CAPITOLO

12

Writing Back: Postcolonial Voices and Multicultural Britain

"For I was born, far from my native clime, / Under the white man's menace, out of time." — Claude McKay, "Outcast", Harlem Shadows (1922)

OBIETTIVI

1. I can describe decolonisation from Indian independence to Kenya, and the history of the Windrush generation from 1948 to the scandal of 2018.
2. I can explain the terms postcolonial literature, writing back, magic realism, diaspora and hybridity, with examples from Tagore, Achebe, Rhys, Rushdie, Levy and Smith.
3. I can analyse Tagore's *Gitanjali* 35 and discuss *Things Fall Apart* and *White Teeth* from reading guides, quoting accurately.
4. I can describe World Englishes with Kachru's circles, recognise features of Indian, Nigerian and Caribbean English, and choose standard English when the situation requires it.
5. I can give a presentation with slides and write a Europass-style CV and a covering email.

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On 21 June 1948 a former troopship, the *Empire Windrush*, sailed up the Thames estuary to Tilbury, the port of London. Most of its passengers had boarded in the Caribbean, many of them in Kingston, Jamaica; the next morning they walked down the gangway into a country that, according to the law, was already theirs. Ten months earlier, in mid-August 1947, India and Pakistan had become independent. The two events open the same story: the end of the British Empire and the beginning of a multicultural Britain.

This chapter follows that story in history and in literature. You will meet writers from the former colonies who answered the books that had described them, and novelists who made the children of migrants the heroes of the English novel; you will study the many Englishes of today's world, and write a CV and an email that might take you abroad next summer.

12.1 History and Society: the End of Empire and the Windrush Generation

In 1945 Britain had won the war but was nearly bankrupt, and the empire it ruled — about a quarter of the world's land — was becoming impossible to hold. In the next twenty years most of the colonies became independent states. The process is called **decolonisation** (*decolonizzazione*): the transfer of power from a colonial government to an independent state, sometimes by negotiation, sometimes after violence. Figura 12.1 shows the main events of the chapter; Figura 12.2 places the countries named in this section on the map.

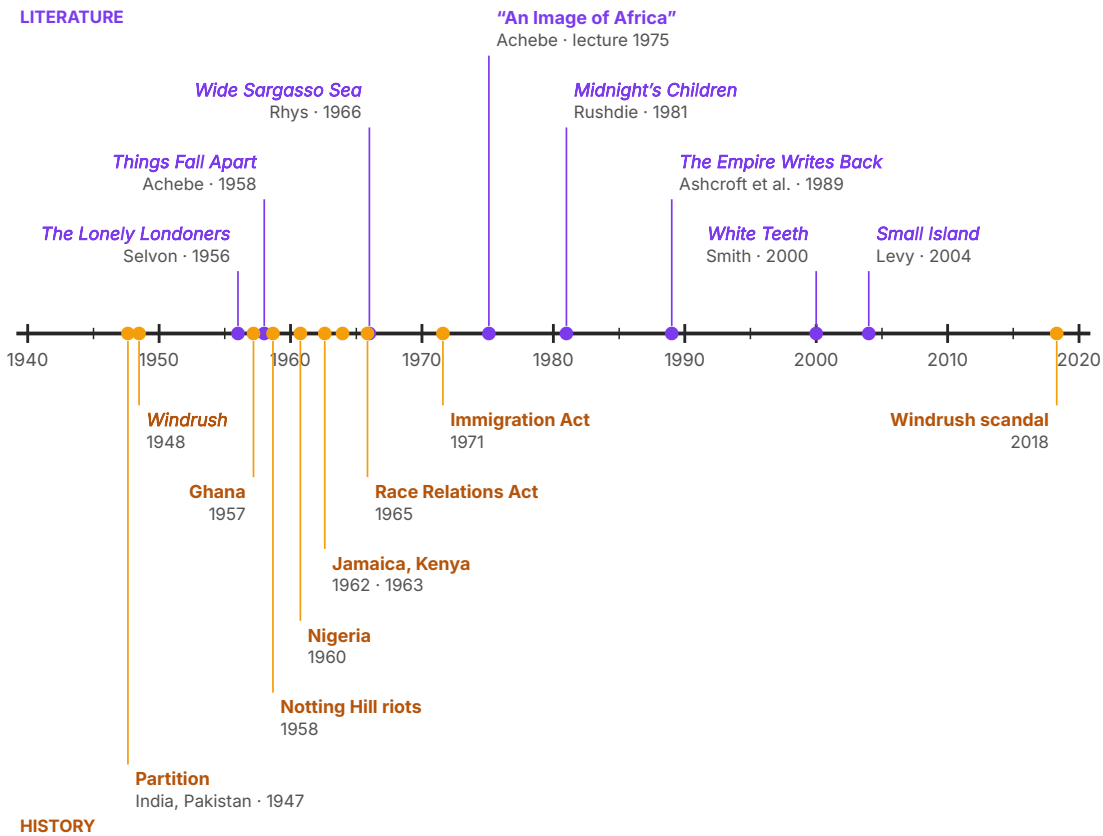


Figura 12.1 The end of empire, migration and postcolonial writing, 1940–2020: literary events (above the axis, violet) and historical events (below, amber) on a proportional time axis (ticks every 5 years, labels every 10). Country names below the axis mark independence from Britain.

12.1.1 India, 1947: independence and Partition

India was the largest and richest of the colonies, and its independence movement the oldest: the Indian National Congress had been founded in 1885, and from the 1920s Mohandas K. Gandhi led mass campaigns of non-violent civil disobedience. During the Second World War the Muslim League, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, demanded a separate state for India's Muslims. In 1947 the Labour government of Clement Attlee decided to leave quickly. British India was divided along religious lines into a Hindu-majority India and a Muslim-majority Pakistan: power passed to Pakistan in Karachi on 14 August 1947 and to India at midnight on 15 August. This division is called the Partition of India — the same word, *partition*, that you met for Ireland in chapter 8.

The new borders, drawn in a few weeks, cut through the provinces of Punjab and Bengal. Hindus and Sikhs fled east, Muslims fled west, and terrible violence followed on both sides. Hi-

storians' estimates of the dead range from about 200,000 to two million, and between ten and twenty million people were forced to leave their homes — one of the largest migrations in history. Pakistan itself was made of two parts a thousand miles apart; in 1971 East Pakistan became the independent state of Bangladesh.

