*Things Fall Apart* Chapter Journal Entries

Instead of our usual short answer questions for every chapter, you will keep a reading journal for *Things Fall Apart.* Please write an entry for each chapter immediately after reading. (You will write at least a solid paragraph for each and need to keep a section of your notebook for this.)

**Chapter One:**

What do we learn about the tribe’s values? It may help you to consider those values under the following headings…

Moral

Social

Cultural

Sporting

Economic

**Chapter Two:**

How do you think Achebe wants us to view Okonkwo’s character and behavior? You may take into account in your answer what we have learned about Okonkwo in Chapter One.

**Chapter Three:**

Why do you think Achebe features Okonkwo’s failures at this point in the story?

**Chapter Four:**

What signs are there that Okonkwo’s personal shortcomings will bring him trouble later?

**Chapter Five:**

a) Why does Okonkwo feel unenthusiastic about the feast? How does that lack of enthusiasm show itself? Why is it surprising?

b) Why does he feel excited by the wrestling? In your answer take into account the story of how Okonkwo won Ekwefi’s heart. How does his excitement show itself? Why is it not surprising?

Taken together, what do the two feelings add to our understanding of Okonkwo’s character?**Chapter Six:**

What do you think this short chapter contributes to the story?

**Chapter Seven:**

How does Achebe create the feeling that Ikemefuna’s death is an inevitable part of things? Consider in your answer the arrival of the locusts, the part played in the death by tribal beliefs, Okonkwo’s character, and the way this part of the story is told.

**Chapter Eight:**

In what ways is Okonkwo’s thinking challenged in the early part of this chapter? How does he respond?

**Chapter Nine:**

How and why does Achebe establish a sharp contrast between the way Okonkwo and Okagbue behave in this chapter?

**Chapter Ten:**

How effective is the tribe’s system of justice as illustrated here? What is significant, as far as the story is concerned, about the fact that Okonkwe is one of the egwugwu?

**Chapter Eleven:**

What conflicting forces are probably at work within each of the four characters in this chapter?

**Chapter Twelve:**

How does Achebe want us to view the life of the tribe, as evidenced here? Why might you expect this chapter to be something of a preparation for the novel’s turning-point?

**Chapter Thirteen:**

What view does Achebe take of Okonkwo’s banishment? How do you view it?

**Chapter Fourteen:**

How does Uchendu’s advice to Okonkwo suggest some directions the story may take from this point on? Imagine you write a ‘personal advice’ column for a newspaper or magazine. Re-express Uchendo’s advice in modern terms (and more briefly).

**Chapter Fifteen:**

‘There is no story that is not true,’ says Uchendu on Page 123. What do you think he means? Explain your answer by talking about to some of the stories told so far in the novel (including the account of the locust invasion).

**Chapter Sixteen:**

How does Achebe

a) show the great gap between the two sets of beliefs (tribal and Christian)?

b) suggest why Christianity appeals to some members of the tribe (including Nwoye)?

**Chapter Seventeen:**

a) Why does Okonkwo react so violently to Nwoye’s conversion? Suggest as many reasons as you can.

b) What understanding of the situation does he come to by the end of the chapter? Can you see any connection between that understanding and your answer to the question on Chapter Seven?

**Chapter Eighteen:**

What do we learn from this chapter about how people of differing beliefs become hostile towards each other? Note the parts played not only by the voices of extremism, but also by those of moderation.

**Chapter Nineteen:**

Explain how this chapter is both a statement of faith and an expression of fear. How does Achebe lead us to be concerned for Okonkwo, as well as for the tribe?

**Chapter Twenty:**

What are ‘the things that held [the tribe] together’, and how have they been cut? What advice do you think Uchendu might have given Okonkwo now, if he had been here? (Read again the advice he gives him at the end of Chapter Fourteen.)

**Chapter Twenty-One:**

How does this chapter hold out hope for peaceful compromise? What signs are that there this may not be achieved easily?

**Chapter Twenty-Two:**

What differences do you note in the way of thinking of the two sides in this conflict, and also in the language they use?

**Chapter Twenty-Three:**

How are the tribe’s leaders betrayed by

a) the District Commissioner

b) the Court Messengers

c) their own standards of conduct?

**Chapter Twenty-Four:**

What are the sign, and the outcome, of Okonkwo’s isolation?

**Chapter Twenty-Five:**

Explain the ironies in this chapter.