

Séquence

7

> **South Africa and English- speaking Africa**

Sommaire

Séquence 7

1. > **Civilisation et culture**
2. > **Texte 1 : Extrait de A Dry and White Season**
3. > **Lecture et vocabulaire**
4. > **Grammaire**
5. > **Traduction**
6. > **Expression écrite**
7. > **Texte 2 : A Portrait of Chinua Achebe**

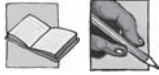
Contenu de la séquence 7

Cette septième séquence traite de l'histoire de certains pays africains qui furent colonisés par les Britanniques et de leur situation actuelle.

Civilisation et culture	A few facts on Africa
Compréhension orale	Nelson Mandela's release
Compréhension écrite	<i>"And if Something Happens..." (A. Brink)</i> A portrait of Chinua Achebe
Expression orale	Lecture d'un passage
Expression écrite	Écrire une narration
Méthodologie	Traduction d'un passage Vocabulaire : exprimer l'émotion
Compétence linguistique	Le discours indirect

1. Civilisation et culture

English speaking Africa



Task ①

① Put the following names of the 18 African Commonwealth countries missing on the map below

Notice their date of entry into the Commonwealth.

South Africa (1931; left in 1961; rejoined in 1994)

Ghana (1957)

Nigeria (1960; suspended in 1995; readmitted in 1999)

Sierra Leone (1961)

Tanzania (1961)

Uganda (1962)

Kenya (1963)

Malawi (1964)

Zambia (1964)

Gambia (1965)

Botswana (1966)

Lesotho (1966)

Mauritius (1968)

Swaziland (1968)

Seychelles (1976)

Namibia (1990)

Mozambique (1995)

Cameroon (1995)



☛ Check your work now.



② A quiz on African history

Tick the correct answers. There might be more than one answer per entry.

a) In 2,600 BC, the Egyptian pharaoh Kufu built the world's largest stone structure. It was:

1. Gisa's great Pyramid
2. The Sphinx
3. The Walls of Jericho

b) Arabs gained control of Egypt and introduced Islam to North and West Africa in

1. 640 BC*
2. 640 AD*
3. 460 AD

*BC= Before Christ; AD= Anno Domini (after Christ)

- c) A Portuguese explorer opens a trade route to India via South Africa in 1498. His name is:
1. Christopher Columbus
 2. Vasco de Gama
 3. Americo Vespucci
- d) From 1500 to 1850
1. 25 million Africans were sold into slavery in the Americas.
 2. 5 million Africans were sold into slavery in the Americas.
 3. 10 million Africans were sold into slavery in the Americas.
- e) In the late 15th century, Portuguese navigators purchased slaves and agricultural produce from coastal middlemen in Nigeria. The slaves had been captured further inland by the middlemen who were:
1. Africans
 2. Portuguese
 3. Arabs
- e) In 1652, the Dutchman Jan Van Riebeeck established a Dutch colony for trading ships in
1. Cape of Good Hope
 2. Cape Horn
 3. Cape Orange
- f) The first white settlers in the South of Africa were mainly Dutch, they were called
1. Boers
 2. African Dutch
 3. Afrikaners
- g) Attracted by the gold and diamond mines, the British gained control over the South of Africa in
1. 1781
 2. 1841
 3. 1881
- h) The Boer War (1899-1902) was fought between
1. the British and the Boers
 2. the Dutch and the Boers
 3. the Boers and the Zulus
- i) After the British victory over the Boers the Union of South Africa became
1. a member of the Commonwealth
 2. a British colony
 3. a free state
- j) In 1914 France had 15 percent of Africa's population under control, Germany had 9%, Belgium 7%, Italy 1%. Britain had
1. 15%
 2. 20%
 3. 30%
- k) From 1948 to 1990, apartheid is enforced in South Africa. It means
1. a separate form of government for Black people
 2. a formal segregation policy
 3. a formal slavery of Black people
- l) The first black president of South Africa elected in 1994 was
1. Edmund Tutu
 2. Nelson Mandela
 3. Steve Biko
- m) Fifteen African colonies gained their independence in
1. 1960
 2. 1990
 3. 1995
- n) What country has the world's highest Adult HIV aids?
1. Botswana
 2. Sudan
 3. Ghana

3 Extra for experts

a) Why did South Africa leave the Commonwealth in 1961 and why did it rejoin it in 1994?

