



Upper School Summer 2024 Assignment  
Evansville Day School

This summer, all rising 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders at Evansville Day School will read [Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche](#)'s 2003 novel, *Purple Hibiscus*. The assignment, below, will be assessed in your English class; however, the novel also relates to our “world” focus in humanities next year. You may therefore find yourself discussing or referring to the work in world history or comparative government, as well as in English courses.

Set in [Nigeria](#) in the 1980s, *Purple Hibiscus* is a coming-of-age-story (*bildungsroman*) told from the point of view of fifteen-year-old Kambili. The story begins with a scene of particular importance, then regresses back in time to contextualize that important encounter. The novel is rife with powerful imagery and symbolism and adeptly demonstrates the tensions between Nigeria's most prominent ethnic groups in the post-colonial nation state.

Since its independence from Great Britain in 1960, Nigeria has suffered political instability, economic poverty (despite its abundance of natural oil and agricultural resources), and widespread corruption. Nearly 150 million Nigerians live in extreme poverty, and the state lacks capacity to effectively govern. Nigeria, in western Africa on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea, is Africa's largest economy. Nigeria hosts more than 250 distinct ethnic groups and even more languages.

The central characters identify with the Igbo ethnicity but adopted the Catholic religion. The novel contains several Igbo words and phrases and Catholic terms that may not be familiar to readers. For your convenience, a short guide to such words, phrases, and terms is included as Appendix A. Also included for convenience as Appendix B are chapter guiding questions. You do not have to write responses to these chapter guiding questions; they are for you to use as a guide as you read. The chapter guiding questions may provide you with ideas on annotations to mark and songs to utilize for the assignment.

**You may not consult with any other person or use artificial intelligence (AI) to assist with any portion of this assignment. All assignment components must be your own original work.**

Part One: Read and annotate *Purple Hibiscus*  
Directions:

1. Purchase a new, physical copy of the Algonquin Books reprint edition (April 17, 2012) of Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche's *Purple Hibiscus*, ISBN-13: 978-1616202415. You may not use a different edition or any edition or copy that has been previously annotated, marked up, or written in.
2. Review these [annotation guidelines](#), including the embedded YouTube video, “[A Student's Suggestions on Annotation](#).” Although you need not write on every page of your book, you should follow a consistent and thorough process to annotate the novel.

3. Read and annotate your book. You may, if desired, listen to an audiobook version of the novel while you read along in your book to aid with comprehension.
4. Your English instructor may choose to review your annotations and award credit. If credit is to be awarded for annotations, the following assessment rubric applies:
  - a. Excellent: Text has been thoroughly annotated with questions, observations, and connections to the text; Challenging words and concepts are marked; interesting and surprising parts are noted; Comments show thoughtfulness and a thorough understanding of the text; Frequent and consistent markings throughout the text.
  - b. Proficient: Text has been reasonably well annotated with questions, observations, and connections to the text; Some challenging words and concepts are marked; a few interesting parts are noted; Comments show an understanding of the text, but at a basic, surface level; Markings are inconsistent throughout the text; markings may be well done in some chapters but not in others.
  - c. Adequate: Text has been sparsely annotated with a variety of comments.; Few words and concepts are marked; few interesting and surprising parts are noted; Few and inconsistent markings throughout the text. Markings show comprehension but not analysis.
  - d. Unsatisfactory: Little or no effort made to mark the text; No understanding of the text is demonstrated by the markings.

#### Part Two: Compilation Album Project

##### Directions:

1. You may not consult with any other person or use artificial intelligence (AI) to assist with any portion of this assignment. All assignment components must be your own original work.
2. Choose six to eight songs that relate to the main characters, major symbols, motifs, and/or major themes of *Purple Hibiscus*.
3. For each individual song, include the name of the musician or band, the date of the song's publication, and the song's lyrics. Cite this information in [MLA format](#).
4. Explain each song's specific connections to the novel's major theme(s), characters, tone(s), and symbols. (Please review these [literary terms](#), if needed.) Do not use first-person "I."
5. Design a cover to represent your compilation album. You may use computer software (but not AI) to design and create the cover, or you may draw, sketch, or paint the album cover.
6. Your work will be assessed pursuant to the following rubric<sup>1</sup>:

