



Wichita High School East • International Baccalaureate Diploma Program

2301 E. Douglas • Wichita, KS 67211 • (316) 973-7289 phone • (316) 973-7209 fax

IB Summer Reading for Rising Juniors

Summer 2023

Your summer reading is a chapter of a book, one novel, and two short essays. The novel is available at Watermark Books at a discounted price and may be preordered there as can all works for the year when they are determined: <http://www.watermarkbooks.com/summer-reading-ib-junior>

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe (ISBN 9780385474542)

This text is also available online (<https://books-library.net/files/books-library.online-12270807Tw6Z2.pdf>), but I recommend that you purchase the work for annotation purposes; otherwise, you will find yourself taking many, many pages of notes as you read and printing sections required for annotation. **If purchasing the work is a financial burden, please contact Mr. Boykins** (973-7289 or mboykins@usd259.net). Please email me with specific questions you have at chutton@usd259.net. I will attempt to check my school email at least every other week over the summer.

While I encourage discussion of the work(s) with your peers, I would remind you that **policies regarding collaboration, collusion, and plagiarism will be enforced. This is an assignment for the individual student, not for the group. Additionally, please be wary if you look up information online as often that leads to unintended plagiarism.**

Junior year focuses on works selected for their cultural and social context; to that end, please **read the chapter entitled “It’s All Political” in *How To Read Literature Like a Professor* before you begin reading the other works** available here:

https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1GCEB_enUS915US915&q=How+to+Read+literature+Like+a+Professor+chapter+13+pdf&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjB-ruC5ej-AhW1mGoFHboVCd8Q1QJ6BAg0EAE

Things Fall Apart is a fictional work focusing on Nigerian colonization in the 1890s. It will be the first work studied during junior year. I have selected it because it is a seminal work, reads fairly straightforwardly, and introduces stylistic and thematic constructs that will be our foundation for the year. The additional essays provide thematic corollaries. Please consult a map of Nigeria before you read to establish the locus and, perhaps, a map of Myanmar as well. These texts deal with the stages of forced cultural disintegration at the hands of colonialism. In the novel religious infiltration is the first step; economic and trade takeover follows—including exploitation of natural and human resources of the colonized area. Then changes in the government and justice systems occur; individuals within the colonized community will help or hinder, depending on personal circumstances. **Note who supports and who resists these cultural changes in the texts and why. As you read, please adhere to the following expectations for *Things Fall Apart* (and any other work we ever read; this is just a given!):**

- PLEASE **join the class Remind.com**, IB English 3, Class of 2025. I will use it to communicate with you directly when Watermark receives all texts for the year. I recommend you purchase all texts in one visit to diminish the need to return to the store, perhaps with little notice throughout the year. **Text @ag8fh3c to 81010** to join.
- **Look up unfamiliar words**, and define them directly in the text; if you do not have a definition next to a word, I assume you already know what it means and can pass a vocabulary quiz on which that word appears.

Take advantage of and consult the glossary of Ibo (or Igbo) words and their definitions at the novel's end. You may need to add additional words.

- **Make a character list** (also an expectation for any long work). This will need to be on separate paper. I recommend three-column notes in which you identify in the left margin before the character's name the page number on which he/she first appears and pages of reappearance if the character is missing from the text for a time. Include significant actions and descriptions with which characters are associated. While the **names are unfamiliar, you will be responsible for being able to identify them on an assessment; you won't have to come up with them on your own.** Making a family tree may be helpful.
- Please **pay special attention to Okonkwo as a character.** Think critically about what type of man he represents, his flaws, his attributes, and his weaknesses. Ultimately he can be identified as both an **allegorical everyman** and a **tragic hero.** **Please review the notes in the last two pages of this assignment sheet so that you may begin to evaluate him in the latter role.**
- The role of oral tradition plays heavily in this text; chapter one establishes that "Among the Ibo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten" (Achebe 7). **Keep a list of proverbs and where you find them** (again on end pages in the text).
- Please also **track the following in your annotations of *Things Fall Apart*:** parent/child relationships, gender roles, communion, cultural myth, scapegoating, the role of ritual (especially that which evidences Christian and Ibo cultural duality), beliefs that constitute superstition by some, language and its delivery, cultural change, and irony. Continue to keep in mind figures of speech, symbols, and archetypal patterns. Track any page numbers in notes so that you can easily find and refer back to earmarked passages.
- The following **thought questions** will make it easier for you to discuss and write adequately about the texts when you return to school. The rule in English is that at least three substantiating situations in a text are necessary to support thinking adequately. Consider these questions as you read and annotate *Things Fall Apart*, noting places in the text that could be relied on for evidence:

A. What holds a culture together? What tears a culture apart? What role does change play in the functioning of a people and culture? If an outside force threatens a culture, do its citizens have the right/responsibility to respond with violence? Should change come only from within, or is it only possible if an individual or group arrives from the outside? Do humans cling to traditions of the past for fear of the future? To what extent does the generation gap play in any society's modulation and change? Is change destructive or progressive? How so?

B. Humans have enormous variance in their religious beliefs, and the power of religion can both guide society and destroy it. How can religion or spirituality help a person individually or society as a whole? How can religion or spirituality hurt a person or a society? Does religion or spirituality influence government? Should it do so?

C. On first read the Ibo society appears to be a male-dominated society; however, women have a vital role in food production, child rearing, establishing and reinforcing standards of beauty and art, cultural ceremonies, and even in spiritual connections with the Ibo gods. How do women contribute to and influence the Ibo culture in specific ways? You will likely also want to consider distinctions between "male" and "female" crimes.

D. In an ideal society, what are the supports and items (tangible or intangible) that a community, state, or country should provide an individual? (Do not answer money!) What should an individual be expected to give back to society?

E. What are some ways that people respond when they don't understand someone else's culture, experiences, or attitudes? How can people successfully gain an understanding of another's culture and the people in it? What potential positive and negative impacts on society occur when cultures mix?

F. Gandhi is spuriously credited with saying, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." Is it truly possible for one person to change society? What is the relevance of this question or any of the other ideas encountered in these works for today?

G. If we consider the aspects of tragedy identified at the end of this handout, how is Okonkwo (and later Orwell's protagonists too) a tragic hero? What are his flaws? In what ways is he an individual greater than life who suffers undeservedly? What are the admirable qualities that allow him to rise to power in his Ibo world? Who or what participates in the role of the chorus in the text? With what effect? See the addendum on tragedy at the end of this handout for more on tragedy and tragic heroes.

- **Assignment 1:** Select three significant passages in the text that are a minimum of two pages long each. These should be passages rich in stylistic and literary features, and they should reflect the entire book (not just the first 20 pages). Annotate these passages thoughtfully. Mark them with post-it notes or flags so that I can easily find them to evaluate your annotations, being sure to indicate clearly where your chosen sections begin and end.
- **Assignment 2:** In an essay entitled "The Role of a Writer in a New Nation," Chinua Achebe writes about his ultimate goal in writing *Things Fall Apart*. He says, "that African peoples did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans, that their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry and, above all, they had dignity. It is this dignity that many African peoples all but lost in the colonial period, and it is this dignity that they must now regain. The worst thing that can happen to any people is the loss of their dignity and self-respect. The writer's duty is to help them regain it by showing them in human terms what happened to them, what they lost."

Achebe carefully peppers Ibo proverbs (short pithy sayings that usually state a general truth or piece of advice) and folktales throughout the novel, revealing a culture that possesses a rich, poetic history. Identify a minimum of FIVE proverbs. Write out the proverbs and cite where you find them. Then, in your own words, explain the lesson, advice, or piece of wisdom being communicated through each proverb. Explain how the proverb is used within the context of the novel. Why is the proverb brought up in that particular moment? To which character(s) does each proverb apply? Finally, identify at least three other places in the text where each proverb becomes relevant, again with parenthetical citations. Your focus should be to identify and explain how these proverbs establish dignity in Achebe's fictionalized Ibo culture. **You will submit this on the first day of school.**

Do this in a four-column chart like the one below. Full sentences are necessary only in your paraphrase and explanation (column 2). Write (black or blue ink) or type and print your response before class.