.....

b) Why was Nigeria suspended from the Commonwealth in 1995 and why was it readmitted in 1999?

.....

▶▶▶ Check your work now.

Task 2

Listening comprehension: Nelson Mandela's release



2 ▶ 22

Listen to the French introduction.



2 ▶ 23

Listen to the recording only once, answer the following question.

1 General comprehension

What is the general feeling of the people interviewed.

.....

.....



2 ▶ 24

Listen and repeat the following words or expressions:

The parade, we chatted, his release, delayed, bruised, cheering, jostling, the applause, charisma, cherished, the ideal, equal opportunities, campaigning, yelled, deafening, togetherness.

Vocabulary help

we chatted = nous bavardions

delayed = retardé

cheer = acclamer

yell = hurler

togetherness = unité

his release = sa libération

bruised = contusionné

jostled = bousculé

deafening = assourdissant

Listen to each part of the recording several times and answer the following questions.



2 ▶ 25

2 Detailed comprehension

Part 1

a) Give the date of Nelson Mandela's release.

b) Give the name and the nationality of the first interviewee. Indicate where he was at the time.

.....

c) What was uncomfortable? Relate a particular incident.

.....
.....
.....

d) What was comforting?

.....
.....

e) What happened at the end?

.....



2 ▶ 26

Part 2

f) Give the name, origin and occupation of the second interviewee. Where was she at the time?

.....
.....

g) What two things surprised her?

.....
.....

h) From Mandela's speech remember the two evils he has fought.

.....

i) Has the girl's life been influenced by this man?

.....



2 ▶ 27

Part 3

j) Give the name, town and political actions of the third interviewee?

.....
.....

k) What did the noisy reception remind him of?

.....

l) What were his hopes?

.....
.....

▶▶▶ Check your work now.

What's on the Internet?



www.southafrica-travel.net/history/
<http://pbskids.org/africa>
www.anc.org.za/people/mandela.html

2. Texte 1 : Extrait de *A Dry and White Season*

Task 1

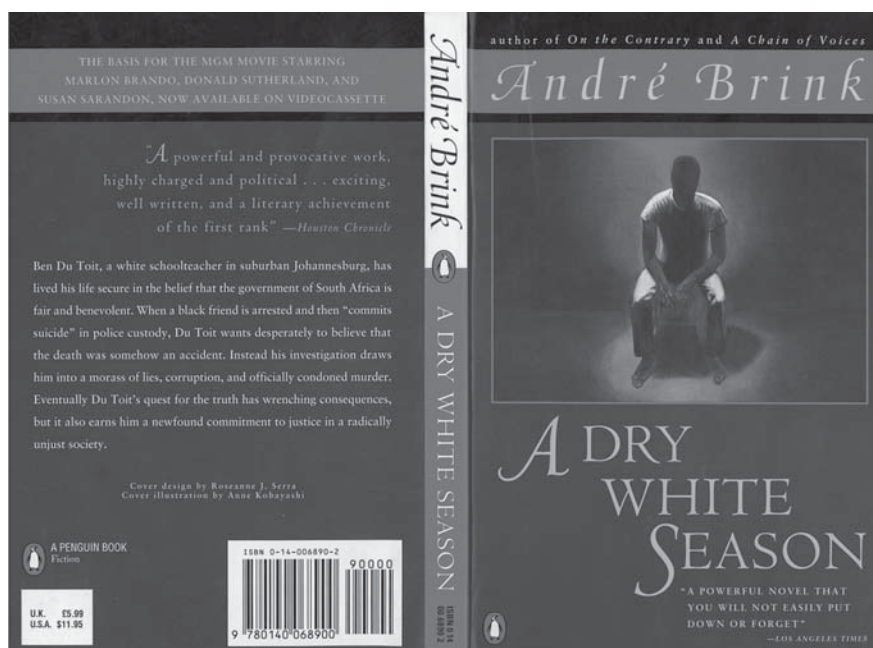
Read the following information and do the anticipation exercise.

And if something happens...

