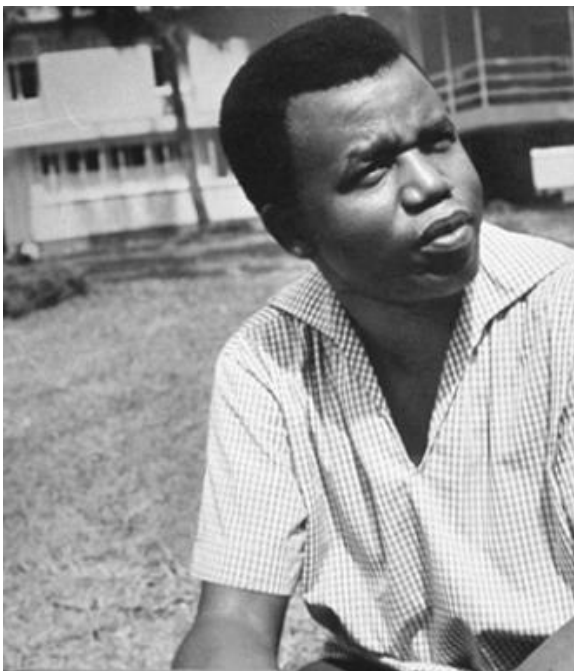




ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE A LEVEL SUMMER ASSIGNMENT



One of our set texts is *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe.

The novel was written in 1958 and is recognised as a classic of twentieth-century fiction. It is set in West Africa among the Igbo people in what is now part of Nigeria. It explores the time just before and after the first encounters between the Igbo people and the expanding British Empire.

TASK 1: ANALYSIS

Read the extract below from chapter one. Write one side of A4 in response to this question:

‘How does Achebe portray the character of Unoka?’ Use quotations, and comment on Achebe’s language choices.

TASK 2: WRITING

Create a **description** of a fictional character, giving your reader a sense of **personality** as well as **appearance**. **Aim to write around half a side of A4.**

EXTRACT FROM CHAPTER ONE

Unoka was, of course, a debtor, and he owed every neighbour some money, from a few cowries to quite substantial amounts.

He was tall but very thin and had a slight stoop. He wore a haggard and mournful look except when he was drinking or playing on his flute. He was very good on his flute, and his happiest moments were the two or three moons after the harvest when the village musicians brought down their instruments, hung above the fireplace. Unoka would play with them, his face beaming with blessedness and peace. Sometimes another village would ask Unoka’s band and their dancing egwugwu to come and stay with them and teach them their tunes. They would go to such hosts for as long as three or four markets, making music and feasting. Unoka loved the good fare and the good fellowship, and he loved this season of the year, when the rains had stopped and the sun rose every morning with dazzling beauty. And it was not too hot either, because the cold and dry harmattan wind was blowing down from the north. Some years the harmattan was very severe and a dense haze hung on the atmosphere. Old men and children would then sit round log fires, warming their bodies. Unoka loved it all, and he loved the first kites that returned with the dry season, and the children who sang songs of welcome to them. He would remember his own childhood, how he had often wandered around looking for a kite sailing leisurely against the blue sky. As soon as he found one he would sing with his whole being, welcoming it back from its long, long journey, and asking it if it had brought home any lengths of cloth.

That was years ago, when he was young. Unoka, the grown-up, was a failure.

Glossary: **cowries** = shells used as money; **egwugwu** = masked elders and spiritual figures of the village; **harmattan** = dry wind.