

Seminar on Things Fall Apart

1. Does the author, Chinua Achebe, seem to favor one culture over the other, or does he present an entirely neutral view of both? Why, and how can you tell?
2. What do you think were the author's main purposes in making Okonkwo his main character? How would the message of the book been different if Obierka or Nwoye had been the main character, or one of Okonkwo's wives, let's say, or Enzinma, his favorite daughter, or the District Commissioner (who, we should note, is planning on writing a book of his own), or one of the Christian missionaries? Another way of phrasing the central idea of all these questions is as follows: Is Okonkwo the perfect main character for the story that Achebe wants to tell? Why or why not?
3. How do you view Okonkwo's death at the end of the text? How do you think Achebe wants us to view it, and how do you know?
4. What are all of the messages – direct and implied – in the last chapter of the text?
5. What do you think is the central idea Achebe is communicating by means of the novel?
6. What are the various lessons we can learn from the collision of cultures that the text describes?
7. What do you think accounts for the novel's widespread appeal and acclaim throughout the continent of Africa? Many scholars have asserted that it is the spring from which all subsequent African literature has flowed. Besides being set in Nigeria, a prominent African nation, and besides featuring characters native to the region, what other themes/ideas within the text have proven so influential?