*The passage is taken from the novel **A Dry White Season**, written by **André Brink**, a white South African writer. The novel, published in 1979, was banned in South Africa as the country was under the status of apartheid when it came out. **A Dry White Season** was made into a movie starring Marlon Brando, in 1989.*

***André Brink** writes in Afrikaans, his native language, and in English.*

The extract is taken from the beginning of the novel. The story happens during apartheid. The narrator has just received a mysterious phone call from Ben du Toit, a Black man and a former University friend. The latter has asked the narrator to meet him urgently.



Penguin book – Droits réservés.

Anticipation

Taking into account the title, the illustration and what you know of the author, anticipate the nature and content of the text choosing from one or several of the following alternatives.

- a) The text is an extract from a detective story.
- b) The text is an extract from a novel.
- c) The text is a historical fiction.
- d) The text deals with a socio-political situation.



2 ▶ 28

Task ②

Pronunciation

The following words and expressions may cause problems because of their accentuation. Listen to the CD to repeat them out loud.

burdening, whether, ridiculous, illegal, hurriedly, he laughed, laugh, biography, necessary, assure, innocent, paranoid, resemblance, coincidence, comfort, humour, perturbed, sighed, resignation, irritation, hypertension.



2 ▶ 29

Task ③

Read the text as you listen to the CD.

Do not use your dictionary, read and listen without stopping



"But what's the matter, Ben?"

"No use *burdening you with it. All I want to know is whether I may send you some *stuff to keep for me.

"Stolen goods?" I said playfully.

5 "Don't be ridiculous! There's nothing illegal about it, you needn't be scared. It's just that I -" He hurried on in silence for a short distance, then glanced round again. "I don't want them to find the stuff on me."

"Who are 'they'?"

He stopped, as agitated as before. "Look, I'd like to tell you everything that's happened these last months. But I really have no time. Will you help me?"

10 "What is it you want me to store for you?"

"Papers and stuff. I've written it all down. Some bits rather hurriedly and I supposed confused. But it's all there. You may read it of course. If you promise you'll keep it to yourself."

"But -"

15 "Come on." With another anxious glance over his shoulder he set off again. "I've got to be sure that someone will look after it. That someone knows about it. It's possible nothing will happen. Then I'll come round one day to collect it again. But if something does happen to me -" He jerked his shoulders as if to prevent his coat from slipping off. "I'll leave it to your discretion." For the first time he laughed, if one could call that harsh brief sound a laugh. "Remember, when we were at varsity, I always brought plots for your stories. And you always spoke about the great novel you were going to write one day, right? Now I want to dump all my stuff on you. You may even turn it into a bloody novel if you choose. As long as it doesn't end here. You understand?"

"No, I'm afraid I don't understand you at all. You want me to write your biography?"

"I want you to keep my notes and *journals. And to use them if necessary."

"How will I know if it's necessary or not?"

25 "You'll know, don't worry." A pale smile twitched his tense mouth. He stopped once more, an unnatural glance in his grey eyes. "They have taken everything from me. Nearly everything. Not much left. But they won't get that. You hear me? If they get that there would have been no sense in it at all."

We *drifted along with the crowd.

30 "That's what they are aiming for," he proceeded after a while. "They want to wipe out every sign of me, as if I'd never been here. And I won't let them."

"What have you done, Ben?"

"Nothing, I assure you. Nothing at all. But I can't go on for very much longer, and I think they know it too. All I'm asking of you is to keep my papers."

"But if the whole thing is really all that innocent -"

35 "Are you also turning against me now?"

There was something paranoid in his attitude as if he'd lost his *grasp on the world, as if he weren't really in that street in that city at that moment, as if he weren't aware of my presence at all. As if, in fact, he himself were a stranger whose slight and superficial resemblance to the Ben du Toit I'd once known was pure coincidence.

40 "Of course I'll keep your stuff for you," I said, the way one would comfort or humour a child. "Why don't you bring it to my house tonight, then we can have a quiet chat over a glass of wine?"

He looked even more perturbed than before. "No, no, I can't do that. I'll make sure it gets to you. I don't want to cause you any problems."

45 "All right then." I sighed with resignation. All the *sob stories I'd seen in my time. "I'll look through it and let you know."

"I don't want you to let me know. Just keep the stuff like I told you. And if something happens -"

"Nothing will happen, Ben," I insisted, not without some irritation. "It's just hypertension. All you need is a good holiday."

Two weeks later he was dead.