Criteria	Excellent	Proficient	Adequate	Unsatisfactory
Completeness/Quality of Compilation Album	Contains 6-8 tracks, demonstrates unity and flow, as songs make sense together and progression creates drama; tracks work together to communicate an effective brief,	Contains 6-8 tracks; demonstrates some signs of unity and flow but not all songs make sense together; progression creates some drama; has an original cover	May have fewer than 6-8 tracks; demonstrates little unity and flow—songs rarely make sense together and progression creates little drama; cover is unoriginal or unclear/confusing	Has significantly fewer than 6 tracks; songs make little sense together and progression creates little drama; tracks fail to work together to communicate a brief, urgent message about the novel; cover detracts from

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from NCTE/IRA ReadWriteThink "CD Project Rubric," 2009

	urgent message about the novel; has an original, thoughtfully designed album cover			presentation of album or is missing
Completeness/Quality of Connections between Songs and Novel (double score)	Clearly communicates multiple sophisticated connections between each song and the novel's major theme(s), characters, tone(s), and symbols	Clearly communicates connections between the songs and the novel's major theme(s), characters, tone(s), and symbols	Communicates some connections between the selected music and the novel's major theme(s), characters, tone(s), and/or symbols	Makes few connections between the music selected and the novel's major theme(s), characters, tone(s), and/or symbols
Clarity/Quality of Written Expression	Words are chosen carefully; writing is clear and understandable; words are spelled correctly, and proper punctuation is employed; quotations from the novel are accompanied by page numbers	Most words are chosen carefully; writing is clear and understandable; most words are spelled correctly, and proper punctuation is employed; quotations from the novel are accompanied by page numbers	Words are chosen with less care; writing is sometimes unclear; most words are spelled correctly, and proper punctuation is typically employed; some quotations from the novel are unaccompanied by page numbers	Words are chosen with little care; writing is sometimes unclear; some words are spelled incorrectly, and proper punctuation is not employed; quotations are from the novel are unaccompanied by page numbers
Overall Presentation	Shows attention to detail and pride in work; final product is attractive and thoughtfully designed; cover, musical selections and student's explanations work together to present a unified project; student took risks and explored the project's creative potential	Meets expectations but could be more thoughtful or polished; final project is attractive and well designed; cover, musical selections and student's explanations work together to present a unified project; student took some risks and explored the project's creative potential	Needs attention to accuracy, detail, quality; final project is not particularly attractive or well-designed; cover, musical selections, and student's explanations only sometimes work together to present a unified project; student took few risks to explore the project's creative potential	Deviates from expectations a great deal; final project is not particularly attractive or well-designed; cover, musical selections, and student's explanations rarely work together to provide unified project; student took few risks to explore the project's creative potential

All components of this assignment are due at the beginning of class on the first day of your 2024-25 EDS English course, Wednesday, August 7, 2024, or Thursday, August 8, 2024.

The following appendices are included as resources to help you through your reading.

- You will want to consult the two glossaries (Appendix A) as you encounter unfamiliar terms, particularly those in Igbo, one of the indigenous languages of Nigeria.
- You may also want to consult the guiding questions (Appendix B) as a means of focusing your annotations.
  - NOTE: You are not expected to answer these guiding questions explicitly.

## Appendix A

### Glossary of Igbo Words and Expressions:

*Abi*: "Right?" "Isn't it?"

*Amam*: "I know"

*Amarom*: "I don't know"

*Anam asi*: "Am saying"

*Biko*: "Please"

*Bunie ya enu...*: "Lift him/her high up"~referring to Jesus Christ

*Chelu nu*: Hold your horses (idiom)

*Chelukwa!*: Hold on a moment

*Ehye*: "Yes," "yeah"

*Ekwuzina*: "Stop saying that!"

*Ezi okwu*: "Is that true?" "Honestly?" "It is true!"

*Gini mezia*: "What happened then?"

*Ifukwa*: "you see!" "Do you see?"

*Ke kwanu?*: "How are you?"

*Kedu*: How are you? (singular)

*Kedu nu?*: How are you all? (plural)

*Mba*: "No."

*Neke!*: "Look!"

*Nne, ngwa*: "Come on, dear."

