English 10 Summer Reading Assignment
Summer 2018

Step One: Read *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe. You can get this book from any bookstore or library. There may be limited copies available to check out from BSM before the end of the year.

Step Two: Print out and complete this handout, following the directions for each question. Bring the completed assignment and book on the first day of school.

Background Information:

*Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe is a renowned novel with over eight million copies sold world-wide in fifty different languages. This novel takes place in Nigeria in the 1890s. The novel centers around a man named Okonkwo, whose hunger for strength and power affects his relationships with his family and others in his village, Umuofia. *Things Fall Apart* also examines the rise of colonialism and its impact on the Igbo culture. Colonialism is the practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically. Nigeria was colonized by Great Britain for sixty years, gaining independence in 1960.
1. What are the roles of men and women in Igbo society? How does Okonkwo act in relation to the men and women in his life? How are his views similar to or different from others’ views on gender roles in Umuofia? Use at least three direct quotes (with page numbers) to prove your answer.

2. What types of ceremonies are performed in Umuofia? Describe at least three different ceremonies and what they reveal about the beliefs of the Igbo people (use page numbers).

3. What role do proverbs and storytelling play in Igbo culture? Keep track of various proverbs and stories as they come up and note their deeper meanings. Find at least five different examples of proverbs and/or tales told by characters in the text (include page numbers) to explain the role language plays in Igbo culture.
4. What impact do the missionaries have on the Igbo society? Who were the first converts and why did they find Christianity so appealing? How do you think the arrival of the missionaries prepared the way for colonization?

5. What do you make of the Commissioner’s plan to write a paragraph on Okonkwo’s story as part of his book, The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger? What do you think Achebe is trying to say about colonialism by ending the novel in this way?

6. Destiny, the role of one’s chi, and the struggle of the individual within society are major issues throughout the novel. Who or what is responsible for Okonkwo’s fate? Support your answer using at least three direction quotations (with page numbers) from the novel.
Step Three: Annotate a passage.
Annotate a two-page selection from *Things Fall Apart*. Choose a section that you find to be significant or compelling. You will need to show the annotations on the first day of class. If you purchased your own copy of the book, you may write in it, or you may want to use post-it notes, photocopy your pages and annotate the copies, or select your chosen passage from a digital copy and annotate it using Preview, Microsoft Word, or GoogleDocs.

- Show evidence of a close reading (connections, predictions, questions, clarifications, definitions, summarizing, challenging, etc.)
- Make note of significant items that jump out at you in the following categories:
  - Use of language
  - Use of figurative language
  - Character development
  - Plot development