André Brink, *A Dry White Season*, 1979 © HarperCollins Publishers

Vocabulary help

journal = journal (intime)

burden = accabler

stuff = affaires

goods = marchandises

drifted along = être emporté

lose one's grasp = lâcher prise

the sob stories = les histoires larmoyantes

Task 4

Understanding the text

1 Characters and setting

a) Complete the grid. Answer in complete sentences.

When?	Where?	Who?	What about?	What type of narration?

b) What is the narrator's job? Justify by quoting from the text.

.....
.....

c) What is the characters' relationship? Justify by quoting from the text.

.....
.....

② The mystery

a) Throughout the passage the narrator undergoes a change of feelings. Using the following adverbs: *at first, then, later, finally*, describe this evolution and quote when necessary.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

b) From the beginning to line 26 pick out words or expressions indicating Ben's perturbed state of mind

.....

.....

.....

.....

c) Who are those mysterious "they"? What have they done or can do according to Ben? Answer in your own words and quote when necessary.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

d) Explain the word "paranoic" (line 35) from the narrator's point of view. Why is "as if" repeated four times?

.....

.....

.....

.....

e) What is so mysterious about Ben and incomprehensible for the narrator?

.....

.....

.....

f) Why is the last sentence such a shock?

.....

.....

.....

3. Lecture et vocabulaire



2 ▶ 30

Task 1

Reading

Lecture expressive : lecture d'un passage du texte.

Ecoutez le CD et répétez à chaque pause. Faites cet exercice plusieurs fois et à différents moments du cours. Les doubles barres correspondent à des pauses.

There was something paranoid in his attitude// as if he'd lost his grasp on the world,// as if he weren't really in that street// in that city// at that moment,// as if he weren't aware of my presence at all.// As if, in fact, he himself were a stranger //whose slight and superficial resemblance to the Ben du Toit I'd once known// was pure coincidence.

"Of course I'll keep your stuff for you," // I said, the way one would comfort or humour a child. //"Why don't you bring it to my house tonight, //then we can have a quiet chat// over a glass of wine?" //

He looked even more perturbed than before. //"No, no, I can't do that.// I'll make sure it gets to you.// I don't want to cause you any problems." //

"All right then." //I sighed with resignation. //All the sob stories I'd seen in my time. //"I'll look through it// and let you know." //

"I don't want you to let me know. //Just keep the stuff like I told you. //And if something happens-"

"Nothing will happen, Ben," // I insisted, //not without some irritation.// "It's just hypertension.// All you need is a good holiday." //

Two weeks later he was dead.//

Task 2

Enrich your vocabulary

Comment exprimer l'émotion de la voix.

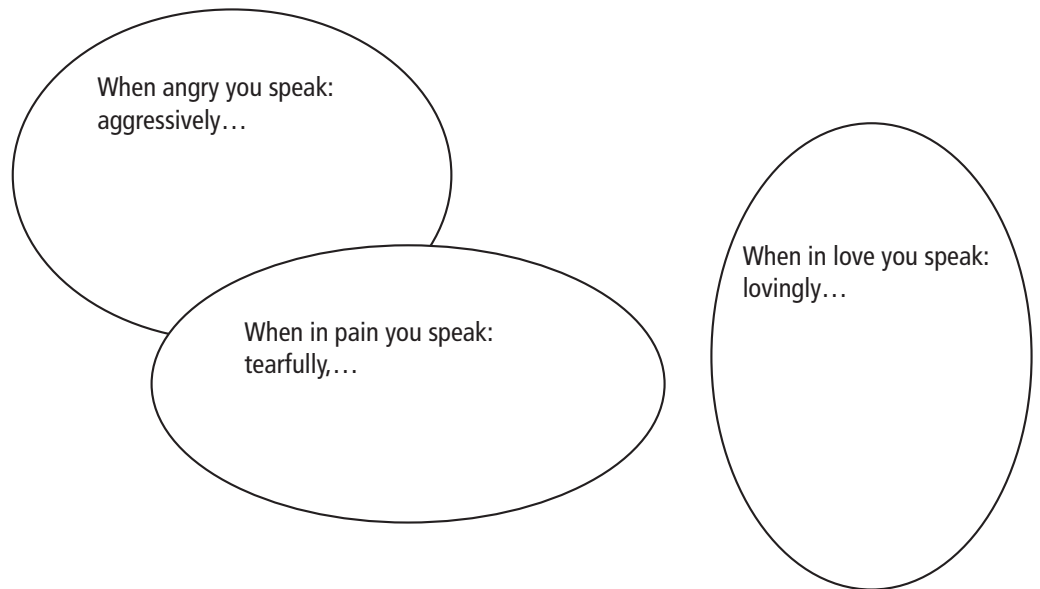


Exemple *I said playfully*

Classez les adverbes suivants par bulles de sens.