12.1.2 Africa and the Caribbean

Ghana, the former Gold Coast, was the first British colony in West Africa to become independent, on 6 March 1957, under Kwame Nkrumah. Nigeria followed on 1 October 1960, Jamaica on 6 August 1962 and Kenya on 12 December 1963. Kenya's came after the Mau Mau rebellion and the emergency of 1952–1960, when tens of thousands of Kenyans were detained in camps where many were tortured — abuses the British government acknowledged, with compensation, only in 2013. In February 1960 the Prime Minister Harold Macmillan told the South African parliament that a "wind of change" was blowing through Africa: the phrase is often used as a name for the whole period.

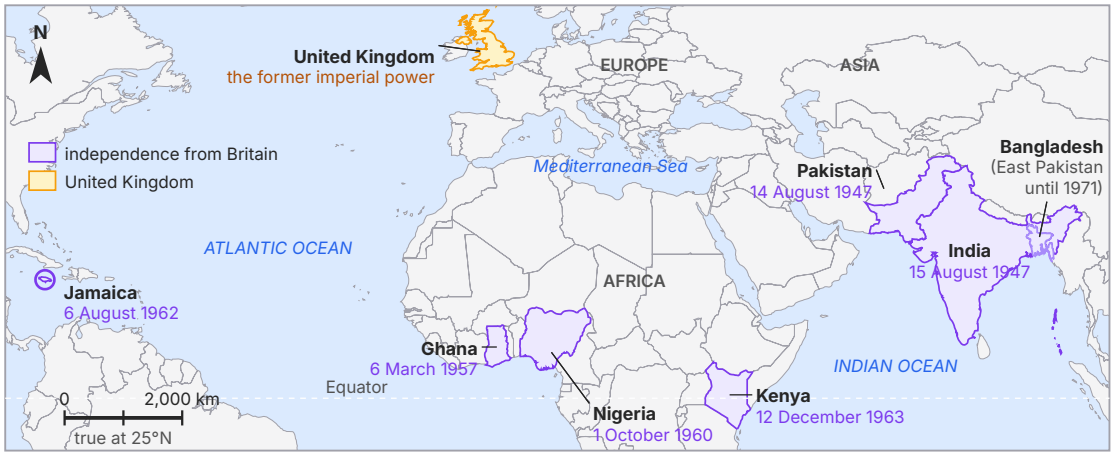


Figura 12.2 Decolonisation: the countries named in this section, with their dates of independence from Britain. Present-day borders, simplified (Natural Earth data; disputed borders not marked). In 1947 Pakistan also included East Bengal, independent as Bangladesh in 1971. Scale true at 25°N.

Most of the new states chose to stay in the **Commonwealth of Nations** (*Commonwealth delle nazioni*), a voluntary association of independent and equal states that were once, with a few exceptions, part of the empire. The London Declaration of 1949 allowed a republic, such as India, to remain a member and to recognise the British monarch only as the symbolic Head of the Commonwealth.

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ «Il Commonwealth è l'Impero britannico con un altro nome.» → ✓ È un'**associazione volontaria** di stati indipendenti ed eguali; nessuno è governato da Londra, e molti sono repubbliche (India, dal 1950).

✗ «I passeggeri del *Windrush* erano immigrati stranieri senza documenti.» → ✓ Erano **sudditi britannici** (dal 1949 «cittadini del Regno Unito e delle colonie»): avevano per legge il diritto di entrare e di stabilirsi nel Regno Unito.

12.1.3 The Windrush generation

The *Empire Windrush* reached Tilbury on 21 June 1948 with 1,027 passengers; they disembarked on 22 June (Figura 12.3). Some were ex-servicemen who had served in the Royal Air Force during the war; others had read that Britain needed workers. They were not foreigners. A month later Parliament passed the British Nationality Act 1948, in force from 1 January 1949, which created a single status, "citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies", for the people of Britain and of its colonies, with the right to live and work in Britain. The name **Windrush generation** (*generazione Windrush*) is now used for all the people who came from the Caribbean to Britain between 1948 and 1971, and for their children.

They found work in the new National Health Service, on London's buses and Underground, in factories and on the railways; London Transport and the NHS recruited directly in the Caribbean in the 1950s. They also found prejudice. Landlords put signs in their windows refusing "coloured" tenants, and many employers, pubs and dance halls operated a **colour bar** (*discriminazione razziale di fatto*): an unwritten rule excluding people because of the colour of their skin. In 1963 a boycott of the Bristol Omnibus Company, which refused to employ Black or Asian drivers and conductors, ended in August with the company changing its policy.

In late August and early September 1958 white crowds attacked West Indian residents in Notting Hill, in West London, for several nights; there had been similar violence in Nottingham a few days earlier. In answer, the Trinidad-born activist Claudia Jones organised a Caribbean carnival in St Pancras Town Hall in January 1959, an ancestor of today's Notting Hill Carnival. Parliament responded to the new Britain in two opposite ways. The Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 began to restrict the right of Commonwealth citizens to settle, and the Immigration Act 1971 (in force from 1 January 1973) restricted it further. The Race Relations Act 1965, on the other hand, was the first British law against racial discrimination: it banned discrimination in public places such as hotels, pubs and cinemas; the Act of 1968 extended it to housing and employment.



Figura 12.3 The voyage of the *Empire Windrush*, 1948 (route approximate). The ship sailed from Trinidad, called at Kingston (Jamaica), Tampico (Mexico), Havana (Cuba) and Bermuda, and crossed the Atlantic to Tilbury, where it arrived on 21 June; the passengers disembarked on 22 June. Coastlines simplified (Natural Earth data); scale true at 32°N.

12.1.4 Multicultural Britain and the Windrush scandal

From the 1950s migrants also came from India, Pakistan and, after 1971, Bangladesh; in the 1960s and 1970s from East Africa, especially after Uganda expelled its Asian citizens and residents in 1972. Their children and grandchildren are British. In the 2021 census, 81.7% of the people of England and Wales described their ethnic group as White, 9.3% as Asian, 4.0% as Black, 2.9% as Mixed and 2.1% as another group (Connections, Figura 12.5).

In 2017–18 the newspaper *The Guardian* revealed that many people of the Windrush generation, who had lived legally in Britain for fifty or sixty years, had been treated as illegal immigrants. Many had arrived as children on their parents' passports and had never needed any other document. Since 2012 the government's **hostile environment** (*ambiente ostile*) policy had required employers, landlords, banks and hospitals to check people's immigration status, and those who could not prove it lost their jobs, their homes or access to medical care; some were detained, and some were deported to countries they had left as children. The Home Secretary resigned in April 2018, and the government apologised and set up a compensation scheme. Since 2019, 22 June has been celebrated as Windrush Day.

