – “into” + <i>toxic</i> – “poison”) | D. violent mental agitation; wild excitement |
| ___ 5. bouts  | E. threadlike                                |
| ___ 6. feign (Lat. <i>fung</i> – “mold; pretend; contrive”)             | F. abundantly                                |
| ___ 7. rebuked  | G. stopped from growing                      |
| ___ 8. stunted  | H. pretend; represent falsely                |
| ___ 9. harbingers   | I. stimulating or exciting                   |
| ___ 10. copiously   | J. containers made from dried gourds         |

## Chapters 8-10

1. "When did you become a shivering old woman," Okonkwo asked himself, "you who are known in all the nine villages for your *valor* in war?"
2. As she buried one child after another her sorrow gave way to despair and then to grim *resignation*.
3. In that way she will *elude* her wicked tormentor and break its evil cycle of birth and death.
4. He brought out a sharp razor from the goatskin bag slung from his left shoulder and began to *mutilate* the child.
5. Her husband's wife took this for *malevolence*, as her husband's wives were wont to do.
6. At first Ekwefi accepted her, as she had the others - with *listless* resignation.
7. ...she could not ignore the fact that some really evil children sometimes misled people into digging up a *specious* one.
8. "No," said Ezinma, whose feeling of importance was manifest in her *sprightly* walk.
9. Most *communal* ceremonies took place at that time of day....
10. The *egwugwu* house was now a *pandemonium* of quavering voices.
11. ...the spirits of the ancestors, just emerged from the earth, greeted themselves in their *esoteric* language.
12. There was a loud murmur of *approbation* from the crowd.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ___ 1. valor   | A. lacking in spirit or energy            |
| ___ 2. resignation (Lat. <i>re</i> - "back; un-" + <i>sign</i> - "sign; seal") | B. wild uproar or noise                   |
| ___ 3. elude (Lat. <i>e</i> - "out" + <i>lud</i> - "play")                     | C. courage in battle; bravery             |
| ___ 4. mutilate  | D. understandable; clear                  |
| ___ 5. malevolence (Lat. <i>male</i> - "ill" + <i>vol</i> - "wish")            | E. approval                               |
| ___ 6. listless  | F. evil or harmful influence              |
| ___ 7. specious (Lat. <i>spec</i> - "look")                                    | G. known only to the chosen few           |
| ___ 8. manifest  | H. to disfigure or cripple                |
| ___ 9. communal  | I. of a group of people.                  |
| ___ 10. pandemonium (Gk. <i>pan</i> - "all" + <i>demon/daimon</i> - "demon")   | J. avoid; evade                           |
| ___ 11. esoteric (Gk. <i>es/eso</i> - "into; within")                          | K. seemingly reliable but incorrect       |
| ___ 12. approbation (Lat. <i>ad</i> - "to" + <i>prob</i> - "test; try")        | L. lack of resistance; patient submission |

## Chapters 11-13

1. The night was *impenetrably* dark.
2. Nwayieke lived four compounds away, and she was *notorious* for her late cooking.
3. Nothing that happened in the world of animals ever escaped his notice; he was full of *cunning*.
4. His speech was so *eloquent* that all the birds were glad they brought him, and nodded their heads in approval of all he said.
5. After kola nuts had been presented and eaten, the people of the sky set before their guests the most *delectable* dishes Tortoise had ever seen or dreamed of.
6. But Ekwefi did not hear these *consolations*.
7. She hit her left foot against an outcropped root, and terror seized her. It was an ill *omen*.
8. Fireflies went about with their tiny green lamps, which only made the darkness more *profound*.
9. She remembered that night, long ago, when she had seen *Ogbu-agali-odu*, one of those evil *essences* loose upon the world by the potent "medicines" which the tribe had made....
10. The priestess's voice came at longer *intervals* now, but its vigor was undiminished.
11. Ekwefi could now *discern* the figure of the priestess and her burden.
12. It was only on his fourth trip that he had found Ekwefi, and by then he had become *gravely* worried.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ___ 1. impenetrably  | A. not able to be entered or pierced    |
| ___ 2. notorious (Lat. <i>not</i> - "note; know")                      | B. delightful; delicious                |
| ___ 3. cunning   | C. spiritual or incorporeal entities    |
| ___ 4. eloquent (Lat. <i>e</i> - "out" + <i>loqu/loc</i> - "speak")    | D. known widely and usually unfavorably |
| ___ 5. delectable  | E. words of comfort                     |
| ___ 6. consolations (Lat. <i>con</i> - "with" + <i>sol</i> - "soothe") | F. time between two specified instants  |
| ___ 7. omen  | G. skill in deception                   |
| ___ 8. profound (Lat. <i>pro</i> - "before" + <i>fund</i> - "bottom")  | H. prophetic sign                       |
| ___ 9. essences  | I. distinguish; perceive                |
| ___ 10. intervals (Lat. <i>inter</i> - "between")                      | J. expressive; persuasive               |
| ___ 11. discern (Lat. <i>dis</i> - "apart" + <i>cern</i> - "separate") | K. deep; complete                       |
| ___ 12. gravely (Lat. <i>grav</i> - "heavy; serious")                  | L. serious                              |

