

Vocabulary in *Things Fall Apart*

Chapter 1

Within each of the sentences below, circle a word or phrase that offers a clue to the meaning of the bold-faced word. When finished, compare your circled words and phrases with a partner and work together to develop simple definitions. Add them to the bottom of this sheet. Correct your definitions as your teacher explains each word.

- Amalinze was a **wily** craftsman, but Okonkwo was as slippery as a fish in water.
- That was many years ago, twenty years or more, and during this time Okonkwo's fame had grown like a bush-fire in the **harmattan**.
- Unoka, for that was his father's name, had died ten years ago. In his day he was lazy and **improvident** and was quite incapable of thinking about tomorrow.
- He always said that whenever he saw a dead man's mouth he saw the **folly** of not eating what one had in one's lifetime.
- He wore a **haggard** and mournful look except when he was drinking or playing on his flute.
- When they had eaten they talked about many things: about the heavy rains which were drowning the yams, about the next ancestral feast and about the **impending** war with the village of Mbaino.
- Okoye was also a musician. He played on the **ogene**.
- At the end, Unoka was able to give an answer between fresh outbursts of **mirth**.
- To crown it all he had taken two titles and had shown incredible **prowess** in two inter-tribal wars.
- Age was respected among his people, but achievement was **revered**.

wily _____

harmattan _____

improvident _____

folly _____

haggard _____

impending _____

ogene _____

mirth _____

prowess _____

revered _____

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Chapter 2

Match each bold-faced word to a definition that would work with the context of each sentence.

- Then the **crier** gave his message, and at the end of it beat his instrument again.
- Okonkwo wondered what was **amiss**, for he knew certainly that something was **amiss**.
- He had **discerned** a clear overtone of tragedy in the crier's voice, and even now he could still hear it as it grew dimmer and dimmer in the distance.
- Dangerous animals became even more sinister and **uncanny** in the dark.
- And so on this particular night as the crier's voice was gradually swallowed up in the distance, silence returned to the world, a vibrant silence made more intense by the universal **trill** of a million million forest insects.
- An **ultimatum** was immediately dispatched to Mbaino asking them to choose between war on the one hand, and on the other the offer of a young man and a virgin as compensation.
- Its most **potent** war-medicine was as old as the clan itself.
- And so when Okonkwo of Umuofia arrived at Mbaino as the proud and **imperious emissary** of war, he was treated with great honour and respect, and two days later he returned home with a lad of fifteen and a young virgin.
- It was deeper and more intimate than the fear of evil and **capricious** gods and of magic, the fear of the forest, and of the forces of nature, **malevolent**, red in tooth and claw.
- Okonkwo's first son, Nwoye, was then twelve years old but was already causing his father great anxiety for his **incipient** laziness.

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|-------------------|---|
| ___1. crier | A. wrong or improper |
| ___2. amiss | B. recognized or perceived |
| ___3. discerned | C. powerful or mighty |
| ___4. uncanny | D. in an initial stage |
| ___5. trill | E. evil or harmful |
| ___6. ultimatum | F. a representative sent on an errand |
| ___7. potent | G. a final statement of conditions |
| ___8. imperious | H. a person who makes public announcements |
| ___9. emissary | I. a sequence of repetitive, rapid, vibratory movements |
| ___10. capricious | J. domineering in a haughty manner |
| ___11. malevolent | K. unpredictable or erratic |
| ___12. incipient | L. mysterious; extraordinary |