*Nne* literally means "mother;"

*Ngwa* means "come on" "here you go/take this" "begin"

*Nno*: “Welcome” (singular)  
*Nno nu*: “Welcome” (plural)  
*O di egwu*: “Yeah! It is scary!”  
*O gini?*: “What is it?”  
*O maka*: “It is so beautiful.”  
*O zugo*: “That’s enough,” “Let’s go”  
*Umu m*: “My children”

### **Igbo Terms and Cultural References:**

*Agbogho*: short for *Agbogobia*; young lady, maiden  
*Agwonatumba*: "The snake that strikes the tortoise" (i.e., despite the shell/shield)~the name of a masquerade at Aro festival  
*Aja*: sand or the ritual of appeasing an oracle  
*Aku*: winged termites, common during the rainy season; also means wealth  
*Akwam ozu*: Funeral/grief ritual or send-off ceremonies for the dead  
*Aro*: Spear referring to Aro-Igbo people, short for *Arochukwu*  
*Aro festival*: The main cultural festival of Aro people, known for their fierce masquerades  
*Asusu anya*: Eye language  
*Atilogu*: A form of Igbo acrobatic dance performance  
*Atulu*: Sheep/lamb~insinuating stupidity, dumb, a fool  
*Azu*: Fish  
Big man, Big Oga, or Big people: Powerful, wealthy, influential, high status in the community, large (e.g., Head of State)  
*Chukwu*: God  
*Dim*: my husband  
*Kwa*: also  
*Kobo*: Nigerian currency, cents  
*Harmattan*: dry, dusty West African trade wind, blows south from Sahara into Gulf of Guinea between the end of November and the middle of March (winter)  
*Mmuo*: spirits, separated between good and bad  
*NEPA*: Nigerian Electric Power Company  
*Naira*: Nigerian currency, dollar  
*Nwunye m*: My wife  
*O bugodi*: dispel

*Ogbunambala*: "He that kills in public." No secrecy or privacy. He who loves to publicly disgrace or shame another

*Okada*: motorcycle taxi

*Omelora*: one who does for the community

*Umunna*: "ancestors;" extended group of paternal kinsmen; extended family

*Unu*: you (plural)

### **Glossary of Catholic Terms:**

*Act of Contrition*: A private devotional prayer as part of a daily examination of conscience

*Advent Sunday*: The fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, it marks the first day of Advent—the season when preparations are made for the birth of Jesus Christ

*Articles of Vatican I, II*:

*Vatican I*: refers to the ecumenical council of the Roman Catholic Church, which met in 1870 to adopt the first dogmatic constitution on the Catholic faith

*Vatican II*: The second ecumenical council of the Church convened in 1962 and ended in 1965

*Ash Wednesday*: The first day of Lent, forty-six days before Easter. *Lent* is a period of fasting and prayer in preparation for Easter

*Ave Maria* (aka *Hail Mary*): a traditional Roman Catholic prayer or song upholding the sacredness of Mary, mother of Jesus

*Benediction*: A short invocation for divine help, blessing or guidance, usually at the end of worship service

*Blessed Sacrament*: Refers to the Host and wine after they have been consecrated in the sacrament of the Eucharist (ceremony commemorating the Last Supper), or Holy Communion

*Catechist*: Someone who engages in instruction of Catholic doctrine in the form of Q&A

*Catholic chaplaincy*: A chaplain is typically a priest or pastor serving a group of people who are not organized as a mission or church, or who are unable to attend church for various reasons, such as health, confinement, or military or civil duties

*Communion*: That part of the Eucharistic rite in which the consecrated bread and wine are distributed to participants

*Confession*: When individuals confess their sins before a priest to be absolved of their sins

*Confirmation*: A rite of initiation bestowing full membership of the church

*Feast of the Epiphany*: A Christian feast day which celebrates the revelation of God in human form in the person of Jesus Christ

*First Holy Communion*: A Roman Catholic ceremony for the first reception of the sacrament of the Eucharist

*Good Friday*: The Friday before Easter Sunday. It commemorates the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ and his death at Golgotha

*Holy water*: Water that has been blessed and set aside for baptism

*Knights of St. John:* The Knights of Saint John are those members who commit to undertaking a pilgrimage to the Cathedral or Co-Cathedral of a diocese to pray for the Holy Father, the Bishop of the diocese and his intentions, the auxiliary bishops, the priests, and all who assist the Bishop in shepherding the faithful of the diocese

*Knights of St. Mulumba:* The Knights of Saint Mulumba were founded in Onitsha, Anambra, Nigeria in 1953. Currently, there are over 7,000 members

*Mass for the repose of the soul:* A prayer for the departed that his soul may be forgiven of his sins in the eyes of God

*Missal:* A missal is a liturgical book containing all instructions and texts necessary for the celebration of a Catholic Mass throughout the year.