12.2 Literature: Postcolonial Literature and Writing Back

For most of the twentieth century Africa, India and the Caribbean appeared in English literature, if at all, as settings — the jungle of Kipling, the river of Conrad (chapter 6). After independence the people who had been described began to describe themselves, in English, and to argue with the books that had described them.

Postcolonial literature (*letteratura postcoloniale*) is the literature of countries that were once colonies, and of their migrants, written in the light of the colonial experience and its aftermath. The term is a critical category, not a period: it also covers texts written before independence. A key idea of postcolonial criticism is **writing back** (*rispondere scrivendo*): answering the books of the colonial canon from the point of view of the colonised, by retelling their stories, giving a voice to their silent characters or turning their language against them. The phrase comes from Salman Rushdie, who wrote in an article of 1982 that "the Empire writes back"; it became the title of an influential study by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back* (1989).

> **DA RICORDARE**
>
> **Writing back** is a dialogue with a specific text. Achebe answers Conrad's Africa; Jean Rhys gives Bertha Mason, the "madwoman" of *Jane Eyre*, a life and a voice; Rushdie rewrites the history of India from the point of view of a child born at the moment of independence.

12.2.1 Rabindranath Tagore: a Bengali poet in English

Long before independence, one Indian writer had conquered the English-speaking world. **Rabindranath Tagore** (1861–1941), born in Calcutta (now Kolkata) into a great Bengali family of artists and reformers, was a poet, novelist, composer, painter and educator, who founded a school and later a university at Santiniketan. In 1912 he translated a selection of his Bengali poems into English prose; the book, *Gitanjali* ("song offerings"), was published in London that year by the India Society with an introduction by W. B. Yeats (chapter 8). In 1913 Tagore became the first writer from outside Europe to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. Knighted in 1915, he renounced the title in 1919 after British troops killed hundreds of unarmed people at Amritsar. His songs became the national anthems of India and Bangladesh.

12.2.2 Chinua Achebe: Things Fall Apart

Chinua Achebe (1930–2013) was born in Ogidi, in eastern Nigeria, into an Igbo family; his father was a Christian teacher, and he grew up between two cultures. At University College, Ibadan, he read European novels about Africa, such as Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson*, and decided that the story had to be told from inside. *Things Fall Apart* (1958) tells the rise and fall of Okonk-

wo, a proud warrior of the village of Umuofia, in the years when British missionaries and colonial administrators arrived in Igboland, in the late nineteenth century. Its title comes from Yeats's "The Second Coming". Achebe was also the first editor of Heinemann's African Writers Series (1962).

In February 1975, at the University of Massachusetts, Achebe gave a lecture called "An Image of Africa" (published in 1977), in which he argued that *Heart of Darkness* reduces Africa to a background for a European's moral drama and denies its people language and humanity — and that a book which does this cannot be called a great work of art. Many critics replied that the novel attacks imperialism through a narrator whose views are not simply Conrad's; the debate continues, and both readings belong in an essay on the book.

12.2.3 Rhys, Rushdie and magic realism

Jean Rhys (1890–1979), born in Dominica to a Welsh father and a Creole mother, wrote *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) as an answer to *Jane Eyre* (chapter 3). Its heroine is Antoinette Cosway, a white Creole girl in Jamaica after the abolition of slavery, whom an unnamed English husband marries for her money, renames "Bertha" and takes to England, where she is locked in an attic — the attic of Thornfield Hall in Brontë's novel. The madwoman whom Brontë's novel describes from outside becomes a woman with a history.

Salman Rushdie (born in Bombay, now Mumbai, in 1947) won the Booker Prize with *Midnight's Children* (1981). Its narrator, Saleem Sinai, is born at the stroke of midnight on 15 August 1947, the moment of India's independence, and discovers that he is telepathically linked to the other children born in that first hour, all of whom have magical gifts; his life and the life of the nation are "handcuffed" together. The novel is a famous example of **magic realism** (*realismo magico*): a narrative in which marvellous events are told in the same matter-of-fact tone as ordinary ones, so that the fantastic becomes part of everyday reality. The term, first used for painting by Franz Roh (1925), is linked above all to Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967).

12.2.4 Writing the new Britain

Migration created a new subject for the English novel. In *The Lonely Londoners* (1956), the Trinidadian Samuel Selvon followed a group of West Indian men in London in the 1950s, in a narrative voice that uses the rhythms and grammar of Caribbean English. Fifty years later, Andrea Levy (1956–2019), born in London to Jamaican parents (her father had sailed on the *Windrush* in 1948), wrote *Small Island* (2004): set mainly in 1948, it is told by four narrators — a Jamaican couple, Hortense and Gilbert, and an English couple, Queenie and Bernard — and its title fits both Jamaica and Britain: each couple, in its own way, has grown up on a "small island". Zadie Smith (born in London in 1975 to an English father and a Jamaican mother) published *White Teeth* (2000), a comic novel about three families in North London.

Two more critical terms help to describe these books. A **diaspora** (*diaspora*) is a people scattered from its homeland that keeps links with it across generations — the word is Greek (*diasporá*, "scattering") and was first used for the Jews living outside the land of Israel. **Hybridity** (*ibridità*) is the mixing of cultures that produces new, plural identities: in postcolonial theory, especially in the work of Homi K. Bhabha (*The Location of Culture*, 1994), it is not a loss of purity but a source of creativity.

IN SINTESI

Postcolonial voices at a glance

- **Tagore** (India), *Gitanjali*, English version 1912 — Nobel Prize 1913.
- **Selvon** (Trinidad), *The Lonely Londoners*, 1956 — West Indians in London.
- **Achebe** (Nigeria), *Things Fall Apart*, 1958 — Igbo society and colonial rule; "An Image of Africa", 1975/77.
- **Rhys** (Dominica), *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 1966 — Bertha Mason's story.
- **Rushdie** (India/UK), *Midnight's Children*, 1981 — magic realism and the birth of a nation.
- **Smith** (UK), *White Teeth*, 2000; **Levy** (UK), *Small Island*, 2004 — the multicultural city.

APPROFONDIMENTO

A Jamaican poet in Harlem: Claude McKay. Claude McKay (1889–1948) published two books of poems in Jamaican Creole in 1912 before moving to the United States, where he became one of the first voices of the Harlem Renaissance. In the summer of 1919, when white mobs attacked Black communities in many American cities, he wrote the sonnet "If We Must Die", which opens:

> If we must die, let it not be like hogs
> Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,

(Claude McKay, "If We Must Die", lines 1–2; text of *Harlem Shadows*, 1922, Project Gutenberg eBook #64989.) A Caribbean poet chooses the most English of forms, the Shakespearean sonnet, to call for resistance: an early case of a colonial writer turning the canon's own tools to his purpose.

