

DOCUMENT REPORT: EXPLORING THE AFRICAN NOVEL

1. Description and Purpose

The [first] assignment of this course is a document report on *Things Fall Apart* (1958), a novel by the Nigerian author Chinua Achebe (1930–2013). Achebe was born in the village of Ogidi, which by the time of his birth had been fully infiltrated by Christian missionaries from Great Britain. After earning his degree in History and Theology, Achebe worked for the Nigerian Broadcasting Company before moving on to several posts as an English professor in both Nigeria and the United States. Although Achebe chose to write in the language of the colonizer, *Things Fall Apart* reflects many aspects of Igbo culture and traditions. For his numerous novels, short stories, essays, and poems Achebe has been hailed as one of the fathers of modern African literature. You will carefully and critically read through *Things Fall Apart* and think about the ways in which Achebe represents colonization in his novel. What roles do British missionaries and colonial administrators play in the overall plot? How is Okonkwo and others in his village influenced by colonialism and in what ways do they respond to their changing situation? The purpose of this assignment is to think about the ways in which colonialism altered local dynamics in Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This document analysis is also designed to provide you with an opportunity to exercise your historical imagination and to engage with a primary source in a critical fashion.

2. Important Details

Due Date: To be determined (email before midnight)

Length: [XX] pages (double-spaced, 12-font, Times New Roman)

Sources:

- Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*. 50th Anniversary Edition (New York: Anchor Books, 1994). [<http://teachers.greenville.k12.sc.us/sites/amrobinson/Things%20Fall%20Apart/things-fall-apart-chinua-achebe%20FULL%20TEXT.pdf>]