Utilisez le dictionnaire si vous ne connaissez pas bien le sens de certains mots.

Aggressively, tearfully, hesitantly, lovingly, joyfully, enthusiastically, passionately, respectfully, hurriedly, indignantly, disapprovingly, angrily, pleasantly, resentfully, cunningly, bashfully, scornfully, offensively, crossly, furiously, cheerfully, pitifully, cynically, slowly, kindly, grudgingly, hurriedly.



L'expression des sentiments/ Expressing feelings

Vous aviez déjà commencé une recherche de vocabulaire dans les séquences 2 et 3 sur l'expression des sentiments des personnages, complétez-la avec des mots et expressions tirés du texte *"And if something happens..."*. Vérifiez que vous connaissez le sens des mots à l'aide du dictionnaire. Apprenez par cœur le nouveau vocabulaire.

Body language	Adjectifs	Adverbes
To hurry on To glance round To set off again To jerk one's shoulders To stop once more To sigh with resignation	Agitated Confused Anxious Unnatural Perturbed	Playfully Hurriedly

4. Grammaire



Task 1

1 Adjectifs et pronoms possessifs (révision)



<i>adjectives</i>	<i>adjectifs</i>	<i>pronouns</i>	<i>pronoms</i>
<i>my</i>	mon, ma, mes	<i>mine</i>	le mien, la mienne, les miens, les miennes
<i>your</i>	ton, ta, tes	<i>yours</i>	le tien, la tienne, les tiens, les tiennes
<i>his</i>	son, sa, ses (possesseur masculin)	<i>his</i>	le sien, la sienne, les siens, les siennes (possesseur masculin)
<i>her</i>	son, sa, ses (possesseur féminin)	<i>hers</i>	le sien, la sienne, les siens, les siennes, (possesseur féminin)
<i>its</i>	son, sa, ses (possesseur neutre)		
<i>our</i>	notre, nos	<i>ours</i>	le/la nôtre, les nôtres
<i>your</i>	votre, vos	<i>yours</i>	le/la vôtre, les vôtres
<i>their</i>	leur, leurs	<i>theirs</i>	le/la leur, les leurs

Complete with possessive pronouns

- What's your name? – John. What's
- These notes are Ben's. – Are you sure they are
- She says her job is terrible. – I'm lucky is interesting.
- Their climate is better than but our income is better than
- We don't have a car, can we borrow

► Check your work.

2 Le discours indirect

a) Observez ces phrases au style indirect

- He asked me in an agitated voice if I could help him.*
- He added that it was rather urgent.*
- He said that he would leave it to my discretion.*
- I enquired what he had done.*
- I insisted that nothing would happen.*

b) Mettez les phrases ci-dessus au style direct

- "Can you?" he asked in an agitated voice.
-
-
-
-

c) Quels changements avez-vous été obligés de faire ?

.....
☛ Vérifiez vos réponses.



Le discours indirect peut entraîner des modifications de temps selon que le verbe introducteur est au présent ou au passé. D'autres modifications portent sur les pronoms personnels, les adjectifs et les pronoms possessifs.

d) Discours rapporté au présent

Quand le verbe utilisé pour rapporter est au présent → pas de modification de temps.

"I'm in a hurry."
"Je suis pressé"
He says he is in a hurry.
Il dit qu'il est pressé.

e) Discours rapporté au passé avec modifications de temps

① présent

"They are watching me day and night."
"Ils me surveillent jour et nuit."

preterit

He insisted they were watching him day and night.
Il n'arrêtait pas de dire qu'on le surveillait jour et nuit.

② present perfect

"They've arrested all my friends."
"Ils ont arrêté tous mes amis."

past perfect/plus-que-parfait

He said that they'd arrested all his friends.
Il a dit qu'ils avaient arrêté tous ses amis.

