



IAM READERS GUILD

Discussion Guide

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe

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1. Who do you most identify with? Why?
2. How did the pre-colonial Igbo govern themselves? How are politics conducted?
3. Discuss the situation and plight of Ikemefuna. Who is he? What happens? How did he come to Okonkwo's family?
4. How does this story illuminate the social structure of the Ibo at this time?
5. Many say Okonkwo is stubborn with stunted emotional capacity. Are there examples that show him in a more nuanced light, that show both his positive and negative sides?
6. How does education advance Christianity among the Igbo people, and vice versa?
7. Who were the first converts among the Igbo? It was almost never the elites who converted first. Who was it, and why?
9. How is the concept of change and the response to change presented in the novel? What is the significance of the song sung at the end of Chapter Twelve? How does this new song convey the theme of change?
10. What are the human consequences of the collision between the two cultures?
11. Achebe does not paint a clear view of good versus evil in either the Igbo culture or colonialism. How does Achebe show value in both systems?

The questions below are merely prompts to get your discussion going. Keep a brief record of the most interesting ideas that come up during your discussion, and after the meeting, send us a summary (around a paragraph long) to post to the Readers Guild blog! (Email your summary to readersguild@internationalartsmovement.org.)