12.3 Texts: Freedom, Collapse and a New Century

The first text is a short poem in the public domain, printed complete. The two novels that follow are not: Achebe died in 2013 and Zadie Smith is alive. They are presented as **reading guides** — an original summary of a passage, its context and at most two very short quotations — and

the questions work on the summary. When you write about them in an essay, say so, and quote only what you have checked.

12.3.1 T1 · Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali* 35 (1912)

Context. *Gitanjali* is a sequence of 103 short prose poems addressed to God, translated by Tagore himself from his Bengali songs. Poem 35 is a prayer for the poet's country — India under British rule — and is often read in Indian schools as a hymn to freedom.

Tabella 12.1 T1 — Tagore, *Gitanjali* 35, complete. Text of the London edition of 1913 (Macmillan; first published by the India Society, 1912), pp. 27–28, as transcribed on Wikisource; checked against Project Gutenberg eBook #7164; one line per verse paragraph

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;	1
Where knowledge is free;	
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;	
Where words come out from the depth of truth;	
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;	5
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;	
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action—	
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.	

Glosses. *held high*: raised with dignity · *narrow domestic walls*: the walls of the house, and of the small community — divisions of caste, religion and class · *striving*: effort · *dreary*: grey, depressing · *dead habit*: custom repeated without thought · *thee*: you (archaic, addressing God) · *ever-widening*: always growing wider.

Analysis

Form. The poem is a single sentence. Seven clauses introduced by *Where* describe an ideal place; only the last line gives the main clause, a prayer: *let my country awake*. This repetition at the beginning of successive lines is *anaphora* (English 4, chapter 11), and its effect is cumulative: each line adds a condition, and the reader waits for the verb. The lines lengthen in the middle and shorten at the end, like a breath held and released. There is no rhyme or metre: the rhythm comes from parallel syntax, as in the Psalms of the Authorised Version.

Imagery. Two images carry the argument. The *fragments* made by *narrow domestic walls* describe a divided society; the *clear stream of reason* lost in the *desert sand of dead habit* sets thought against blind custom. Height and movement (*held high*, *stretches its arms*, *led forward*, *ever-widening*) belong to freedom; enclosure and dryness to its opposite.

Themes. Tagore never names the British. The freedom he asks for is first inner and moral — fearlessness, truth, free knowledge, reason — and only then political: a nation *awakes* when its people are free in mind. It is writing back in its gentlest form: an Indian poet, in the coloniser's language, defines the freedom his country deserves.

1. What does the poet ask for in the main clause? Why does it come only in the last line?
2. List the seven conditions. Which concern the individual, and which the whole society?
3. Explain the image of the stream and the desert in your own words.
4. Who is *my Father*? How does the religious frame change the meaning of *freedom*?
5. Tagore wrote this before independence. Which line, in your view, would most worry a colonial government, and which a nationalist one?

ESEMPIO SVOLTO

From an observation to a paragraph (on T1, lines 3 and 6). Use the literary present (chapter 1) and build the paragraph in three steps.

1. **Point** — one claim: *Tagore presents freedom as the end of division and of blind custom.*
2. **Evidence** — a short quotation, built into your sentence: *The world, he prays, should not be "broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls", and reason should not lose "its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit".*
3. **Explanation** — what the words do: *The first image turns the walls of a house into the divisions of caste and religion; the second sets a living stream against dry sand, so that tradition repeated without thought becomes a kind of death. Political freedom, for Tagore, begins with these inner liberations.*

12.3.2 T2 · Reading guide · Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958)

The epigraph. Achebe placed four lines of Yeats's "The Second Coming" (1920; chapter 8) at the beginning of the novel. The third gives the book its title: *"Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;"* (W. B. Yeats, "The Second Coming", line 3, text of *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*, 1920). Yeats's line describes Europe after the First World War; Achebe applies it to the Igbo society destroyed by colonial rule.

Summary of the novel. Part One (chapters 1–13) describes life in Umuofia, a group of nine Igbo villages, through the story of Okonkwo, a famous wrestler and farmer who has risen from poverty and is terrified of looking weak like his father. We see harvests, marriages, the courts of the ancestral spirits and proverbs: a complex society with its own laws. But Okonkwo takes part in killing a boy, Ikemefuna, who has lived in his house as a son, and later accidentally kills a clansman. He is exiled for seven years to his mother's village. In Part Two (chapters 14–19) missionaries arrive, and Okonkwo's son Nwoye joins the Christians. In Part Three (chapters 20–25) Okonkwo returns to a changed Umuofia, with a church, a court and a District Commissioner.

His friend Obierika sees that the white man has cut "the things that held us together" (chapter 20). When the clan's leaders are arrested and humiliated, Okonkwo kills one of the Commissioner's messengers; the others do not follow him, and he hangs himself.

The ending (chapter 25), described. The last paragraph leaves Okonkwo's people and enters the mind of the District Commissioner. He is writing a book about his work in Africa, and he reflects that the story of this man would make perhaps "a reasonable paragraph". He has already chosen the title of the book: *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*.

Analysis

Point of view. For almost the whole novel the narrator stays close to the Igbo characters and explains their world from inside, often through proverbs. The sudden move into the Commissioner's mind in the final paragraph is the novel's argument: the colonial archive turns a tragedy into a paragraph, and a whole culture into a people to be "pacified". Achebe writes back to that archive — and to novels like Conrad's — by giving the colonised the whole book and the coloniser the last, ironic paragraph.

Language. Achebe's English is shaped by Igbo speech: proverbs, untranslated words such as *chi* (a personal god) and *egwugwu* (masked ancestral spirits), a calm, oral rhythm.

Tragedy. Okonkwo has the stature and the fatal flaw of a tragic hero (English 3 term): his fear of weakness makes him violent and rigid. But things fall apart also because the society was already divided: Nwoye finds in the new religion something his own culture denied him. Achebe refuses to idealise the past.

1. Whose "centre" cannot hold in Yeats's poem, and whose in Achebe's novel?
2. Why do you think Achebe describes the Igbo world in such detail before the Europeans arrive?
3. What does the title of the Commissioner's book reveal about him? Comment on the words *pacification* and *primitive*.
4. Compare the ending with Marlow's lie to Kurtz's Intended in *Heart of Darkness* (chapter 6): what does each ending leave unsaid?
5. Is Okonkwo destroyed by the colonisers, by his own character, or by both? Give reasons.

12.3.3 T3 · Reading guide · Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (2000)

Context. Zadie Smith published *White Teeth* at twenty-four. It follows two friends who met as soldiers in the last months of the Second World War — Archie Jones, a mild Englishman, and Samad Iqbal, a Muslim from Bengal — and their families in Willesden, North London, from 1974 to the end of 1992. Its four parts are named after characters and headed by two dates, so that each part's present stands beside another time — usually a past that keeps returning.