*Novenas:* In the Catholic Church, a novena is a devotion consisting of prayer said (most typically) on nine successive days, asking to obtain special graces. These may consist of small prayer books, recitation of the Rosary, or small prayers through the day.

*Oblate:* Oblates are everyday people who seek to live extraordinary lives of devotion. Oblates take no binding vows, but they dedicate themselves in a special way to live as balanced Christian people, offering witness to the world of Christ's transformative power. What sets them apart from other devoted Christian people is their special way of living an enriched Christian life according to the Gospel

*24. Palm Sunday:* Palm Sunday is a Christian moveable feast, or holy day which always falls on the Sunday before Easter

*Pentecost Sunday:* Pentecost is the festival when Christians celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost means "fiftieth day." It is celebrated on the Sunday that occurs 50 days after Easter

*Peter's Pence:* Peter's Pence is the name given to the financial support offered by the faithful to the Holy Father (Pope) as a sign of their sharing in the concern of the Successor of Peter (the Pope) for the many different needs of the Universal Church and for the relief of those most in need

*Purgatory:* Purgatory is the condition or process of purification or temporary punishment in which the souls of those who die in a state of grace are made ready for heaven

*Rosary:* The Rosary (from Latin *rosarium*, meaning "rose garden" or "garland of roses") is a popular traditional Roman Catholic devotion. The term denotes both a set of prayer beads and the devotional prayer itself, which combines vocal (or silent) prayer and meditation

*Sacristy:* A sacristy is a room for keeping vestments (such as the alb and chasuble) and other church furnishings, sacred vessels, and parish records

*St. Nicholas:* Nicholas of Myra, a saint and Bishop of Myra (in Lycia, part of modern-day Turkey), Because of the many miracles attributed to his intercession, he is also known as Nicholas the Wonderworker. He had a reputation for secret gift giving, such as putting coins in the shoes of those who left them out for him, and thus became the model for Santa Claus, whose English name comes from the German, *Sankt Niklaus*.

*St. Vincent de Paul:* Vincent de Paul: Vincent de Paul (24 April 1581 – 27 September 1660) was a Catholic priest dedicated to serving the poor, who is venerated as a saint

*Unction (or Extreme Unction):* Extreme unction is the ritual anointing (pouring, sprinkling, or rubbing of (perfumed) oil) on the seriously ill and the frail elderly. The sacrament is administered to give

strength and comfort to the ill and to mystically unite their suffering with that of Christ during his Passion and death

## Appendix B: Guiding Questions by Chapter

### Chapter 1:

- The narrator describes the religious traditions her family follows every Palm Sunday. Reread the first paragraph, analyze the significance of the characters who are participating in the traditions of Palm Sunday, and predict what those roles might mean throughout the novel.
- The narrator describes her mother's actions after Papa breaks the figurines and adds imagery of her mother two weeks' prior, "when her swollen eye was still the black-purple color of an overripe avocado (10-11). What can we infer from this description of Kambili's mother? What can we infer from the casual way Kambili inserts this description?"
- What is the purpose and effect of the following simile that the narrator uses to describe Jaja's defiance toward his father: "Jaja's defiance seemed to me now like Auntie Ifeoma's experimental purple hibiscus: rare, fragrant with teh undertones of freedom, a different kind of freedom from the one the crowd waving green leaves chanted at Government Square after the coup. A freedom to be, to do: (16)?"

