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| ***Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe** | | | | | | | |
| **A. Context** | | **B. Vocab** | | **C. Key characters** | | | |
| *The Rise of Christian Europe* | Hugh Trevor-Roper suggests that African history is essentially “barbarous tribes” in “irrelevant corners of the globe” | Eurocentric | Focusing on European culture or history | Okonkwo | The tragic hero, a callous and hypermasculine leader | | |
| Vulnerable | Exposed to harm, physically or emotionally | Unoka | The idle and gentle father of Okonkwo | | |
| Ritual | Religious ceremony or actions for good fortune | Nwoye | Okonkwo’s eldest son who resembles Unoka | | |
| *Introduction to Things Fall Apart* | Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie finds Achebe’s writing “unapologetically African” in contrast to Eurocentric books | Antagonise | Cause someone to become hostile or angry | Ikemefuna | The ill-fated boy taken by Umuofia as sacrifice | | |
| Sacrilegious | Transgressing religious expectations | Ogbuefi Ezeudo | | | The eldest and wisest man in the village |
| Paternal | Relating to the role and behaviour of fathers | Ekwifi | Okonkwo’s second wife, she fears losing Ezinma | | |
| “An African Voice”, 2000 | Chinua Achebe suggests that Eurocentric novels about Africans were used to justify slavery and imperialism | Generational | Relating to people from one generation or age | Ezinma | Okonkwo’s eldest daughter, admired by her father | | |
| Admiration | A deep respect for someone or something | Mr Brown | The first white missionary, respectful and compromising, he learns about the Igbo people | | |
| Turbulence | A state of conflict or confusion |
| Joseph Conrad | Renowned author of 1899 colonial novel Heart of Darkness which presents Africans as savages who Achebe criticises as racist and offensive | Brutality | Savage physical violence or cruelty | Reverend James Smith | | Replacing Mr Brown, he is contrastingly chauvinist, imperious and ethnocentric | |
| Resilience | Recovering quickly from difficulties |
| Prestige | Widespread admiration or respect | District Commissioner | | Arriving after Okonkwo murders a white man, he represents Eurocentric imperious beliefs | |
| Igbo Folk Tales | Folklore stories that teach children lessons, and act as a religion for the masses explaining the world, its creation, and the values of its people | Sheltered | Protected from danger or knowledge |
| Possessive | Controlling of someone or something | **D. Critical Approaches** | | | |
| Destabilised | Losing control of oneself, acting frenzied | Nationalism | | Identity relating to one’s nation or country | |
| Ahebi Ugababe | A female “king” whose ability to speak English allowed her to communicate with the colonising British, initially respected but later dethroned for overreaching and attending a male-only ritual | Nature | The innate qualities of something or someone | Decolonisation | | The process of removing colonisers | |
| Nurture | The encouragement and growth of qualities | Realism | | Literature that seeks to reveal the truth | |
| Innate | Irremovably part of someone or something | Colonialism | | Literature written by colonisers e.g. Conrad | |
| Hypermasculinity | Exaggerated male behaviour such as violence | Postcolonialism | | | Literature that studies the human consequences of colonialism e.g. Achebe |
| Ignatius Sancho | Born on a slave ship travelling from Guinea, Sancho was educated by a Duke and eventually became a recognised critic of colonialism. | Jingoism | Extreme patriotism especially in the form of war |
| Chauvinistic | Being overly prejudiced toward your own causes | **E. Key Quotes** | | | |
| Xenophobia | The fear of other races and nations | “Okonkwo ruled his household with a heavy hand.” | | | |
| 1885 Berlin Conference | A meeting between European powers such as Britain, France and Germany who negotiated their rights to colonise Africa, beginning formal colonisation | Isolationist | Wanting to remain separate from other nations | “Perhaps down in his heart Okonkwo was not a cruel man. But his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and of weakness.” | | | |
| Ethnocentric | Evaluating other cultures in relation to your own |
| Imperious | Arrogant belief of your own superiority |
| The Biafran War, 1967-1970 | A civil war in Nigeria where Igbo people unsuccesfully fought for the creation of their own nation, Biafra, as they felt they could no longer coexist with the current government who were ignoring their massacre | Folklore | Beliefs or religion passed by word of mouth | “We come together because it is good for kinsmen to do so.” | | | |
| Communal | For or by a group rather than individuals | “To fill the Lord's holy temple with an idolatrous crowd clamoring for signs was a folly of everlasting consequence.” | | | |
| Restraint | Discipline and the ability to control oneself |
| Foolhardy | Disregard or lack of care for consequences | “Do you know how many children I have buried—children I begot in my youth and strength? Twenty-two. I did not hang myself, and I am still alive.” | | | |
| Shell Oil | Just one example of a Western corporation who exploited and ravaged Africa for its resources | Malevolent | Wishing or causing evil on others |
| Colonialism | The forcible taking over of another country | “if a child washed his hands he could eat with kings” | | | |