The opening scene (chapter 1), summarised. The novel begins "Early in the morning, late in the century", on New Year's Day 1975, on Cricklewood Broadway. Archie Jones, forty-seven, recently separated from his Italian wife, sits in his car and tries to kill himself with the exhaust

fumes, having decided the matter by tossing a coin. He is saved by the owner of a halal butcher's shop, who refuses to let anyone die on his property. Archie takes it as a sign; that same day he goes to an end-of-the-world party, where he meets Clara Bowden, a young Jamaican woman, whom he soon marries. A failed suicide becomes the start of a new, mixed family.

Analysis

Tone. Smith turns a desperate act into comedy without cruelty: the narrator is ironic, omniscient and affectionate, and treats chance — the coin, the butcher — as the real ruler of lives.

Themes. The novel asks what it means to belong in a city where almost everyone comes from somewhere else. Samad fears that his sons are losing their roots; his twins take opposite paths; Archie's daughter Irie, half English and half Jamaican, wants a history she can recognise. It is a novel of hybridity that shows both the comedy and the tension of living between cultures.

1. Why is the opening phrase "Early in the morning, late in the century" an effective beginning? Comment on its structure.
2. How does the narrator make a suicide attempt comic? Is this tasteless, in your view?
3. Why are the parts of the novel headed by two dates? Connect the idea to the History section of this chapter.
4. Compare the multicultural London of *White Teeth* with the London of *The Lonely Londoners* as described in Literature: what has changed in forty years?

12.4 Language: World Englishes

Achebe's English contains Igbo proverbs; Selvon's narrator speaks the English of Trinidad; Tagore wrote a careful, biblical English. English is no longer the property of England. Linguists speak of **World Englishes** (*gli inglesi del mondo*): the many varieties of English used as a first, second or international language across the world, each with its own regular features of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar.

12.4.1 Three circles

In 1985 the Indian-born linguist Braj B. Kachru proposed a model of three concentric circles (Figura 12.4). In the **inner circle** (*cerchio interno*) English is the first language of most people: Britain, Ireland, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand. In the **outer circle** (*cerchio esterno*) English is a second language with an official role in government, law, education and the media, usually a legacy of colonial rule: India, Nigeria, Kenya, Singapore, the Philippines. In the **expanding circle** (*cerchio in espansione*) English is a foreign language, learnt at school and used for international contact: Italy, China, Japan, Brazil. Kachru called the three circles "norm-providing", "norm-developing" and "norm-dependent".

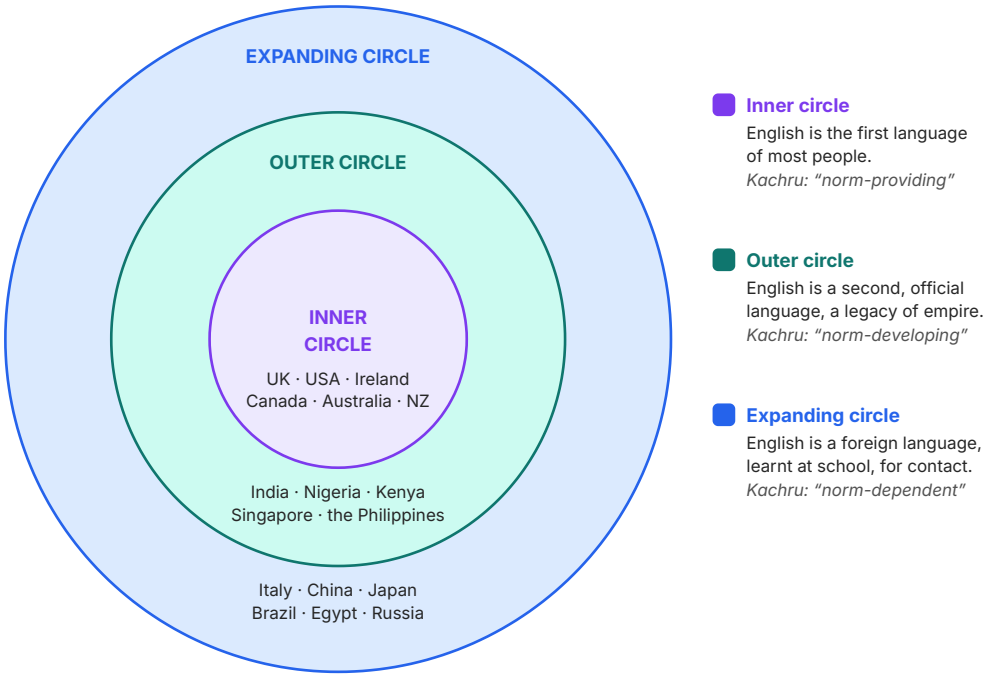


Figura 12.4 The three circles of English, after Braj B. Kachru (1985), with Kachru's labels for the role of each circle in setting the norms of the language. The countries are examples. The model is a simplification: many countries mix circles (in South Africa or Singapore English is a first language for some speakers and a second for others).

The model is useful, but it is a model. Its boundaries are national, while languages live in people: in Nigeria some children now grow up speaking English at home; in the Netherlands or Sweden almost everyone uses English fluently. And today most conversations in English take place between non-native speakers — an Italian engineer and a Japanese client, an Erasmus student from Poland and her Spanish flatmate. This use of English is called **English as a lingua franca** (*inglese come lingua franca*, ELF; *lingua franca*: English 1, Unit 10). In ELF what matters is being understood: clear pronunciation, shared vocabulary, checking and rephrasing, not a perfect British or American accent.

12.4.2 Features of three varieties

Varieties of the outer circle are not "broken English": their features are regular, shared by educated speakers and used in their newspapers and schools. Tabella 12.2 gives a few examples. Many Caribbean speakers also use a **creole** (*creolo*): a full language that grew out of contact between English and West African languages under slavery, with its own grammar. Jamaican Creo-

le (Patois) is not the same as Jamaican English, the standard variety used in Jamaican schools and newspapers; most Jamaicans move between the two.

