

Things Fall Apart

Part Two (Chapters 14–19)

by Chinua Achebe

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: annihilation, derisive, despicable, effeminate, enthralled, harbinger, impotent, ominous, ostracise, zeal

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Vocabulary Preview 2

Answer Key — Preview 3

Caution: share only if self-checking

OPTIONAL POST-READING QUIZ

Vocabulary in Context 4

Answer Key — In Context 5

Caution: do not share with students

About the Pre-Reading Activity (open-dictionary; ungraded or completion grade):

Students preview 10 words from the upcoming reading, each in a sentence that supports understanding. They choose the best meaning from 3 choices.

About the Optional Post-Reading Quiz (use after reading, or skip):

Same words, now in real excerpts from the text, with questions that build reading and analytical skills.

Vocabulary Sections for this Book:

Section 1 · Part One (Chapters 1–13) · Okonkwo and his village of Umuofia

Section 2 · Part Two (Chapters 14–19) · Okonkwo's years of exile in Mbanta

Section 3 · Part Three (Chapters 20–25) · Okonkwo's return to Umuofia

Bold = this section. Other sections are available at verbalworkout.com.



verbalworkout.com
(all resources free)

Vocabulary Preview

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Read each prompt. Then choose the best meaning for the bold word.

1. The asteroid threatened the **annihilation** of all life on Earth.

- A. a permanent change
- B. complete destruction
- C. a slow weakening

2. He gave a **derisive** laugh at my clumsy attempt.

- A. mocking and scornful
- B. loud and hearty
- C. nervous and forced

3. Cheating a blind man out of his savings is a **despicable** act.

- A. deserving contempt
- B. highly illegal
- C. deeply foolish

4. His critics mocked the prince's **effeminate** manners and soft voice.

- A. rude and ill-tempered
- B. overly formal and stiff
- C. womanly in a way seen as unmanly

5. The children sat **enthralled** by the magician's every trick.

- A. deeply puzzled
- B. completely captivated
- C. pleasantly surprised

6. The first frost is a **harbinger** of the coming winter.

- A. a sign of what is coming
- B. a lasting record of the past
- C. a cause of sudden change

7. Without fuel, the mighty engine sat **impotent** and still.

- A. damaged beyond repair
- B. powerless and ineffective
- C. dangerously overheated

8. Dark, **ominous** clouds gathered above the quiet valley.

- A. vast and towering
- B. heavy and rain-filled
- C. threatening; warning of trouble

9. The team voted to **ostracise** the player who broke their trust.

- A. closely watch
- B. publicly scold
- C. shut out and shun

10. He threw himself into the campaign with great **zeal**.

- A. eager enthusiasm
- B. quiet confidence
- C. careful patience

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

chi — in Igbo belief, a personal god or spirit believed to shape one's fate

Nneka — an Igbo name meaning "Mother is Supreme"

osu — in Igbo society, a person dedicated to a god and shunned as an outcast

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	B
2	A
3	A
4	C
5	B
6	A
7	B
8	C
9	C
10	A

Vocabulary in Context

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 10

Read each excerpt carefully. Then choose the best answer to each question.

1 “They were locusts, it said, and that first man was their harbinger sent to explore the terrain.”

As it is used in the passage, the word “harbinger” suggests that the first white man

- A. signaled that others would follow
- B. came only to trade and leave
- C. had arrived purely by chance

2 “There is something ominous behind the silence.”

The passage most strongly suggests that the silence

- A. should bring everyone relief
- B. is a sign of looming danger
- C. means the threat has passed

3 “When this was interpreted to the men of Mbanta they broke into derisive laughter.”

Which choice best describes the men of Mbanta’s attitude toward the white man’s claim?

- A. thoughtful and persuaded
- B. alarmed and fearful
- C. scornful and mocking

4 “The interpreter explained each verse to the audience, some of whom now stood enthralled.”

The author most likely includes the listeners’ reaction in order to

- A. show the faith winning some over
- B. show the listeners losing interest
- C. show the interpreter’s poor skill

5 “For how else could he explain his great misfortune and exile and now his despicable son’s behaviour?”

Which choice best describes Okonkwo’s attitude toward his son’s behaviour?

- A. quiet pride in his choices
- B. anxious concern for him
- C. bitter contempt and shame

6 “To abandon the gods of one’s father and go about with a lot of effeminate men clucking like old hens was the very depth of abomination.”

It can reasonably be inferred that Okonkwo regards the converts as

- A. rivals he must respect
- B. weak and shamefully unmanly
- C. foolish but harmless dreamers

7 “Okonkwo felt a cold shudder run through him at the terrible prospect, like the prospect of annihilation.”

Which statement about Okonkwo’s dread is best supported by the passage?

- A. He dreads utter destruction
- B. He expects only minor trouble
- C. He feels calm about it all

8 “Living fire begets cold, impotent ash.”

In context, the word “impotent” emphasizes

- A. the ash’s utter powerlessness
- B. the ash’s lingering warmth
- C. the fire’s remaining force

9 “It was in fact one of them who in his zeal brought the church into serious conflict with the clan a year later ...”

It can reasonably be inferred that the convert’s zeal

- A. turned on fellow converts
- B. drove him to a rash act
- C. faded into quiet doubt

10 “Everybody in the assembly spoke, and in the end it was decided to ostracise the Christians.”

According to the passage, the assembly decided to

- A. drive them out by force
- B. make peace with them
- C. shut the Christians out

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	
2	B	
3	C	
4	A	Event comprehension.
5	C	Character comprehension. The behaviour is Nwoye's conversion to the new faith.
6	B	Character comprehension.
7	A	
8	A	Used figuratively here for lifeless, powerless ash, not the word's other common senses.
9	B	Event comprehension. The act was killing the sacred python, which provoked the clan.
10	C	Event comprehension. The assembly rejected Okonkwo's call to drive the Christians out by force.

Teacher Context: Part Two (Chapters 14–19)

Part Two covers Okonkwo's exile in Mbanta, his mother's village, where he is taken in by her kinsmen. During these years the first white missionaries and the colonial government arrive in the region, and Okonkwo's son Nwoye is drawn away to the new church. The section ends as Okonkwo prepares to return home at the close of his exile.