Quoted Proverb (followed by parenthetical citation)	Paraphrase and meaning of the proverb in your own words	How is the proverb developed in context?	Minimum three other textual connections and explanations

- **Assignment 3:** Read the two nonfiction works by George Orwell available here: "A Hanging" https://piper.asu.edu/sites/default/files/orwell_hanging.pdf and "Shooting an Elephant"

https://acikders.ankara.edu.tr/pluginfile.php/101183/mod_resource/content/1/Orwell%2C%20ShootingAnElephant.pdf or at <https://www.npr.org/2005/07/19/4761169/exploring-burma-through-george-orwell>. Both Orwell essays are set in Burma, now Myanmar. In a series of wars in the 19th century, the British gained control of Burma and made it a province of British India. The Burmese resented British rule under which they endured poverty and a lack of political and religious freedom. Like many of his fellow British officers, Orwell was inexperienced in police work when he arrived in Burma at age 19. He can be presumed to be the speaker in both works. Complete a chart like the following for each story. (Suggestion: do this on separate sheets of paper.) You will receive hard copies of these essays at the opening of the school year. **Do this only after you have completed reading *Things Fall Apart*. Consider the meanings of the works and then record your responses in black or blue ink or typed and printed in a chart like this, which you will submit on the first day of school:**

“A Hanging”		“Shooting an Elephant”	
What are the specific arguments of the author?		What are the specific arguments of the author?	
Occasion:		Occasion:	
Audience:		Audience:	
Purpose:		Purpose:	
Speaker’s Attitude:		Speaker’s Attitude:	
Tone:		Tone:	
Specific words that establish the tone:		Specific words that establish the tone:	
Figurative language that reinforces the tone:		Figurative language that reinforces the tone:	
Theme statement revealed by the work: (This should be a complete sentence.)		Theme statement revealed by the work: (This should be a complete sentence.)	
Personal Connections:		Personal Connections:	

- **Assignment 4:** Consider commonalities among the protagonists in Orwell’s essays and Achebe’s protagonist and other characters, albeit Orwell is on the side of the colonizer rather than the colonized. **Write a brief MLA-formatted essay in which you compare and contrast attitudes toward colonization in Achebe’s work and Orwell’s essays. What do the authors and their works ultimately suggest about colonization, violent means to an end, human reactions when trapped, the importance or lack thereof of an individual’s own human story, or some other meaningful commonality you see in the texts? Focus your essay on one specific topic only. Cite as follows: (Achebe 7), (Orwell, “AH” par. 3), or Orwell, “SaE” par. 7). Maximum length is three pages; no minimum length exists. This work should be typed and printed. I will collect these on the first day of school**

What to expect at the beginning of the academic year:

1. **On the first day of school submit a hard copy of assignments 2, 3, and 4. Assignments 2 and 3 may be handwritten in black or blue ink or typed; assignment 4, as stated, should be typed. Print out all assignments that are typed BEFORE coming to class. Late penalties (20% deduction per day) will apply to all long-term assignments not submitted on time.**
2. **An objective test over the texts will occur in the first days of school.** I strongly recommend that you take and review notes over the works. Although these notes will not be collected for a grade, they will be a useful resource in preparing for tasks related to summer reading assessments and should provide you a model

of how to prepare and take notes for English classes over the next two years. As you read, pay close attention to and annotate for **literary and stylistic devices**. **Track reoccurring metaphors, symbols, and/or other authorial choices on end pages of your text. Characters, plot, and understanding of how literary elements contribute to the meaning of a text will appear on the objective test.**

3. On the day of the test, I will collect Assignment 1, looking for evidence that you have thought deeply and carefully as you read.

4. Oral presentation(s), dramatic interpretation(s), or Socratic circle(s) on the works will take place in the first weeks of school as will a written guided analysis or in-class essay over the works.

5. While these activities and expectations build concepts significant in IB World Literature (a two-year course), because you will be returning to the text(s) throughout the semester and beyond, the more carefully you read and annotate now, the better off you'll be during the academic year. As always come to class with specific questions to enhance your engagement.

Notes on tragedy and tragic heroes as defined by Aristotle (384- 322 B.C.) from *Poetics*, his study of dramatic art (for the third bullet and thought question G—Keep this handout for the entire year; we will return to it frequently.)