Tabella 12.2 Three varieties of English: a few verified features, with their equivalents in standard British English

Variety	Feature	Example	Standard British English
Indian English	new verb formed on *postpone*	The meeting has been *preponed* to Monday.	brought forward
Indian English	colonial-era expression	Mr Rao is *out of station* this week.	away, out of town
Indian English	formal expression in official letters	Kindly *do the needful*.	please do what is necessary
Nigerian English	compound coinage	I'm going to the *barbing salon*.	barber's
Nigerian English	time expression	We travel *next tomorrow*.	the day after tomorrow
Nigerian English	semantic shift	We *trekked* to the market.	walked (on foot)
Jamaican Creole	progressive with *a*	*Mi a run.*	I am running.
Jamaican Creole	plural *you* (from Igbo)	*unu*	you (plural)
Jamaican Creole	word from Portuguese or Spanish	*pickney*	child

Notice the last examples: *unu* comes from Igbo, the language of Achebe's Okonkwo, carried to Jamaica by enslaved Africans. The history of the empire is written in the vocabulary of its Englishes.

12.4.3 What "correct" means in an exam

If all these varieties are legitimate, what is correct English? The answer depends on the situation. **Standard English** (*inglese standard*) is the variety of grammar and vocabulary used in education, publishing and official writing, with small differences between its British and American forms (chapter 5); it can be spoken with any accent. In an essay, in the colloquio or in an email to a university you are expected to use standard written English, consistently British or American. In conversation, especially in English as a lingua franca, you should also be ready to understand varieties that are not your own — and to adapt, rephrase and check, as good international speakers do.

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Varietà, non errori. Una **varietà** è un sistema coerente, condiviso da una comunità di parlanti istruiti (l'inglese indiano, nigeriano, giamaicano); un **errore** è una deviazione involontaria dalla varietà che si sta usando. *The meeting has been preponed* è corretto in India, ma in una mail a un'azienda di Londra scriverai *brought forward*.

Confronto con l'italiano. Anche l'italiano ha varietà regionali (*sto a mangiare* a Roma, il passato remoto vivo al Sud) e accanto a esse i dialetti, che sono lingue con una grammatica propria, come i creoli. L'**italiano standard** si usa nei temi e nei documenti; lo stesso vale, in inglese, per lo *Standard English*. Il *creolo* giamaicano sta all'inglese un po' come il napoletano sta all'italiano: non è «inglese sbagliato».

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ «L'inglese indiano è un inglese sbagliato.» → ✓ È una **varietà** con norme proprie, usata da milioni di persone istruite e nei giornali indiani.

✗ *Please do the needful and send me the documents.* in una mail a un'università britannica → ✓ *Could you please send me the documents?* L'espressione è normale in India, ma suona antiquata nel Regno Unito: scegli la varietà del tuo interlocutore.

✗ *In my essay I mixed British and American spelling: colour, center.* → ✓ Scegli una varietà e usala con coerenza: *colour, centre* (BrE) oppure *color, center* (AmE).

12.5 Skills: Presentations, CVs and Covering Emails

12.5.1 Vocabulary: identity, migration and belonging

The words in Tabella 12.3 help you talk about the history and the novels of this chapter, and about your own experience.

Tabella 12.3 Identity, migration and belonging: key words

Word	Meaning	Example
migrant (n)	a person who moves to another country or region to live or work	Many migrants from Jamaica found work in the NHS.
heritage (n)	traditions, language and history passed down in a family or a nation	She is proud of her Caribbean heritage.
identity (n)	who a person is; what makes them feel themselves	Irie looks for an identity of her own.
belonging (n)	the feeling of being accepted, of being part of a place or group	A sense of belonging takes time.
roots (n pl)	the family origins of a person	Samad fears his sons will forget their roots.
discrimination (n)	unfair treatment because of race, sex, religion…	The 1965 Act banned discrimination in public places.
integrate (v)	become part of a society while keeping your own culture	Schools help children integrate.
citizenship (n)	the legal status of being a citizen, with rights and duties	The 1948 Act created a common citizenship.
multicultural (adj)	made of several cultures living together	London is a multicultural city.
settle (v)	go to live permanently in a place	They settled in Brixton in 1950.

Word formation: *multi-*, *inter-*, *trans-* and hyphenated identities

Three Latin prefixes are essential for this topic. ***multi-*** means "many" (*multicultural, multilingual, multi-ethnic*); ***inter-*** means "between" (*intercultural, international, interracial, intermarriage*); ***trans-*** means "across" or "beyond" (*transnational, transatlantic, translate*). A *multicultural* city contains many cultures; an *intercultural* project brings them into contact. Double identities are often hyphenated: *a British-Asian writer, an Italian-American family* (but usually *Black British*). Usage varies: when in doubt, use the words people use for themselves.

12.5.2 Reading: Sam in Turin

Before you read. Does anyone in your family come from another region or country? What did they bring with them? Sam is spending the Easter holidays in Turin with Giulia's family. Read his post for the Link Reading Club (Tabella 12.4). *Sam's family history is invented for this book; the history around it is real.*

Tabella 12.4 Reading text — Sam's post for the Link Reading Club

The Link · Two Cities and a Suitcase — a post by Sam Taylor, Turin

I'm writing this on Giulia's balcony, with a view of the Alps that I'm told is "not even a good one". I came to Turin for the food and to meet Giulia's class (they asked harder questions about Achebe than my seminar group in Manchester). But I want to write about a suitcase.

The suitcase belongs to my gran, Maggie. It is brown cardboard with metal corners, and it lives on top of her wardrobe in Bristol. In 1960, when she was seven, she carried it — or rather, she sat on it — all the way from Kingston, Jamaica, to Southampton, with her mother. Her father had come four years earlier, to work; the bus company in Bristol wouldn't take him, because of the colour bar, so he worked in a factory until the boycott of 1963 changed things, and then he drove buses for twenty-five years. When my dad became a bus driver too, Gran said the family had finally got the job back.

Gran doesn't talk much about the first winter, except to say that she had never been so cold. She talks more about 2018. That year a letter asked her to prove that she had the right to live in Britain. She had arrived on her mother's passport, as a child, and she had no papers of her own. It took months, three boxes of old school reports and a very patient lawyer to prove what everyone in our street already knew. She was sixty-five. She had never lived anywhere else. When the newspapers began to call it the Windrush scandal, she said she was glad it had a name, "because then it wasn't just me".

This week Giulia took me to Porta Palazzo, a huge open-air market that people here describe as one of the largest in Europe. Within a hundred metres I heard Arabic, Chinese, Romanian and the Piedmontese dialect of a cheese seller, who gave me a lecture on why English cheese is a mistake. Afterwards we walked through San Salvario, where Giulia's dad lived as a student. He says that in the 1960s the newcomers here were from Sicily, Calabria and Puglia, coming north to work at Fiat, and that some landlords put up signs refusing southerners. I had to sit down for a minute. I thought that sign was a Bristol story.

