



 Prestwick House

# Activity Pack

## THINGS FALL APART

BY CHINUA ACHEBE



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Written by Debbie Newsome

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Pre-Reading

#### Identifying With Thematic Concepts

**Objective:** Identifying with characters and situations in a novel

#### Activity

There are several thematic concepts prevalent in *Things Fall Apart*; among them are the fear of failure, the disintegration of a society, and the perception of gender (masculine versus feminine). These three thematic concepts will be focused on in this activity.

In groups, discuss each of these thematic concepts and list situations, examples, and feelings you associate with them.

After you have done this, choose one of the thematic concepts to visually display to the class. You may choose to do this through a collage or art medium, through charades or pantomime, or through the performance of a short play you create as a group.

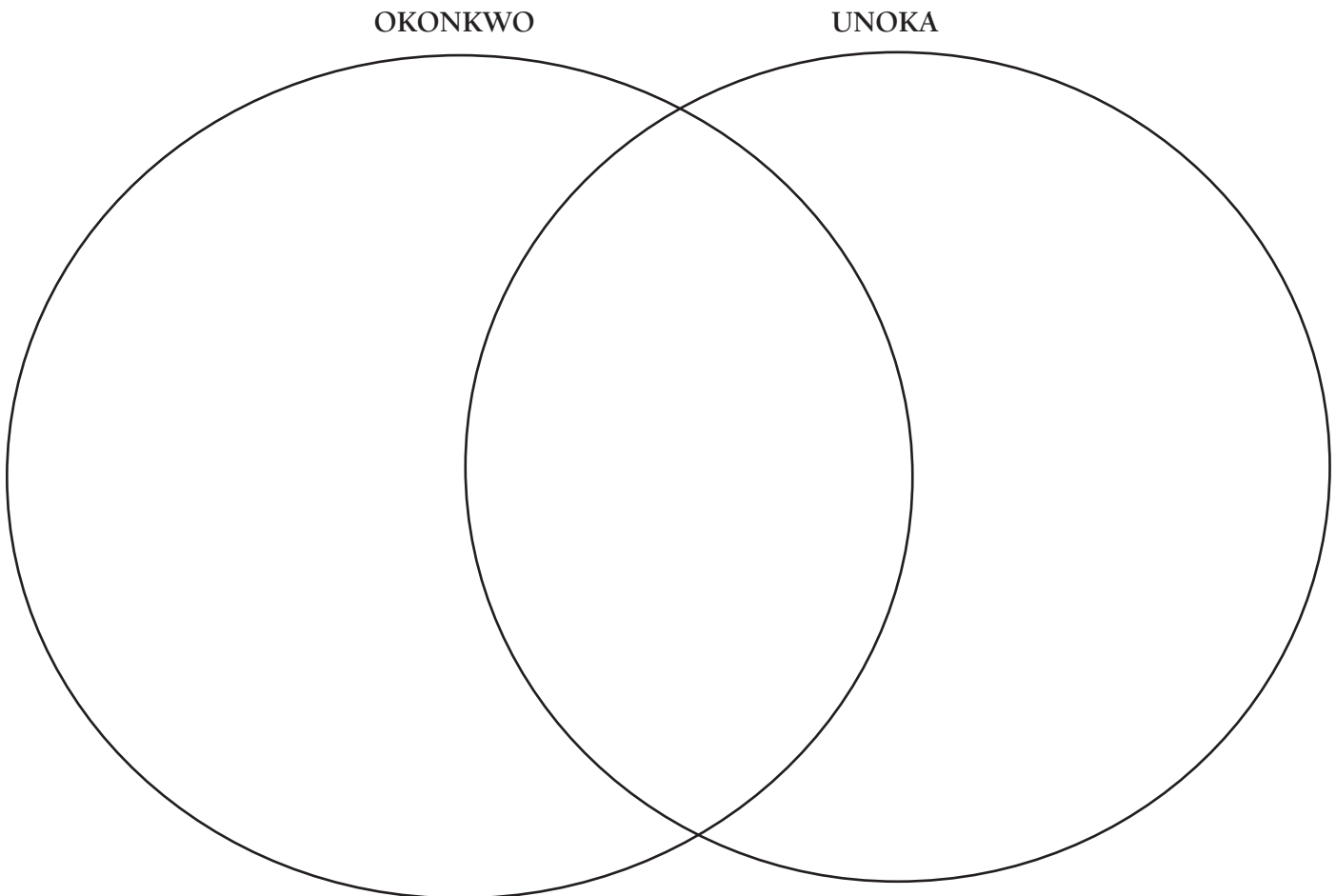
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**Chapters 1-3****Characterization****Objective:** Comparing and contrasting characters**Activity**

In order for the reader to identify with the characters, the author creates a visual of his characters through description and detail. The first three chapters of *Things Fall Apart* reveal much about the protagonist Okonkwo and his father, Unoka.

