

## Chinua Achebe: An Overview

- Poet, novelist, teacher, editor, journalist; has published over 20 books
- Born 1930, Ogidi, Nigeria (one of the 1<sup>st</sup> centers of Anglican missionary work in Eastern Nigeria). Died March 21, 2013.
- Father was teacher in a missionary school
- Was 28 when he published TFA, his first novel, in 1958
- Ibo ethnic/cultural background
- Graduated from University College, Ibadan
- Radio career until 1966, when he joined Biafran Ministry of Information during Biafran War (Nigerian civil war 1967-1970)
- 1970s and 80s – Prof. of English at U-Massachusetts, Amherst and U-Connecticut, Storrs
- Founding editor of Heinemann African Writers series
- Over 30 honorary degrees, many awards including German Booktrade’s Peace Prize (2002), Commonwealth Poetry Prize
- 1990 – car accident left him paralyzed from the waist down
- 2004 – rejects National Award from Nigerian gov’t and Pres. Obasanja. On rejection of the award: “Receiving awards is not the important thing. The important thing is for things to change.”  
“Nigeria has disappointed me and has disappointed many Nigerians and I feel that the situation is getting worse and worse. I thought I should draw attention to this, (a wake up call) because people are losing patience and losing confidence. And Nigeria is losing its position in Africa and in the Black world and in the world as a whole. The situation in Nigeria is far below expectation.” (BBC interview, November 1, 2004 Monday All Africa News)
- On the novelist as teacher: “one long night of savagery” “The last four or five hundred years of European contact with Africa produced a body of literature that presented Africa in a very bad light and Africans in very lurid terms. The reason for this had to do with the need to justify the slave trade and slavery. ... This continued until the Africans themselves, in the middle of the twentieth century, took into their own hands the telling of their story.” (Chinua Achebe, "An African Voice", *The Atlantic*)

### Selected Works by Chinua Achebe

*Refugee Mother and Child*

*The Trouble With Nigeria*, 1984

*Things Fall Apart*, 1958

*Arrow of God*, 1964

*A Man of the People*, 1966

*African Short Stories*, ed. 1984

*No Longer at Ease*, 1960

*Another Africa*, 1998

*Anthills of the Savannah*, 1988

*The Sacrificial Egg and Other Stories*, 1962

*Hopes and Impediments*, 1988 (essay)

*Home and Exile*, 2000

*Chike and the River*, 1966

*Collected Poems*, 2004

*Beware, Soul-Brother, and Other Poems*, 1971

*How the Leopard Got His Claws* (with John Iroaganachi), 1972

*Girls at War*, 1973

*Christmas at Biafra, and Other Poems*, 1973

*Morning Yet on Creation Day*, 1975

*The Flute*, 1975

*The Drum*, 1978