

A. Intro to the Novel Things Fall Apart

Author: Chinua Achebe (1930–2013)

- raised in a village in south-east Nigeria
- parents raised him as a Christian (Protestant)
- exposed to his native Igbo cultural heritage as well

Published: 1958

Setting: 1890, Nigeria

- a time of transition (not a positive one – think of the title)
- the time of *first contact* with British colonizers

Literary Genre: tragedy

Literary Era: Postcolonial literature

- Nearly all early-to-mid twentieth century literary works depicted African people as “savages” who were unfairly oppressed by white colonizers.
 - In this novel, Achebe seeks to revise previous stereotypes by looking at each culture (Igbo and British) objectively.
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B. Sign Up to Teach Your Peers

Sign up today for one of the six categories below. You’ll coordinate with your group members to create some subtopics that you’ll work to research. Next class, you will be teaching your peers the basics about the topic. You only need to do a bit of informal research, but you should be able to talk knowledgeably about the topic, answer questions, and cite sources if asked.

- History of Nigeria (late 1800s)
 - History of Nigeria (1950s)
 - Igbo Culture
 - British Colonialism of Africa
 - Postcolonial Literature
 - Tragedy (as a genre of literature)
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C. Mini-Quiz Next Class

I encourage (but do not require) you to annotate the first two chapters of the novel. The mini-quiz will cover the basic plot as well as the intro notes at the top of this page (A). You should also be ready to discuss what you’ve read as well as the extra background information you’ve researched (B).