## Chapters 14-19

1. And he arranged the *requisite* rites and sacrifices.
2. A vague scent of life and green vegetation was *diffused* in the air.
3. He laughed a *mirthless* laughter.
4. Do you know how many children I have buried--children I *begot* in my youth and strength?
5. There is something *ominous* behind the silence.
6. When this was interpreted to the men of Mbanta they broke into *derisive* laughter.
7. Nwoye's *callow* mind was greatly puzzled.
8. Her husband and his family were already becoming highly critical of such a woman and were not unduly *perturbed* when they found she had fled to join the Christians.
9. & 10. A sudden fury rose within him and he felt a strong desire to take up his machete, go to the church and wipe out the entire *vile* and *miscreant* gang.
11. It was, in fact, one of the men who, in his zeal, brought the church into serious conflict with the clan a year later by killing the sacred python, the *emanation* of the god of water.
12. But let us *ostracize* these men.

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| _____ 1. requisite (Lat. <i>quir/quer/quis</i> – “seek; search”)                 | A. ridiculing                |
| _____ 2. diffused (Lat. <i>dis</i> – “away” + <i>fund/fus</i> – “pour”)          | B. spread in all directions  |
| _____ 3. mirthless   | C. wretch; villain           |
| _____ 4. beget   | D. exclude from public favor |
| _____ 5. ominous (Lat. <i>omin</i> – “omen”)                                     | E. greatly disturbed         |
| _____ 6. derisive (Lat. <i>de</i> – “from” + <i>ris/rid</i> – “laugh; ridicule”) | F. without laughter          |
| _____ 7. callow  | G. issuing forth             |
| _____ 8. perturbed (Lat. <i>per</i> – “completely” + <i>turb</i> – “disturb”)    | H. threatening               |
| _____ 9. vile (Lat. <i>vil</i> – “cheap; base”)                                  | I. youthful; immature        |
| _____ 10. miscreant (Lat. <i>mis</i> – “mis” + <i>cred</i> – “believe”)          | J. loathsome; disgusting     |
| _____ 11. emanate (Lat. <i>e</i> – “out” + <i>man</i> – “flow”)                  | K. produce; father           |
| _____ 12. ostracize  | L. necessary requirement     |

## Chapters 20-25

1. He would return with a *flourish* and regain the seven wasted years.
2. But it was a *resilient* spirit, and in the end Okonkwo overcame his sorrow.
3. This growing feeling was due to Mr. Brown, the white missionary, who was very firm in restraining his flock from *provoking* the wrath of the clan.
4. Mr. Brown's mission grew from strength to strength, and because of its link with the new administration it earned a new social *prestige*.
5. & 6. He condemned openly Mr. Brown's policy of *compromise* and *accommodation*.
7. Enoch himself was greatly disappointed when he heard this, for he had hoped that a holy war was *imminent*.
8. *Discordant* bells clanged, machetes clashed and the air was full of dust and weird sounds.
9. For a brief moment the onrush of the *egwugwu* was checked by the unexpected *composure* of the two men.
10. Then an unmistakable voice rose above the *tumult* and there was immediate silence.
11. His voice was unmistakable and so he was able to bring immediate peace to the *agitated* spirits.
12. It has bred untold *abominations* and we have come to put an end to it.

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| _____ 1. flourish (Lat. <i>flor</i> – “flower”)   | A. stirred up; disturbed              |
| _____ 2. resilient (Lat. <i>re</i> – “back” + <i>sil</i> – “jump”)                                    | B. mental calmness                    |
| _____ 3. provoking (Lat. <i>pro</i> – “forth” + <i>voc</i> – “call”)                                  | C. help; adaptation                   |
| _____ 4. prestige   | D. angering; causing retaliation      |
| _____ 5. compromise (Lat. <i>com</i> – “together” + <i>pro</i> – “forward” + <i>mis/mit</i> – “send”) | E. something detestable               |
| _____ 6. accommodation  | F. impending; near at hand            |
| _____ 7. imminent (Lat. <i>in</i> – “toward” + <i>min</i> – “stick out; jut”)                         | G. grow well; prosper                 |
| _____ 8. discordant (Lat. <i>dis</i> – “un-” + <i>cord</i> – “heart”)                                 | H. adjustment                         |
| _____ 9. composure (Lat. <i>com</i> – “together” + <i>pon/pos</i> – “put; place”)                     | I. commotion; riot                    |
| _____ 10. tumult  | J. elastic; able to spring back       |
| _____ 11. agitated  | K. inharmonious; conflicting          |
| _____ 12. abominations (Lat. <i>ab</i> – “away” + <i>omin</i> – “omen”)                               | L. impression produced by achievement |