



Key Vocabulary: Things fall apart by Chinua Achebe

Vocabulary Word	Definition
Abomination	Something that is detested or hated
Ancestor	A person from whom one is descended
Chi	A personal god or spirit believed to protect an individual or family
Colonialism	The policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically
Egwugwu	A masquerader who impersonates one of the ancestral spirits of the village
Oracle	A person or place considered to be a source of wise counsel or prophetic opinion, often associated with a deity or supernatural power
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Palm-wine	An alcoholic beverage made from the sap of various species of palm trees
Protagonist	The leading character or one of the major characters in a drama, movie, novel, or other fictional text
Proverb	A short popular saying, usually of unknown and ancient origin, that expresses effectively some commonplace truth or useful thought
Superstition	An irrational belief or practice resulting from ignorance or fear of the unknown
Tribe	A social division in a traditional society consisting of families or communities linked by social, economic, religious, or blood ties, with a common culture and dialect, typically having a recognized leader
Umunna	A wide group of kinsmen or extended family who are responsible for settling disputes and looking after the welfare of all members
Yams	A tropical African crop that is the starchy, edible tuber of a climbing plant, widely cultivated in the tropics



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Historical and political context of the book

"Things Fall Apart" by Chinua Achebe is set in pre-colonial Nigeria, before the arrival of European colonial powers. The book provides an insight into the history and culture of the Igbo people of Nigeria, and also sheds light on the impact of British colonialism and Christian missionaries on African societies.

The Igbo people had a rich and complex culture, with a well-developed system of government, social hierarchy, religion, and traditions. They had their own language, customs, and beliefs, which were closely tied to the land and their ancestors. However, the arrival of Europeans and their imposition of Christianity and colonialism disrupted and threatened the Igbo way of life.

The British colonizers were interested in exploiting Nigeria's natural resources, such as palm oil, and in spreading their culture and religion. They established colonial governments and institutions, which undermined the authority of traditional rulers and the autonomy of local communities. They also imposed a new legal system, language, and education system, which eroded the cultural identity and self-esteem of African people.

The book portrays the tensions and conflicts that arose between the Igbo people and the British colonizers, as well as within the Igbo community itself. The protagonist, Okonkwo, struggles to uphold the values and traditions of his people in the face of change and external pressures. He is also haunted by his father's legacy of weakness and failure, which he tries to overcome through violence and aggression.

Overall, "Things Fall Apart" offers a poignant and powerful critique of the destructive effects of colonialism on African societies and cultures, and highlights the resilience and dignity of African people in the face of oppression and injustice.