- Tragedy, like all poetry, is an imitation of things as they could be, not as they are
- The aim of tragedy is *catharsis* for spectators, sensations of pity and fear that build and are then cleansed from the audience to enable them to leave the theatre feeling uplifted and heightened in their understandings of the ways of men and gods. *Catharsis* is brought about by witnessing disastrous and moving changes in the life of the protagonist.
- Tragedy, for Aristotle, becomes a representation of an action which may be possible and should be interpreted to have significance greater than the act itself, a meaning we can all learn and improve from.
- Tragedy is didactic and symbolic in nature.
- It's early function was entirely religious.

Aristotle's 6 Elements of Tragedy

1. **Plot** is the action in life that makes men happy or wretched. It is the most important of Aristotle's elements as it is what is responsible for bringing about *catharsis*.

- It must be a complete story with a definite beginning, middle, and end that the audience can understand as separate units and as a whole.
- It must have a central theme which logically demonstrates the change in the protagonist's fortunes and shows cause and effect.
- To be universal it should illustrate matters of cosmic rather than individual significance.
- It must include "reversal" (*peripetia* or dramatic irony) in that the opposite of what the protagonist expects to happen does.
- It must also include "recognition" (*anagnorisis*), the point at which the protagonist realizes the truth of the situation.

2. **Characters** who are tragic, for Aristotle, are neither sinful nor morally weak; they simply do not know enough; thus, bringing about their own downfall becomes inevitable. The **ideal protagonist** is a man who is highly renowned and prosperous but not exceedingly virtuous and just, whose misfortune is brought about by an error in judgment or frailty rather than because he is an evil person.

- He has little psychological motivation and seemingly merely experiences cosmic changes.

- He must be true to life and consistent.
- He must be a figure with whom the audience can sympathize to trigger pity and fear when his status changes.
- He must have an error or frailty (*harmartia*) that is more fate- and cosmos-controlled than man-controlled; if it is looked at as human-controlled, he fails to be sympathetic.

In short, a **tragic hero is a literary character who makes a judgment that inevitably leads to his own destruction. Justice and/or revenge must play a role in that judgment. The character's fate must be more than he deserves. He must fall from great heights and courageously accept his fall (often death) with honor. He cannot, according to Aristotle, "become a hero until he can see the root of his own downfall."**

Other common traits:

- Hero must suffer more than he deserves.
- Hero must be doomed from the start but bears no responsibility for possessing his flaw.
- Hero must be noble in nature but imperfect so that the audience members can see themselves in him.
- Hero must discover his fate by his own actions rather than by events happening to him.
- Hero faces making a profoundly serious decision and makes the only moral decision he can.
- Hero must understand his doom as well as the fact that he participated in his own ignorance and discovery of that doom.
- Hero must be physically or spiritually wounded by his experiences (again, often resulting in his death).
- Hero must be intelligent so that he may learn from his mistakes.
- Hero must have a weakness; usually it is pride.

3. Thought: Aristotle says little about thought, and most of what he does say is associated with how speeches should reveal character. However, we may assume that this category would also include what we call the **themes** of a play.

4. Diction: Here, Aristotle discusses the stylistic elements of tragedy; he is particularly interested in **metaphors**: "But the greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor; . . . [I]t is the mark of genius, for to make good metaphors implies an eye for resemblances."

5. Song: the musical element of the chorus. Aristotle argues that the chorus should be fully integrated into the play like an actor; choral odes should not be "mere interludes" between scenes but should contribute to the unity of the plot.

6. Spectacle: last because it is least connected with literature and is determined by the **art of the stage machinist** rather than by the poet.

Functions of the Chorus (formerly the central figure rather than a group of interested bystanders):

1. **Ideal Spectator**--interprets characters' experiences and feelings in everyday terms and reacts to them in a conventional manner
2. **Odes**--create psychological and emotional background
3. Introduce and question new characters--converse with and offer advice
4. Point out significance of events as they occur
5. Give background information to the audience about preceding events
6. Establish facts, themes, and mood of the drama
7. Cover the passage of time between events
8. Relieve tension
9. Separate episodes with odes (originally choreographed)
10. *Kommos*-- lyrical dialogue with one of the characters during an episode (the scenes)
11. Leader of the chorus is a spokesperson (*choragus*)