③ prétérit

"I thought you might help me."
"J'ai pensé que tu pourrais m'aider."

past perfect/plus-que-parfait

He confessed he had thought I might help him.
Il a avoué qu'il pensait que je pourrais l'aider.

④ impératif

"I want you to keep my notes."
"Je veux que tu gardes mes notes."

to + infinitif

He asked me to keep his notes.
Il m'a demandé de garder ses notes

"Don't mention it to anyone."
"N'en parle à personne."

He told me not to mention it to anyone.
Il m'a dit de n'en parler à personne.

f) Exercice

① Complete with the correct verbal form

She says she worried (is – was). I told him I(don't - didn't) understand. They declare they (won't – wouldn't) accept it. They said they (are – were) lost. She said she (has – had) been here before. She asked me what I (am – was) doing.

② Translate the following sentences into English

Il m'a dit qu'il l'avait déjà écrit.

Je lui ai promis que je l'aiderais.

Je croyais que tu étais déjà parti en vacances.

Je lui ai dit que je n'aimais pas les secrets.

☛ Check your work now.

g) Style indirect : modification des adjectifs et pronoms possessifs

① Observez

"These are my books", she said.
"Ce sont mes livres", a-t-elle dit.

She said that they were her books.
Elle a dit que c'étaient ses livres.

"They are mine."
"Ce sont les miens."

She said they were hers.
Elle a dit que c'étaient les siens.

② Exercise: put into indirect speech

"It's your responsibility," he told me.

.....

"They are mine," she yelled.

.....

"It's ours," they stated.

.....

"She laughed at us," they complained.

.....

"You look tired, Ben," I said.

.....

|||► Check your work now.

h) Style indirect : modification des marqueurs de temps

Observez :

He said, "I saw him yesterday."
Il déclara: "Je l'ai vu hier."

He said he had seen him the day before.
Il déclara qu'il l'avait vu la veille.

Discours direct

Yesterday = hier
Ago = il y a
Now = maintenant
Tomorrow = demain
Next week = la semaine prochaine

discours indirect

the day before = la veille
before = avant
then = alors
the next day = le lendemain
the following week = la semaine suivante

Exercises

① Complete in indirect speech:

"Why don't you come to my office tomorrow?"

I suggested

"I can't explain right now."

He said

"Will you meet me at Bakker's bookshop?"

He asked me

"What's the matter, Ben?"

I wanted to know

"Just keep the stuff like I told you."

He requested me

▶ **Check your work now.**

② Translate into English

Il m'a dit que le lendemain il avait lu la nouvelle de sa mort dans les journaux.

.....

Il lui avait dit de n'en parler à personne.

.....

Ils avaient demandé à sa femme où il cachait ses documents.

.....

Ils annoncèrent qu'ils allaient fouiller la maison.

.....

Il m'a confié qu'il avait expédié ses documents trois jours auparavant.

.....

▶ **Check your work now.**

5. Traduction



① Read again the following passage which you will later translate

There was something paranoid in his attitude as if he'd lost his grasp on the world, as if he weren't really in that street in that city at that moment, as if he weren't aware of my presence at all. As if, in fact, he himself were a stranger whose slight and superficial resemblance to the Ben du Toit I'd once known was pure coincidence.

"Of course I'll keep your stuff for you," I said, the way one would comfort or humour a child. "Why don't you bring it to my house tonight, then we can have a quiet chat over a glass of wine?"

He looked even more perturbed than before. "No, no, I can't do that. I'll make sure it gets to you. I don't want to cause you any problems."

"All right then." I sighed with resignation. All the sob stories I'd seen in my time. "I'll look through it and let you know."

"I don't want you to let me know. Just keep the stuff like I told you. And if something happens –"

"Nothing will happen, Ben," I insisted, not without some irritation. "It's just hypertension. All you need is a good holiday."

Two weeks later he was dead.

② Choose the best alternatives

There was something paranoid in his attitude... =

Il y avait quelque chose de paranoïaque dans son attitude...

Son attitude avait quelque chose de paranoïaque...

"Of course I'll keep your stuff for you," I said =

"Bien-sûr, je garderai ton truc pour toi," j'ai dit

"Bien entendu, je te garderai tes papiers, ai-je dit

All the sob stories I'd seen in my time. =

Toutes les histoires à pleurer que j'avais vu en mon temps.

Encore une de ces histoires larmoyantes dont j'avais l'habitude.