A Venn diagram is a way to organize the similarities and differences between two people or things visually. In the center, where the circles intersect, write the similarities. On either side, write the differences. Fill in the Venn diagram that follows to compare and contrast Okonkwo with his father Unoka. Consider their personalities, attitudes, relationships, and appearances.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 4****A Man's Fate****Objective:** Assessing character's personality**Activity**

This chapter of *Things Fall Apart* continues to reveal more insight into Okonkwo's character, his personal beliefs, and his values. The author reiterates the importance of a man's *chi*, or personal god as he explains that Okonkwo "deserved his success,...That was not luck." (Pg. 27)

Imagine you are an astrologer; write a horoscope for Okonkwo based on his primary character traits revealed in this chapter.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 5

### The Family Tree

**Objective:**    Interpreting details from the text  
                  Creating a visual reference to the text

#### Activity

In order to preserve the history of a family, many people research their genealogy and build a family tree based on information given and recorded over many years. This history includes as many members and relatives as the researcher can find. This is not only an American custom, but it is also a historical record-keeping system for many countries and cultures. In keeping with the traditions of the Ibo culture, Achebe bases his story on a realistic African family and clan. Using the information given through this chapter, generate a representation of Okonkwo's family tree including his wives and children. Your final product can be in the form of a sketch, a collage, a power point slide, or a 3-D visual.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 6

### Cultural Traditions

**Objective:**    Comprehending important details  
                     Relating American culture to the Ibo

#### Activity 1

The scenario and events in this chapter outline the importance of wrestling matches to the Ibo tribe. The author's description helps the reader visualize and understand the event.

After reading the chapter, answer the following questions:

1. Describe how the villagers create the arena.
2. Who sits during the event? Who stands during the event?
3. How is order among the crowd maintained?
4. Describe the teams.
5. Describe the day's events.
6. What role does music play in the event?
7. How is the winner honored?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 7

### Eulogy

**Objective:** Writing a eulogy  
Writing an obituary

#### Activity 1

At the end of the chapter, members of the Ibo tribe, along with Okonkwo, kill Ikemefuna, the young man placed under Okonkwo's care. Imagine that Okonkwo has been instructed by the elders to deliver the eulogy at Ikemefuna's funeral. Assume the persona of Okonkwo and write the eulogy. Eulogies should offer some insight into how Ikemefuna lived and how he died. Your eulogy should be approximately one page in length.

#### Activity 2

Locate a copy of your local newspaper and read through the obituaries to understand the purpose and style of the article. Write an obituary for Ikemefuna.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 8**

**Thematic Concepts**

**Objective:** Recognizing thematic concepts

**Activity**

One thematic concept expressed in *Things Fall Apart* deals with gender and Okonkwo's perception of masculinity and femininity. Throughout the novel, Okonkwo expresses his dislike for feminine traits that he associates with weakness and inferiority. His ideas are based on his experiences with his father and his desire to be different from him. In this chapter, the reader views various incidents that reveal Okonkwo's pride in his masculinity.

Complete the chart below with the passage that reveals Okonkwo's reaction and explain the reaction. The first one has been done for you.

Incident	Okonkwo's Reaction	Explanation
Ezinma delivers food to her father.	"Okonkwo ate the food absent-mindedly. 'She should have been a boy,' he thought as he looked at his ten-year-old daughter." (Pg. 64)	Okonkwo believes being a girl is weak and inferior, and because Ezinma is his favorite, he wishes she were masculine and, therefore, strong.
Okonkwo is shamed by his grief.		
Obierika's son, Maduka, shakes hands with Okonkwo, and Okonkwo wishes his own son Nwoye were more like Maduka.		
Okonkwo shows his manliness by participating in Ikemefuna's death.		
Obierika relates the details of Ndulue and Ozoemena's deaths.		



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 9**

**Names**

**Objective:** Relating literature to life

**Activity**

Okonkwo's second wife Ekwefi "had suffered a good deal in her life. She had borne ten children and nine of them had died in infancy, usually before the age of three." (Pg. 77) This misfortune is attributed to *ogbanjie*, wicked children who are repeatedly reincarnated. Because of the deaths, Ekwefi gives her children names that reflect her belief in the reincarnation process. In addition, names are so important to the members of the Ibo tribe that they hold naming ceremonies seven weeks after the birth of a child.

Make a list of the Top Ten Names of the past few years.

**TOP TEN NAMES**

Girls Names	Boys Names

**Reflection:** Write an essay answering the following questions:

Why do you think these names are so common today? Do you know the meaning or folklore behind any of the names? Look up the meanings of some of the names. Do the meanings reflect anyone you know who has that name? Why do you think some names are more popular than others? What does your name mean? Why did your parents give you this name? If you could change your name, what would you change it to? Why would you choose this name?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 10

### Secret Societies

**Objective:** Relating literature to life  
Gathering inference from detail

#### Activity

The *egwugwu* is presented as “the most powerful and the most secret cult in the clan.” (Pg. 88) The ceremonies and background surrounding this organization are as mysterious as they are interesting. Modern society is not without its own secret societies. Most colleges house social fraternities and sororities made up of members who pride themselves on secret rituals, passwords, handshakes, mottos, and ceremonies. In addition, many adults are members of fraternal organizations such as the Elks and Masons, which are also based on secret rites and purposes. Even young children form clubs with passwords.

Create your own secret society. Name your group and indicate how you would form the organization. Consider the following:

- How do you choose your members?
- How do you select your leaders?
- How do you conduct your initiation ceremony for new members?
- What is your secret password? Handshake? Motto?
- Is there a special dress or clothing requirement?
- How often do you meet?
- What is the purpose of your group?

This project should be typed and placed in a neatly decorated folder. Include on the folder front some type of artwork that reflects your organization. For example, the Order of the Eastern Star has a five-point star as its symbol.