### Chapter 2:

- Because the Igbo are a patriarchal society, marriage holds the utmost significance in order to procreate and continue the family line. However, it is common for an Igbo man who has a wife who cannot conceive to procreate with a woman other than his wife or to even take a second wife. Why is it significant that Mama pointed out Papa's rejection of other women to her own children (20)? What does the reader learn about Mama's character through these comments?
- What does the reader learn about Kambili's perception of Mama and Papa's love for one another (21)? Why is this significant for the reader?
- The military coups of Nigeria were both successful and unsuccessful since the country's independence from Great Britain in 1960. The coups discussed in the novel were a permanent feature of Nigerian culture from 1966-1999. What did Papa mean when he stated, "But what we Nigerians needed was not soldiers ruling us, what we needed was renewed democracy" (25)?

### Chapter 3:

- The author makes it clear in this chapter that Nigeria is now ruled by a military regime, and therefore the soldiers can act with exemption from punishment. How is the theme of freedom versus tyranny illustrated through Kambili's thoughts and comments in this chapter?
- What does the idea of a "love burn" (31) tell us about Kambili's and Papa's relationship? How does this foreshadow the way that Papa treats his family members throughout the rest of the novel?
- Analyze the impact of the following simile? "Silence hung over the table like blue-black clouds in the middle of rainy season" (32). What tone does it create and why is it significant?
- The paragraph immediately after Kambili and Jaja's scrubbing Mama's blood off of the floor is about an execution that was shown on television. What is the significance of this event and the characters' reaction to it following what they just witnessed with their parents?
- For what, in Papa's eyes, does Mama need to be forgiven? What is ironic about Papa's beliefs and his actions?

### Chapter 4:



- Why was Ade (pronounced ah-DEH) Coker arrested? What are the implications of his arrest in regard to the Head of State's using violence to suppress and discourage free speech?
- Adichie uses the rhetorical device anaphora, which is the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses, when she writes, "I needed him to touch the back of my neck..." and "I need him to hug me..." and "I needed him to smile at me..." (39). What is the purpose and effect of this device?
- What mood does Kambili's statement, "I was stained by failure," create for the reader (39)?
- How is the theme of perception versus reality reflected through Kambili and her classmates? How is reflected through the Achike family thus far in the novel?

#### Chapter 5:

- Several times throughout the chapter Papa is called "*omelora*," or "The One Who Does for the Community" by the villagers (56). Why is he so revered in Abba? Do you think Papa gains something internally from their admiration?
- What is the significance of Papa's silence when Ade Coker said, "Imagine with the *Standard* would be if we were all quiet" (58)?
- Why are Kambili and Jaja instructed to stay at Papa-Nnukwu's house for only 15 minutes? What does Papa's traditionalist father constantly remind him of?

#### Chapter 6:

- Auntie Ifeoma comes to visit and when speaking to Mama, calls her "*nwunye m*" or "my wife" (73). Why is it significant that she accepts Mama in such a way? What does Papa's reaction to that term of endearment tell the reader about his beliefs?
- Why is Auntie Ifeoma's "fearlessness" (76) uncomfortable and forbidding to Kambili? How does Kambili's outlook about Papa change when Ifeoma is interacting with him? How does she disrupt the order of Papa's family?
- Similar to her classmates, Kambili's cousin Amaka takes her silence and reserve for privilege and snobbishness. Is there some truth to Amaka's and Kambili's classmates' assumptions? Why is Kambili unable to speak when faced with someone who expresses herself?
- What is the difference between *pagan* and *traditionalist* in Igbo culture, and why was it important for Auntie Ifeoma to clarify the difference (81)?

#### Chapter 7:

- As Mass ends, Papa donates money to fund the priest's new house, and after the donation amount is announced, Papa left "smiling and waving at the many hands that reached out to grasp his white tunic as if touching him would heal them of an illness" (91). Analyze the symbolic figure he seems to represent and the irony thereof.
- Explain Kambili's metaphorical statement, "I felt, looking at her, that I was helplessly watching precious flaxen sand slip away between my fingers" (93). What theme does this figurative language develop?
- The first revealing example of Papa's violence occurs when Mama, Jaja, and Kambili are beaten for breaking the Eucharist fast before church. After the beating, Papa "crushed" Jaja and Kambili into his body to hug them and asked if the "belt hurt" (102). Why does Adichie utilize the word

“crushed” to describe a hug? What are other word choices during that violent incident that help create the author’s tone?

