

Name: _____

Group Exam #4: *Things Fall Apart*

Directions: Answer these questions in full sentences in your notebooks.

- 1) How do the main characters respond differently to the cultural collision caused by the introduction of Western ideas into Ibo culture? Make sure to analyze how the collision challenges the character's sense of identity and explain how his or her response shapes the meaning of the novel as a whole. You must provide textual evidence to support your answers.
 - A) Which characters had a strong positive or negative response to the cultural collision in the novel, and which one would you like to focus on? What was this character's sense of identity before encountering Western influence?
 - B) What was this character's response to the new culture: What did he or she do, think, or say; how did he or she interact with others; how did his or her role and/or perspective shift?
 - C) What were the consequences of this character's response and his or her willingness or unwillingness to change?
 - D) What statement about culture is the author making through this fictional character?
- 2) How does Chinua Achebe use a work of fiction to make a statement about culture? What statement is the author trying to make?
- 3) How might a culture of a community be affected when it encounters new ideas? Give examples from *Things Fall Apart* and make connections to your life as well.
- 4) Why did Chinua Achebe write *Things Fall Apart*? What are some lessons that readers can learn from this text?
- 5) Why does Okonkwo hang himself? Is it a cowardly act or brave? Weak or noble?
- 6) What do the constant references to gender (male/female) say about Okonkwo? About Igbo culture?
- 7) Why do you think Achebe often used untranslated Igbo words? What kind of tone was he trying to evoke?
- 8) Why do you think the people of Umuofia maintain the belief that the *egwugwu* are gods when they are clearly masked humans?
- 9) The Western canon has traditionally imagined white European culture as humane and civilizing. On the other hand, Eastern and African cultures have been depicted as primitive and savage. Does this hold true for *Things Fall Apart*? How are the representations of both parties – the Igbo and the white men – more complex than this traditional model?
- 10) Does *Things Fall Apart* present a one-dimensional perspective of white people or a holistic and accurate one?
- 11) Is the story told about the Igbo and colonization only relevant to this specific Nigerian group or is it representative of other colonized groups as well?