Unit 3 — Post-Colonial Voices: An Introduction — Teacher copy

Track E · Klasse 11 · Niveau E (Basisfach / Leistungsfach)

Niveau E

1. Reading

Read the text and use it for the activities below.

Reading — three openings (extracts)

Achebe (1958, Things Fall Apart): *Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements.*

Adichie (2003, Purple Hibiscus): *Things started to fall apart at home when my brother, Jaja, did not go to communion and Papa flung his heavy missal across the room and broke the figurines on the étagère.*

Naipaul (1979, A Bend in the River): *The world is what it is; men who are nothing, who allow themselves to become nothing, have no place in it.*

Voice-marking phrases

the speaker recalls / the narrator distances herself from / the text positions the reader as / the opening lays claim to / the voice carries the weight of / the prose refuses the colonial register.

2. Practise

Niveau E — controlled

1. Match opening → likely setting (West Africa / post-colonial Africa with European parents / a Central African town).
2. T or F: Achebe's opening foregrounds personal achievement. Adichie's opening alludes directly to Achebe's title.

Niveau E — productive

3. Build 4 voice-marking sentences for the three extracts.

3. Your turn

Literary essay, 280 words. Read all three openings. Argue that one of them does the most work with the fewest sentences. Use 4 voice-marking phrases + 1 cleft + 1 quote per source.

Sample

Of the three openings, it is Adichie's that does the most work with the fewest sentences. The line — Things started to fall apart at home when my brother, Jaja, did not go to communion and Papa flung his heavy missal across the room and broke the figurines on the étagère — is a direct allusion to Achebe's 1958 title, which the narrator places quietly inside her domestic frame. The opening positions the reader inside an educated middle-class Nigerian Catholic household where the *fall apart* of post-colonial fiction has migrated from village politics to the broken figurines of a domestic shelf. By contrast, Achebe's opening lays claim, with the calm of a history book, to *Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond*; the prose refuses the colonial register simply by treating the village world as the centre. Naipaul's narrator, more abrasively, distances himself from sentimentality: *The world is what it is.* Each opening engages the imperial archive differently. Adichie's wins, in my reading, because the allusion is buried inside an object — the étagère — that domesticates the entire post-colonial argument into one piece of furniture. The text positions the reader as a guest in a room where something has just shattered, and the shattering is, somehow, the inheritance.

4. Further reading / listening

- Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958).
- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003).
- V. S. Naipaul, *A Bend in the River* (1979).

5. Teacher answer key

Controlled. 1. open (Achebe → 19th-c. Igbo village; Adichie → 1990s Nigeria with educated middle-class parents; Naipaul → an unnamed African town).

2. T, T.

Productive. 3. Open.