- Predict what the following statement foreshadows: “Papa called Aunty Ifeoma two days later. Perhaps he would not have called her if we had not gone to confession that day. And perhaps then we would never have gone to Nsukka and everything would have remained the same” (104).
- What is the significance of Father Benedict’s eyes being described as, “the same green shade of a snake...” (105)?
- When Jaja and Kambili discuss wanting to go to Nsukka, why does Kambili’s throat tighten “at the thought of five days without Papa’s voice, without his footsteps on the stairs” (108)?

#### Chapter 8:

- What has the reader learned about Kambili thus far through the way she perceives her surroundings as through other people’s views of her? Does the way Kambili narrates the story affect the reader’s perception of Nigeria and the Igbo people?
- What are some examples of Amaka’s rejection of the Eurocentric colonial mindset? Why might her viewpoint be significant in relation to the previous question?
- When Aunty Ifeoma laughed about the schedule Papa gave his children to follow while visiting, Kambili’s “mouth felt dry,” her “tongue clinging to the roof” of her mouth (124). Analyze this.
- Why does Kambili yearn for the strict order and silence of her home? How does the family dynamics differ in each household, and why are the differences significant?
- Why are Aunty Ifeoma’s hibiscuses purple, rather than another color? Of what are they a result? Why is their existence significant to the story thus far?
- One of the best known Nigerian musicians is [Fela Ransome Kuti](#), who Amaka plays for Kambili. Kuti, who was educated in England, created Afrobeat, a style of music that blends jazz with traditional African rhythms. He railed against the colonial mentality of his upbringing and advocated for a return to both traditions and democracy. Kuti was arrested, beaten, and tortured several times for openly criticizing the government. The popularity of his music was seen as a threat to the military establishment. Why is it significant that Amaka listens to this type of music rather than the popular music of the time? Does this make her an activist?

#### Chapter 9:

- What is the opening mood of this chapter?
- Aunty Ifeoma covers for Jaja when Chima asks him about his deformed finger (145). However, Kambili wonders how her aunt knows about the incident, and Jaja says when Aunty asked, he told her the truth. What is peculiar about Kambili’s thoughts regarding telling the truth about these situations? Why does she want to remain loyal to her family’s secret?
- How is the motif of governmental corruption interspersed throughout this chapter? Analyze how the lack of a democratic government directly impacts the rights of the people.
- When the family is dining with Papa-Nnukwu, Obiora comments that, “Morality, as well as the sense of taste, is relative” (156). Knowing Papa Nnukwu’s beliefs, do you think he agrees with this notion? Would Papa agree with this? Would Mama?

#### Chapter 10:

- After Kambili calls Papa-Nnukwu a heathen again, Auntie Ifeoma wants her to see her grandfather's rituals and to teach her about his faithfulness to his traditionalist beliefs (167-68). How do Kambili's views change after watching the full ritual?
- Throughout the novel thus far, Adichie explores the oppressive nature of religion, not only on an individual's soul, but also on the hypocritical inclinations in religious groups. Although there are many instances of religious compromise and tolerance, some of the characters struggle with their views. What stance do the following characters take on organized religion and why: Papa-Nnukwu, Father Amadi, Obiora, Amaka, Auntie Ifeoma, and Papa?
- Analyze Kambili's internal dialogue when she states, "She seemed so happy, so at peace, and I wondered how anybody around me could feel that way when liquid fire was raging inside of me, when fear was mingling with hope and clutching itself around my ankles" (174).
- How does the conversation with Father Amadi at the football field open the door for Kambili to question her father's rules?
- What is significant about Kambili and Jaja's reactions to Papa-Nnukwu's death? Are their reactions expected?

#### Chapter 11:

- After Ade Coker's assassination, Kambili starts to have violent nightmares (207). What is symbolic about Kambili's replacing herself in the nightmare for Ade's daughter and of replacing her father for Ade?
- What does Papa mean when he says there are, "fake pastors at those mushroom Pentacostal churches" (208)? What can the reader infer about Papa's beliefs and his hypocritical nature?
- What do Mama's figurines, Kambili's painting, and Jaja's purple hibiscus provide for all three characters in a world of unhinged violence?
- What actions and internal dialogue reflect a change in Kambili's feelings toward her father after the violence incident that almost killed her?