All you need is a good holiday... =

Tout ce dont tu as besoin ce sont de bonnes vacances...

Tout ce qu'il te faut c'est des vacances...

|||► You must check your work now and read the explanations.

③ Translate the passage above

|||► Check your work now.

6. Expression écrite

Is there a specific incident, meeting, film, book,... which made you open your eyes on other people's lives? (250 words)



Il s'agit d'un sujet personnel, ce qui ne vous empêche pas de structurer votre réponse.

Choisissez l'un des fils conducteurs donnés dans l'énoncé et expliquez votre choix.

Le temps du récit est au prétérit, vous aurez sans doute à manipuler le *pluperfect* et le *present perfect*. Parlez aussi de vos émotions au moment du récit puis maintenant, dans ce dernier cas servez-vous du présent, tout comme en français.

Vocabulaire utile

Celui de la surprise : *to be surprised, amazed, dumbfounded, astonished, speechless...*

Celui de l'émotion (négative ou positive selon le fil conducteur choisi) : *to be upset, dismayed, shocked, petrified, to feel ashamed, to be dispirited...*

To be in admiration in front of, to be delighted with, to be eager to, to marvel at the way, to wonder...

Autres expressions utiles : *be aware /unaware of; my life had taken a new turn; from then on; I suddenly realized; my eyes were suddenly opened to...*

▣▣▣▣► **N'oubliez surtout pas de vous relire au moins deux fois.**

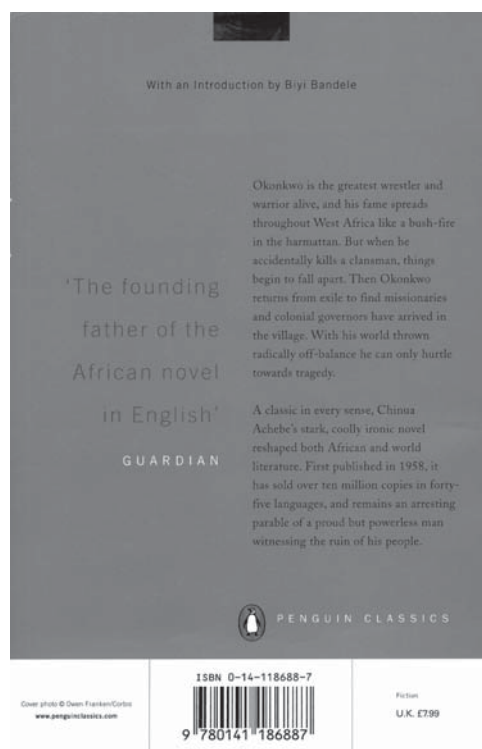
▣▣▣▣► **Check your work now.**

7. Texte 2 - A Portrait of Chinua Achebe

Task 1

Read the following information and do the anticipation.

Information about a writer can be found on the Internet. This is a portrait of Chinua Achebe compiled from information found on the Internet.

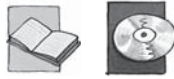


Front cover in it's entirely from Things Fall Apart (William Heinemann 1958, Penguin Classics 2001), © Chinua Achebe, 1958. Introduction © Biyi Bandele, 2001.

Anticipation

Taking into account the title, the illustration and what you know of the source, anticipate the nature of the text choosing from one or several of the following alternatives.

- a) The text is informative.
- b) The text is descriptive.
- c) The text is narrative.



2 ▶ 31



Task 2

Pronunciation

The following words and expressions may cause problems because of their stress. Listen to the CD to repeat them out loud.

Chinua Achebe, satire, savagery, acting on God's behalf, Nigeria, Ibo, christened, literature, sympathetic, Okonkwo, yams, missionaries, dignified, pidgin, gibberish, featuring, colonialism, independence.



Task 3

Read the text as you listen to the CD.



2 ▶ 32

Do not use your dictionary, read and listen without stopping.



Texte Bac

1. Chinua Achebe is considered the father of the African novel in English as well as one of the world's most influential writers. He is famous for his satire and his spoken style. His novels describe the effects of Western customs and values on traditional African society. He chooses to write in "African English" to speak of "African experience in a world-wide language."

