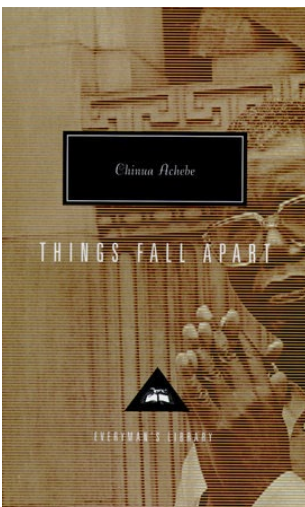


BOOK RESUME: THINGS FALL APART



Title: Things Fall Apart
Author: Chinua Achebe
Imprint: Everyman's Library
Publisher: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group
On sale date: October 17, 1995
ISBN: 9780679446231
Format: Hardcover
Grade Range: Gr 9+
(Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Traces the growing friction between village leaders and Europeans determined to save the heathen souls of Africa. But its hero, a noble man who is driven by destructive forces, speaks a universal tongue.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

“A pivotal narrative that dives into the historical aspects of Africa’s first meeting with Europeans. Readers encounter the rise and fall of African royal Okonkwo. Sacrifice, repentance, and redemption are the central themes in this classic. Students can learn so much through applying lenses of advocacy, criticality, and humanity to their study of Achebe’s classic. This is a stellar work that can aid classrooms to dissect the why behind men’s need to be in control, the silencing of women’s voices, and the importance of symbolism when it comes to plot and structure. Often heralded as the first novel in English to portray African life and people from an autonomous African point of view, this work dramatizes the Igbo culture of Nigeria and its confrontation with European missionaries. . . . A key document of African identity and decolonization that comes within a propulsive, eye-opening hero quest, strongly recommended for all high school libraries.” —*School Library Journal*

“Written with quiet dignity that builds to a climax of tragic force, this book about the dissolution of an African tribe, its traditions, and values, represents a welcome departure from the familiar ‘Me, white brother’ genre. Written by a Nigerian African trained in missionary schools, this novel tells quietly the story of a brave man, Okonkwo, whose life has absolute validity in terms of his culture, and who exercises his prerogative as a warrior, father, and husband with unflinching single mindedness. But into the complex Nigerian village filters the teachings of strangers, teachings so alien to the tribe, that resistance is impossible. One must distinguish a force to be able to oppose it, and to most, the talk of Christian salvation is no more than the babbling of incoherent children. Still, with his guns and persistence, the white man, amoeba-like, gradually absorbs the native culture and in despair, Okonkwo, unable to withstand the corrosion of what he, alone, understands to be the life force of his

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Penguin Random House

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*Publisher suggested age range covers the wide range of readers publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate range for their diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book’s intended use.

people, hangs himself. In the formlessness of the dying culture, it is the missionary who takes note of the event, reminding himself to give Okonkwo's gesture a line or two in his work, *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*. This book sings with the terrible silence of dead civilizations in which once there was valor." —*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review) (January 1, 1958)

"African literature is incomplete and unthinkable without the works of Chinua Achebe." —Toni Morrison

"Chinua Achebe has shown that a mind that observes clearly but feels deeply enough to afford laughter may be more wise than all the politicians and journalists." —*Time*

"Achebe's influence should go on and on . . . teaching and reminding that all humankind is one." —*The Nation*

"This was an intriguing book about the life of a small community in Nigeria and how it was changed with the advent of the intrusion of white missionaries and the British Government officials and how there was a struggle to retain both the freedom and independence and heritage that was precious to the Nigerians in the face of inexorable changing social and economic times. It was a very fine book, and I would recommend it to any of you here who haven't read it." —[President Jimmy Carter at a dinner honoring the Nigerian Head of State](#) (1977)

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- [America's 100 best-loved novels](#) by PBS's The Great American Read (2018)
- Business Insider's [39 Classic Books Every Modern Gentleman Should Read](#) (2014)
- [PEN America Tribute](#) (2008)
- [TIME's List of the 100 Best Novels](#) (2005)
- [Everyman's Library Contemporary Classics](#)

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- Penguin Random House [Reader's Guide](#)
- [Susan Sontag and Chinua Achebe in Conversation](#), PEN America (1989)
- [Chinua Achebe Reads from Things Fall Apart](#) (2008)

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- [Appearance on C-SPAN2 Book TV \(2008\)](#)

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

- [University of Texas at Austin](#) (2022): Sharon Obinna, a speech, language and hearing sciences freshman, said banning books and teaching materials inhibits growth for students in the classroom, especially books like *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, which tackles topics like racism and colonization. “If you ban, for example, ‘Things Fall Apart,’ that’s a whole part of a culture that you are not allowing people to learn about,” Obinna said.
- National Coalition Against Censorship [Top 10 Banned Books that Changed the Face of Black History](#): “Regarded as one of the seminal works of African literature, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe follows the life of Okonkwo, a leader and local wrestling champion in Umofia—a fictional group of nine villages in Nigeria—and his experiences with British colonialism and Christian missionaries. The story reveals the negative effects of white-rule on Okonkwo’s small village, most expressively when he decides to commit suicide instead of being tried in a colonial court. Studied widely in Africa, Europe, and North America, *Things Fall Apart* has nonetheless received criticism for its portrayal of colonialism and its consequences, and has reportedly been banned in Malaysia and Nigeria. In 2012 it [made the list](#) of works that were challenged in Texas schools.”

AUTHOR STATEMENT

- [Chinua Achebe on The Purpose and Values of Things Fall Apart](#)

***A NOTE ON AGE RANGES**

A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book’s intended use.

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