

Chinua Achebe (1930 - 2013)

Chinua Achebe is a world-renowned scholar recognized for his ability to write simply, yet eloquently, about life's universal qualities. His writing weaves together history and fiction to produce a literary broadcloth that offers visions of people enduring real life. Critics appreciate his just and realistic treatment of his topics.



Achebe writes primarily about his native Africa, where he was born Albert Chinualumogu Achebe in 1930. He grew up in Ogidi, Nigeria, one of the first centres of Anglican missionary work in Eastern Nigeria. His father and mother, Isaiah and Janet Achebe, were missionary teachers. Achebe's life as a Christian and member of the Ibo tribe enables him to create realistic depictions of both contemporary and pre-colonized Africa. He blends his knowledge of Western political ideologies and Christian doctrine with folklore, proverbs, and idioms from his native tribe to produce stories of African culture that are intimate and authentic.

Achebe left the village of Ogidi to attend Government College in Umuahia and later University College in Ibadan. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from University College in 1953. He worked first for the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation as a writer and continued radio work in various capacities until 1966, when he resigned from his post as Director of External Broadcasting. Dissatisfied with the political climate that would later prompt the Biafran War, he began traveling abroad and lectured as the appointed Senior Research Fellow for the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Continuing his teaching career, Achebe accepted a position with the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in 1972. He was a visiting Professor of English at that institution until 1976 and again in 1987-1988. He also spent a year as a visiting professor at the University of Connecticut. In the intervening years, Achebe returned to his native country to teach at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Achebe has written extensively throughout his adult life. His numerous articles, novels, short stories, essays, and children's books have earned prestigious awards. For example, his book of poetry *Christmas in Biafra* was a winner of the first Commonwealth Poetry Prize. His novels *Arrow of God* and *Anthills of the Savannah* won, respectively, the New Statesman-Jock Campbell Award and finalist for the 1987 Booker Prize in England. Fondly called the "grandfather of Nigerian literature", Achebe died after a short illness on 21 March 2013 in Boston, United States.