5 **2. "I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their past - with all its imperfections - was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans *acting on God's behalf delivered them" (from an essay entitled Morning Yet on Creation Day, 1975)**

10 3. Chinua Achebe was born in 1930 in Ogidi, Nigeria, the son of a teacher in a missionary school. His parents gave him the values of their traditional Ibo culture, however, they were Protestants and christened him Albert. He was educated at the University College of Ibadan, Nigeria, where he studied English, history and theology. At the university Achebe rejected his British name and took his indigenous name Chinua.

4. "If we leave our gods and follow your god," asked another man, "who will protect us from the anger of our neglected gods and ancestors?"

15 **"Your gods are not alive and cannot do you any harm," replied the white man. "They are pieces of wood and stone."**

When this was interpreted to the men of Mbanta they broke into derisive laughter. These men must be mad, they said to themselves. How else could they say that Ani and Amadiora were harmless? And Idemili and Ogwugwu too? And some of them began to go away.'

20 *(from Things Fall Apart, 1958)*

25 5. Achebe's first novel, THINGS FALL APART (1958) has been translated into some 50 languages. It is the most famous African novel in English. It has been influential, not only on African literature, but on literature around the world. As **Paul Briens** explains, the "most striking feature [of *Things Fall Apart*] is to create a complex and sympathetic portrait of a traditional village culture in Africa. Achebe is trying not only to inform the outside world about Ibo cultural traditions, but to remind his own people of their past and to assert that it had contained much of value..."

30 6. The main character of the novel is Okonkwo, a leader of an Ibo community, who has strength and courage. Okonkwo's life is good: his compound is large, he has no troubles with his wives, his garden grows *yams, and he is respected by his fellow villagers. When Okonkwo accidentally kills a clansman, he is banished from the village for seven years. The story is set in the 1890s, when missionaries and colonial government made their intrusion into Ibo society. Eventually Okonkwo is destroyed because his unwillingness to change sets him apart from the community and he is fighting alone against colonialism.

35 7. The language of the novel is simple but dignified. When the characters speak, they use an elevated diction, which is meant to convey the sense of Ibo speech. This choice of language is brilliant and innovative, totally different from that of most earlier writers who had made their African characters speak in *pidgin or inarticulate *gibberish. The reader has the feeling of listening to another tongue, one with a rich and valuable tradition.

40 8. THINGS FALL APART was followed two years later by NO LONGER AT EASE, and ARROW OF GOD (1964) featuring the descendants of Okonkwo and the problem they face under colonialism. A MAN OF THE PEOPLE (1966) was published after the independence of Nigeria. It is a satire of corruption and power struggles in an African state in the 1960s. The novel reflects Achebe's deep personal disappointment with what Nigeria has become since independence. Achebe has published altogether over twenty books, including novels, short stories, essays and collections of poetry.

(Compiled from information on Internet)

Vocabulary help *Acting on God's behalf* = au nom de Dieu
yam = igraine
pidgin = sabir, charabia
gibberish = charabia

Task 4

Understanding the text

1 General comprehension

Give a title to each paragraph

.....
.....

2 Detailed comprehension

a) Why does Achebe write in English? Quote.

.....

b) Give a short biography of Achebe:

1. Name:
2. Place of birth:
3. Date of birth:
4. Parents' religion:
5. Own values:
6. Languages:

c) Can you explain why he changed his name?

.....

d) In the extract from *Things Fall Apart*, how does the white man define the African gods? Quote.

.....

e) Give the names of the African gods mentioned.

.....

f) What is the reaction of the Africans to the white's man statement? Explain it. Quote when necessary.

.....
.....

g) What do we learn about life in Africa from the summary of *Things Fall Apart*?

.....
.....

h) What happened in the 1890s in Nigeria? Quote.

.....

i) Is Onkongwo different from his fellowmen and why? Why will he be destroyed?

.....
.....

j) Define the kind of language used by Achebe pointing out why it is so famous.

.....

k) Is Achebe satisfied with present day Nigeria? Explain. Quote if necessary.

.....
.....

Vocabulary Find the English for

les coutumes occidentales		pour affirmer	
baptisé		son enclos est grand	
indigène		son refus de changer	
ne peuvent pas vous faire du mal		pour communiquer l'effet de la langue ibo	
un rire railleur		qui met en scène	
sans malice		les luttes de pouvoir	
la caractéristique la plus frappante		la déception	

▶▶▶ Check your work now.

