

## Things Fall Apart - Final Essay



In your final writing assignment for *Things Fall Apart* you will be asked to analyze the text through a particular lens. This isn't nearly as difficult as it sounds; all you need to do is start looking at the text in a specific way. For example, if you were to write an essay about the role of women in Umuofia, you would re-examine the book looking specifically at the ways in which women are treated. If you were to write about the ways in which Okonkwo seems to violate tribal codes, you would examine the book looking for those particular moments. In short, a lens is just a tool for seeing things in a particular way.

There are several different essay options for your final writing assessment, but all have the same requirements. Each typed final essay must have:

- A clear introduction, including a hook, some context/background, and a complete thesis including a discussion of the author's purpose.
- At least 3 body paragraphs with relevant topic sentences and logically selected textual evidence that clearly support the thesis.
- Proper MLA citations.
- A conclusion.
- An attached rough draft.

Please select one of the following essay prompts:

1. In his poem "The Second Coming," William Butler Yeats writes that as things fall apart "the center cannot hold." Discuss the ways in which society in Umuofia fell apart and the potential causes for this fall.
2. Examine the role of women in Igbo culture. Are women portrayed as important members of the society or as something more akin to cattle? Perhaps something in-between?
3. Examine the role of the missionaries in *Things Fall Apart*. Is their presence in the novel entirely negative, entirely positive, or something else?
4. In what ways does the church pose a threat to Okonkwo, his way of life, and the health of the tribe? Has it, as Obierika said, cut apart that which held the tribe together?
5. In an essay discussing why he wrote *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe writes the following:

This theme—put quite simply—is that African people 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 people all but lost during the colonial period and it is this 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.

From "The Role of the Writer in a New Nation," 1964

How well do you believe that Achebe manages to accomplish his goal? How well does he show this "depth and value and beauty" in the Igbo people? How does he depict them as human, with human dignity and human failings?

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### Intro:

- Hook is clear.
- Transition moves from hook to subject.
- Topic is introduced.
- Thesis includes a statement about author's purpose.

### Body Paragraph 1

- Topic sentence introduces paragraph's argument.
- Evidence is clearly set up.
- Commentary connects evidence to thesis.
- Second piece of evidence is set up.
- Commentary connects evidence to thesis.
- Conclusion summarizes arguments.
- MLA followed throughout.

### Body Paragraph 2

- Topic sentence introduces paragraph's argument.
- Evidence is clearly set up.
- Commentary connects evidence to thesis.
- Second piece of evidence is set up.
- Commentary connects evidence to thesis.
- Conclusion summarizes arguments.
- MLA followed throughout.

### Body Paragraph 3

- Topic sentence introduces paragraph's argument.
- Evidence is clearly set up.
- Commentary connects evidence to thesis.
- Second piece of evidence is set up.
- Commentary connects evidence to thesis.
- Conclusion summarizes arguments.
- MLA followed throughout.

### Conclusion

- Essay is summarized without repeating.
- Conclusion connects essay to the world at large.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thesis focused, insightful, and logical.</li> <li>• Focus remains on thesis.</li> <li>• Supporting examples/commentary reveal critical analysis or insight.</li> <li>• Quotations/examples clearly connect with and develop thesis.</li> <li>• Body paragraphs use topic sentences, supporting details, and commentary smoothly.</li> <li>• Quotations smoothly blended into text.</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> person POV consistent.</li> <li>• Tense use accurate.</li> <li>• Standard English used fluently, complex sentences risked.</li> <li>• Word processed and formatted correctly.</li> <li>• Essay is written in present tense.</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: right; font-size: 48px; opacity: 0.3;">4</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thesis analyzes elements of literature.</li> <li>• Focus generally remains on thesis.</li> <li>• Supporting examples/commentary sufficient to develop thesis.</li> <li>• Quotations generally support thesis.</li> <li>• Body paragraphs use topic sentences, supporting details, and commentary.</li> <li>• Quotations blended into text.</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> person POV consistent.</li> <li>• Complete sentences are used throughout.</li> <li>• Standard English used throughout.</li> <li>• Word processed.</li> <li>• Essay is written in present tense.</li> <li>• MLA format is followed throughout.</li> <li>• Essay avoids contractions.</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: right; font-size: 48px; opacity: 0.3;">3</div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thesis is vague or broad.</li> <li>• Focus strays from thesis.</li> <li>• Supporting examples/commentary are too vague to support thesis.</li> <li>• Quotations provide limited connection to thesis.</li> <li>• Internal paragraph organization is faulty.</li> <li>• Quotations are not effectively blended into text.</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> person POV is inconsistent.</li> <li>• Tense errors noticeable.</li> <li>• Standard English errors noticeable and detract.</li> <li>• Hand written.</li> <li>• Essay is written in present tense.</li> <li>• Contractions are common.</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: right; font-size: 48px; opacity: 0.3;">2</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thesis not evident.</li> <li>• Focus strays from thesis.</li> <li>• Supporting examples/commentary missing or irrelevant.</li> <li>• Quotations missing or unconnected to thesis.</li> <li>• Paragraphs have little internal order.</li> <li>• Non-standard English is used throughout and detracts.</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> person POV inconsistent.</li> <li>• Grammar errors are common.</li> <li>• Hand written.</li> <li>• Essay is written in present tense.</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: right; font-size: 48px; opacity: 0.3;">1</div>