Giulia's grandmother told me — Giulia translating, slowly — that her own grandfather's brothers left the Langhe for Argentina before the First World War, and that one of them never wrote home again. Every family I meet seems to have a suitcase somewhere.

So here is my suggestion for the club. Our next novel is *White Teeth*. Before we discuss it, each of us could find one object that travelled with someone in our family — a suitcase, a recipe, a word — and write three lines about it. I'll start: brown cardboard, metal corners, Kingston to Bristol, seventy-one years old. Still in use. Gran says she isn't going anywhere, but you never know.

Comprehension. (1) Why does the suitcase matter to Sam's family? (2) Why could Sam's great-grandfather not work on the Bristol buses at first, and what changed in 1963? (3) What happened to Maggie in 2018, and why did she have no papers? (4) Why does Maggie say she was glad the scandal "had a name"? (5) What surprises Sam in San Salvario, and why? (6) What does Sam propose to the club, and how is it connected to the novel they will read next?

Language in context. Find a hedged claim — a sentence in which Sam reports what other people say instead of stating a fact. Why is the hedge useful there?

12.5.3 Speaking: presenting with slides

Presentations with slides are common at university, in CLIL lessons and, in a simpler form, in the colloquio (your PCTO experience, for example). The slides support you; they do not speak for you. Five rules: one idea per slide; few words, never sentences to read aloud; one image, map or chart with its source; a title that states the point; a final slide that sums up. Tabella 12.5 gives the language you need to guide the audience through the talk (signposting, English 3, chapter 13) and to refer to what they see.

Tabella 12.5 Useful language — presenting with slides

Function	Expressions
Opening and outline	Today I'd like to talk about… · My talk is in three parts: first…, then…, finally… · It will take about five minutes.
Moving on	Let's move on to… · This brings me to my second point. · Now let's look at…
Referring to a visual	As you can see on this slide… · This map shows… · On the left / In the top right-hand corner you can see… · Look at the red line.
Highlighting	What is striking here is… · I'd like to draw your attention to… · The key point is…
Giving a source	These figures come from the 2021 census. · According to the National Archives…
Concluding and questions	To sum up… · The main thing to remember is… · Thank you for listening. · I'd be happy to answer any questions. · That's a good question — let me go back to the map.

1. **Task 1 — five slides, five minutes.** Prepare a presentation called "From the *Windrush* to today" using the map of the voyage, the timeline and the census chart in this chapter as your visuals. One slide each: the voyage, the 1948 Act, discrimination and the 1965 Act, the 2018 scandal, Britain today. Rehearse with a timer.
2. **Task 2 — colloquio link (Greek and philosophy).** Present Herodotus's story of Darius, the Greeks and the Callatiae (Connections) on one slide and Achebe's novel on another, and explain in three minutes what both teach about judging other cultures. End with a question for your audience.

12.5.4 Writing: a CV and a covering email

In English 2 (Unit 5) you wrote a formal email of application and a short CV. Now the stakes are higher — a summer job abroad, a volunteering programme, a university course — and you will usually send two documents: a **CV** and a **covering email** (*email di accompagnamento*), a short message that introduces you, says which position you are applying for and why you are suitable, and asks for an interview. Many European employers and universities accept the **Europass CV** (*curriculum Europass*), a standard format promoted by the European Union, with the same

sections in every language. Tabella 12.6 shows Giulia's CV in a simplified Europass layout; Tabella 12.7 her email.

Tabella 12.6 Model text — Giulia's CV (simplified Europass layout; personal details invented)

Personal information	Giulia Ferraro · Turin, Italy · giulia.ferraro@example.com · (phone number)
Education and training	2026–2031 · Liceo classico, Turin — final diploma (esame di maturità) expected July 2031. Main subjects: Latin, Ancient Greek, Italian, English, history, philosophy.
Work experience	2030–2031 · PCTO placement (work-based learning), a museum in Turin: drafted English labels and panel texts for a temporary gallery; guided two visits for English-speaking school groups.
Language skills	Italian: mother tongue. English: upper-intermediate (B2, school assessment). Latin and Ancient Greek: reading and translation.
Digital skills	Word processing and presentations; basic image editing; online research with library catalogues.
Other	Member of an online international reading club; volunteer reader for children at the local library (2029–2030).

Tabella 12.7 Model text — Giulia's covering email (the festival is invented)

To: volunteers@northshoreartsfestival.example
Subject: Application — summer volunteer guide (July–August)

Dear Festival Team,

I am writing to apply for a position as a volunteer guide at the Northshore Arts Festival this summer, as advertised on your website. I am nineteen and in my final year at a liceo classico in Turin, and I will be available from 15 July to 31 August.

I believe I would be well suited to the role. During a work placement at a museum in Turin this year, I wrote English texts for an exhibition and guided groups of visitors, so I am used to explaining art and history clearly to people of all ages. I speak Italian and English, and I enjoy working in a team.

Volunteering at your festival would give me the chance to improve my English before university and to see how a large cultural event is organised.

I attach my CV. I would be happy to have a video interview at any time convenient for you. Thank you for considering my application.

Yours faithfully,
Giulia Ferraro

Structure. Subject line: the position, so that the email reaches the right person · **paragraph 1**: who you are, which position, where you saw it, when you are available · **paragraph 2**: why you

are suitable — one or two concrete experiences, not a list of adjectives · **paragraph 3**: why you want this job · **closing**: attachment, interview, thanks · *Yours faithfully* after *Dear Sir or Madam / Dear Festival Team*, *Yours sincerely* after a name.

Checklist. ✓ a professional email address · ✓ CV in reverse chronological order, with no date of birth or photo unless requested · ✓ email of 150–180 words, formal, no contractions · ✓ concrete evidence for each quality you claim · ✓ consistent spelling · ✓ names and dates checked.

Task. Write your own CV and covering email (Writing and Speaking exercises) and check a partner's against the checklist. **Research (TIC).** Open the official Europass website of the European Union and compare its CV sections with the model: what does it add?

LEARNING TO LEARN

CLIL: studying a subject in English. In the fifth year one non-language subject is taught partly in a foreign language (CLIL). The hard part is vocabulary. Three tools help.

- **A bilingual glossary**, kept as you go: term · Italian equivalent · short English definition · an example from the lesson (*decolonisation · decolonizzazione · the end of colonial rule · Ghana, 1957*).
- **A key-word map**: one central concept (*migration*) with four or five branches (causes, routes, laws, consequences, data), each with two or three key words. A map shows connections that a list hides — what you need in the colloquio.
- **Words with Latin and Greek roots** are your advantage: *diaspora* (διασπορά), *demography* (δῆμος + γράφω), *migrant* (*migrare*), *colony* (*colonia*). Check the meaning in English, though: an *emigrant* leaves, an *immigrant* arrives.

