

THINGS FALL APART

ORAL TEST REVIEW

1. Examine the role of customs and traditions in “Things Fall Apart” and consider why these might be important to this culture (for instance, think about how they all have to do with the natural world and natural forces—appropriate since they live in the open and are prone to threats). Explain how these customs changed after the whites and colonialism came.
2. What are Okonkwo’s view of masculinity? Where do these views come from?
3. How does the novel depict and treat the Christian missionaries? Do you see bias or objectivity?
4. The power of religion can both guide a society and destroy it. Discuss the ways in which Christianity, as promoted by the missionaries, does both.
5. How does the father-son relationship throughout three generations shape the personalities of Okonkwo, and Nwoye? Comment on their characteristics and the role their father plays in making them who they are.
6. "The story of Okonkwo is in a way the story of our culture; he pays a price because he places too much emphasis on strength and manliness." Discuss this quote as it applies to both the novel and our own modern American culture.
7. One of the themes of Achebe's novel is the striving after titles, trophies, and status in general. Comment on the presence and importance of status symbols in Okonkwo's world and today's world. Explain their appeal and the ways in which searching for status symbols is a negative force in life.
8. Discuss the ways in which the District Commissioner symbolizes intolerance and disrespect for cultures he considers inferior.
9. "[Okonkwo's] whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and of weakness." Explain how fear, in an ironic way, is the catalyst for destruction and failure in the novel.
10. Comment on how Achebe counters the Imperialist stereotypes on Africa as an uncivilized continent. What aspects of Ibo culture contradict this commonly held stereotype?