#### Chapter 12:

- After Kambili and Jaja are sent to Auntie Ifeoma's, Kambili observes several aspects of nature, such as "the smell of freshness in the air" due to rain and the air "filling with flapping, water-colored wings" (218). Why are her descriptions of nature emphasized in the first few pages of the chapter, given what she has just experienced with her father?
- Amaka asks Kambili if it was her father who hurt her, and for the first time, Kambili admits to the truth. Why won't Kambili look at Amaka to see her reaction? Does Papa still have "control" over Kambili?
- Why is Auntie Ifeoma's house searched? Why is she warned by the special security men to "be careful" (231)?
- What is the significance of Jaja's killing the chicken with a "precision...a singlemindedness that was cold, clinical" (235)? How has Kambili begun to see her brother? Is their bond as strong as it was in the past?

#### Chapter 13:

- How is the story about Professor Okafor's son a lesson about oppression and tyranny?

- For the first time in the novel, the reader sees Auntie Ifeoma using violence to reprimand her child (245). Are Auntie Ifeoma and Papa more similar than it seems? Or does this act of violence represent something other than Papa's forms of discipline?
- Mama flees to Auntie Ifeoma's house after Papa breaks a small table over her belly, killing the fetus Mama was carrying (248) and after Mama speaks with Papa, "she looked like a different woman from the one who had come out of the taxi that morning" (250). Why does Mama continue to make excuses for Papa's violence?
- As they arrive at their home in Enugu, Jaja notes, "the purple hibiscuses are about to bloom" (253). What do they symbolize? Why does Jaja mention them right before the flashback to Chapter 1?

#### Chapter 14:

- Remembering what you learned in Chapter 1 about Palm Sunday, how is the first paragraph of this chapter contradictory to what the religious day is supposed to represent?
- How have Nigerian politics also "silenced" Auntie Ifeoma? What is significant about the fact that the women in the novel are silenced at some point or another?
- Due to Papa's increasing weakness and loss of familial control, Jaja, Kambili, and Mama all seem to change. Discuss each of the characters' growing assertions due to the altered family dynamics.
- Analyze the significance of the personification of rain in conjunction with Igbo traditions and beliefs: "It stopped as quickly as it had started, and the sun came out again, mildly, as if yawning after a nap" (266).

#### Chapter 15:

- Is Kambili's love for Father Amadi a true love or an immature love? Is it unrequited or is it squelched for another reason?
- Is it made clear by the lack of dialogue that Jaja has changed from the beginning of the novel, and how he is stoic about his aunt and cousins leaving for America, as "finality hung in the air, heavy and hollow" (279). What exactly do you believe he is rebelling against?
- The last two sentences of this chapter are a joyful, climactic experience, with her cousins on top of Odim Hill and the shocking death of her immortal father. Why do you suppose they are juxtaposed with one another? What is the purpose and effect of this juxtaposition?

#### Chapter 16:

- When Kambili tries to communicate with Jaja through eye contact, they are blank, "like a window with its shutter drawn across" (289). Why?
- Kambili comments on Jaja's frustrations about taking care of Mama, and she says, "God knows best. God works in mysterious ways," and then thinks, "Papa would be proud that I had said that" (289). Why is she still searching for Papa's approval?
- Jaja responds to Kambili's previous comments and asks, "Why did He [God] have to murder his own son so we would be saved? Why didn't He just go ahead and save us" (289)? What connection is Jaja making between the death of Jesus and of Papa?
- Does Jaja suffer more than Kambili throughout the novel?

- What is the significance of tea throughout the novel? Think back to the idea of the “love burn” from chapter 3 and then the way Papa dies. Are there other examples of tea or kettles’ playing an important role or symbolizing something?

#### Chapter 17:

- How has Papa’s abuse created “a different silence” that might never be repaired between Jaja, Kambili, and Mama?
- Do Jaja’s upcoming release from prison and the death of the Head of State both represent hope for the family and for Nigeria? Or do these events represent a false hope that has been a part of the Achike family for the majority of their lives?
- Identify and analyze a passage in the novel that reflects Kambili’s growth in her understanding of her father’s strengths and weaknesses.