

## Rising Juniors

### **Summer Reading Requirement:**

Please read *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe and complete the following writing assignment by the first day of your English class.

You may check out *Things Fall Apart* from our high school library during the last week of school or the last week of your summer break.

### **Summer Writing Requirements:**

Choose ONE question from EACH section, and write a one-page typed, double-spaced response to the question of your choice.

You should turn in FOUR pages, each with one separate question from each of the four designated sections. Your question choice should be typed at the top of your paper and followed by your one-page response.

All responses are due the first day of your English class, either fall or spring semester.

### ***Things Fall Apart***

#### **Questions for Discussion and Essay**

Section 1—choose one

1. Define oral tradition. What is the difference between a fable, a myth, and a legend?
2. Comment on the general truth being taught by the following proverb. How does Okonkwo illustrate the value of this proverb in his life?  
“As our people say, a man who pays respect to the great paves the way for his own greatness” (page 19).
3. How does Obierika feel about “female crimes” and twins?
4. Compare Okonkwo’s life to his father’s. Which one do you think lives a happier life in the following areas: wealth, respect of his neighbors, happiness, and position with his ancestors?
5. In what sense does the Ibo culture show its approval or disapproval of spousal abuse?
6. Why do the people of the Abame village kill the white man on the bicycle?

**\*\*Remaining questions on back\*\***

**Section 2—choose one**

7. What is the significance of the beating drums in the first two sections? Why do you think there is no mention of the drums in the third part of the book?
8. In what ways do Ibo women have the right to decide who they are going to marry?
9. Define tragic flaw. What is Okonkwo's tragic flaw? Does the Ibo society also have a tragic flaw?
10. List three examples of Okonkwo's cruel personality and relate how he justifies his behavior in each case.
11. Who are the egwugwu and what function do they fill in Ibo society?
12. Support or refute this statement: The system of justice provided by the white man is much worse than the system of justice already available to the Ibo people.

**Section 3—choose one**

13. Define each of the following religious terms: oracle, agbala, Chukwu, and chi.
14. How does Ikemefuna's death impact Nwoye's relationship with his father? Had Ikemefuna lived, do you think Nwoye would have joined the white church?
15. Why does Okonkwo wish his daughter, Ezinma, had been born a boy?
16. What is the importance of the kola nut, chalk, and palm wine in Ibo society?
17. How does Okonkwo violate the rules of the Week of Peace? What is his punishment?
18. Why do the women look forward to the New Yam Festival?

**Section 4—choose one**

19. Discuss the significance of the title of the novel to Okonkwo's life and the Ibo society as a whole.
20. Define the term eurocentric and point out why this novel is considered non-Eurocentric.
21. Point out how the action of this novel grows out of its setting and compare and/or contrast this development to the relationship between setting and action in some other work with which you are familiar.
22. Support the thesis that this is an anti-imperialist novel.
23. What is there about this novel that gives it a universality? Consider a comment made by the author in which he says that both a white college

- student from Boston and James Baldwin, a noted African-American writer, told him that the protagonist reminded the two of their fathers.
24. Why do you suppose that this work is considered a classic of world literature?

Whew! Bring the book to and give your four essays to your English teacher on the first day of the term!