

World Literature  
Mr. Colegrove  
Summer Reading: 2022

FIRST READING: Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

Edition: Penguin (publisher) ISBN: 978-0-385-47454-2. Because this novel will be used for class activities on close-reading, annotation, and note-taking, you are strongly urged to obtain this edition of the novel.

**Assignment:** Respond to ALL FIVE of the prompts below with coherent paragraphs. Compile these responses in a typed, double-spaced document, in 12-point font, MLA format. Be prepared to submit this assignment to Turnitin.com once you've been assigned a class ID.

*Requirements:* Each response should include approximately 50 words and meet the following criteria: Include significant details from the novel that clearly demonstrate your careful reading of the narrative. Use complete sentences and support your observations with short quotes from the text. Gracefully integrate all quotes with a signal phrase that provides informative context and your own analysis of the quote's value in responding to the prompt. All quotes should be immediately followed by MLA parenthetical citation. ***Crisp, concise, and coherently articulated sentences account for 50% of each response.***

- 1) What is Okonkwo's greatest fear?** What is the source of that fear? How does it mold Okonkwo's nature and attitudes? What role does that fear play in the action of Achebe's novel? Is it resolved? With any irony? How? Why?
- 2) What is it about Okonkwo that most clearly earns the respect of his clan?** What traditions around food and music does Okonkwo greatly observe? How many wives does Okonkwo have, and how do those wives differ from one another? In which of his children does Okonkwo show more pride or concern? How? Why?
- 3) Why is Okonkwo forced into exile?** Where does he find refuge? How does that exile change Okonkwo? How does he very deliberately plan to end that exile? How successfully does he accomplish that plan? Why?
- 4) How do the villagers respond to the missionaries?** How does Okonkwo's son Nwoye respond to the missionaries? How does Okonkwo respond? Where do the missionaries build their new church? How is that location meaningful? What finally happens to the church? To Nwoye? How does Okonkwo respond to Nwoye's new path?
- 5) What are the (2) most important "things" that "fall apart" in Achebe's novel?** How does Achebe communicate the importance of these "disintegrating" elements to the characters of his narrative? How does Achebe communicate their importance to the structure of this story? Why does Achebe choose this as the title of his novel?

## SECOND READING: Dai Sijie's *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*

Edition: Knopf (publisher) ISBN: 0-375-41309-X. Because this novel will be used for class activities on close-reading, annotation, and note-taking, you are strongly urged you to obtain this edition of the novel.

**Assignment:** Sijie's novel is divided into three parts. Respond to the Significant Signposts below for **each** of the three separate parts of the novel. Compile these responses in a typed, double-paced document, in 12-point font, MLA format. Be prepared to submit this assignment to Turnitin.com once you've been assigned a class ID.

### Significant Signposts

**Directions:** Choose any THREE of the following prompts for **each** of the three parts of the novel. **Nine total.** At least three of your nine responses should be on Author's Craft/Style.

**Requirements:** Each response should include approximately 50 words and meet the following criteria: Write one sentence explaining the context (who, what, where, when) of the quotation; one sentence gracefully integrating a salient portion of the quote as evidence (include an MLA parenthetical citation); and one or two sentences of elaboration making an inference or raising a high-level question about the significance of the quotation. **Crisp, concise, and coherently articulated sentences account for 50% of each response.** LABEL each response (Contrasts, Insights, etc.)

**Contrasts:** Write about a passage where you notice a character behaving in a way that is contrary to how you might expect him or her to behave. Why is the character behaving this way? How does this contradiction shape your impression of the character? How might this be ironic? Comment.

**Author's Craft/Style: Setting:** Write about a passage that strikes you as a particularly engaging and rich in description of *setting*. What do you notice about the author's choices in diction, imagery, figurative language, and syntax (DIDLS)? How do these elements of style convey a mood or atmosphere? What impact does this passage have on your understanding of the character or theme?

**Author's Craft/Style: Character:** Write about a passage that strikes you as a particularly engaging and rich in description of *character*. What do you notice about the author's choices in diction, imagery, figurative language, details, and syntax (DIDLS)? How do these elements of style contribute to your understanding of the character and the setting? What impact does this passage have on your understanding of theme?

**Insights/Epiphanies:** Write about a passage where you notice a character's growing awareness or sudden understanding of something. How does this growing realization or moment of clarity change things? How does the character deal with the dilemma? Comment.

**Conflicts:** Write about a passage where you notice a character facing tough questions, dilemmas, uncertainty, or uneasiness. How does the character react to conflict, and what does this indicate about the character's values? How do these conflicts contribute to theme?