

# Evaluation of the role of Okonkwo as illustrated in Achebe's Things Fall Apart

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Okonkwo was a fierce warrior with a short temper. He had 3 wives and 7 children, and seemed to never fully appreciate any of them. This character in the book "Things Fall Apart", written by Chinua Achebe, lived in the small African village of Umuofia, one of the nine making up their tribe. Judging Okonkwo's character of being a powder keg with a short fuse, it's no wonder that his fame and glory of being a great person eventually came crashing down.

Okonkwo loved the old traditions. Why wouldn't he? Okonkwo thrived on them. He acted out as a legendary spirit, he became the champion of the tribe and he built up his compound and yam farm from nothing. So when the younger generation challenged the tradition that Okonkwo was the king of, Okonkwo refused to be taken off his high throne. His dedication to his old ways made him so stubborn to the point where he would rather die than have to change his ways.

Okonkwo's dedication extended to his religion. When the white missionaries came, his first thought was to kill them. However, the other people of the village had a more passive-aggressive way of handling it, which Okonkwo disagreed with. When Okonkwo was pushed past his limit by being humiliated and taken prisoner by the white men and forced to pay their fine, he lost it. Not only did he hate the white man's religion, but the white man himself. When a messenger came, Okonkwo hacked his head off, and when he realized that the people of his village would not arm themselves in a war against the white men, Okonkwo killed himself.

Why did Okonkwo kill himself? There were many reasons. Okonkwo was afraid of being a coward like his father. Okonkwo was afraid of how Umuofia had changed. Okonkwo was afraid changing from being a big fish in a familiar pond to being a little fish in a new pond. Okonkwo was afraid. His life was ruled by fear, committing actions only out of fear of people no longer thinking he was as brave as he acted, like killing Ikemefuna.

Okonkwo was a very interesting character thought up by Chinua Achebe. There were many things that led to his downfall. He refused to let go of his old traditions, he was dedicated to his religion and his life was ruled by fear. There were many times where he could have changed his sad fate, but from his stubbornness he could not open his mind to new things, ultimately that being his doom. If Okonkwo didn't try to handle his fear by trying to rule other people's lives by fear of him, then maybe his life wouldn't have fallen apart.