Colloquio link. Migration links this chapter to history (decolonisation, Italian emigration), to Italian (De Amicis, Pavese), to Greek (Herodotus) and to philosophy (cultural relativism).

12.6 Connections: Emigrants, Customs and Numbers

12.6.1 Italians on the ocean: De Amicis

Between the 1870s and the 1970s millions of Italians emigrated, to the Americas, to Australia and to northern Europe; within Italy, millions more moved from the South to the industrial cities of the North, such as Turin. Italian literature told that story early. In 1884 Edmondo De Amicis (1846–1908), the author of *Cuore*, sailed from Genoa to South America on an emigrant ship, and in *Sull'oceano* (1889) he described the voyage. The book opens in the port of Genoa:

> *Quando arrivai, verso sera, l'imbarco degli emigranti era già cominciato da un'ora, e il* Galileo*, congiunto alla calata da un piccolo ponte mobile, continuava a insaccar miseria*

("When I arrived, towards evening, the emigrants had been boarding for an hour, and the *Galileo*, joined to the quay by a small gangway, went on stuffing misery into its hold" — Edmondo De Amicis, *Sull'oceano*, "L'imbarco degli emigranti"; text of the Milan edition of 1889, Treves, as transcribed on Wikisource from the scans; the same incipit on Wikiquote, which follows the same transcription; translation by the editors.)

The verb *insaccare* — to put into sacks — turns people into cargo — the same reduction of people to things that the District Commissioner's book performs in T2; De Amicis looks at the emigrants with compassion and some middle-class distance: he is a passenger in first class. Compare him with Levy, Selvon or Sam's post, in which the migrants tell their own story. Since the 1990s Italy, a country of emigrants, has also become a country of immigration, and writers who came to Italy from Africa, Albania or Latin America — or who were born here to immigrant parents — have begun to write in Italian about it: Italian literature, too, is learning to write back.

COLLEGAMENTI

Greek: "custom is king of all". In Book III of his *Histories* (read in Greek in your third year), Herodotus tells how the Persian king Darius asked some Greeks at his court how much money they would want to eat their dead fathers: nothing in the world, they said. He then asked some Indians called Callatiae, who did eat their dead parents, what would make them burn their fathers on a pyre, as the Greeks did — and they cried out in horror. Herodotus concludes:

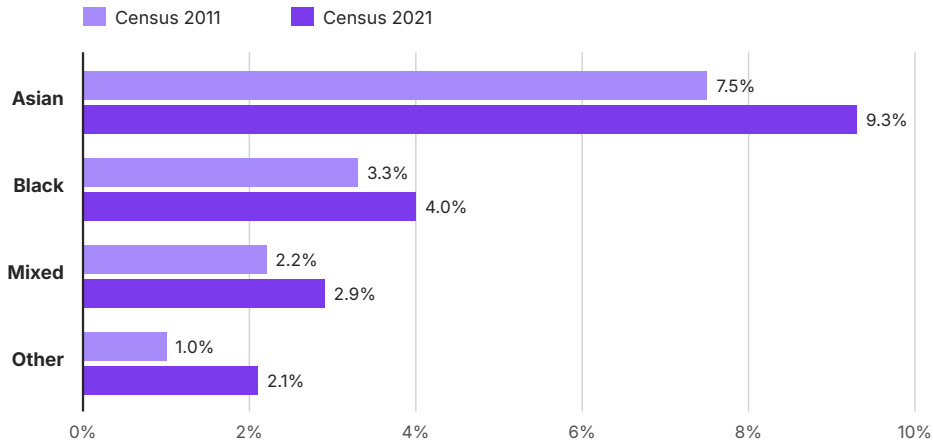
> οὕτω μέν νυν ταῦτα νενόμισται, καὶ ὀρθῶς μοι δοκέει Πίνδαρος ποιῆσαι νόμον πάντων βασιλέα φήσας εἶναι.

("So these things are fixed by custom, and Pindar seems to me right when he wrote that custom is king of all." — Herodotus, *Histories* III.38.4; text of A. D. Godley's edition, Perseus Digital Library; translation by the editors.)

For Herodotus every people believes its own customs are the best, and only a madman — like the king Cambyses, the subject of this chapter of the *Histories* — mocks the customs of others. The colonial archive of Achebe's District Commissioner, with its "primitive tribes", is exactly the view Herodotus warns against; *Things Fall Apart*, with its patient description of Igbo law and ritual, is closer to Herodotus's curiosity. The word *nómos* means both "custom" and "law": the same ambiguity runs through the clash of Igbo customs and colonial courts in Achebe's novel. In philosophy, this is the problem of cultural relativism.

12.6.2 Demography: reading a census

Migration is a subject for numbers as well as for novels. Figura 12.5 shows how the population of England and Wales described its ethnic group in the last two censuses. In the census every household must answer, and people describe their ethnic group themselves.



Share of the usual resident population of England and Wales. Not shown: White, 86.0% (2011) → 81.7% (2021). Each year's five groups add up to 100%.

Figura 12.5 Ethnic group in England and Wales, censuses of 2011 and 2021 (percentages of usual residents; five aggregated groups as defined by the Office for National Statistics). Data: ONS, Census 2011 and Census 2021, as published by GOV.UK, "Ethnicity facts and figures — Population of England and Wales".

COLLEGAMENTI

Demography and statistics. *Demography* (from the Greek *dêmos*, "people", and *gráphein*, "to write") is the study of populations: their size, structure and movements. Read Figura 12.5 with three questions. **What is measured?** Self-described ethnic group, not place of birth or citizenship: most people in the "Black" or "Asian" groups were born in Britain. **What changed?** Every minority group grew: the Asian share from 7.5% to 9.3%, the Black from 3.3% to 4.0%, the Mixed from 2.2% to 2.9%, the Other from 1.0% to 2.1% — that is, it more than doubled — while the White share fell from 86.0% to 81.7%. **What is missing?** The chart shows shares, not numbers of people (the population also grew), and nothing about regions: London is far more diverse than Wales. In Italy, ISTAT publishes comparable data on foreign residents and on Italians abroad. You will learn to describe such data in a full commentary in chapter 13.

SINTESI

- **Decolonisation**: India and Pakistan became independent in August 1947, with the **Partition** and its mass violence and migration; Ghana followed in 1957, Nigeria in 1960, Jamaica in 1962, Kenya in 1963.
- Most former colonies joined the **Commonwealth of Nations**, a voluntary association of equal states (London Declaration, 1949).
- The *Empire Windrush* brought 1,027 passengers to Tilbury in June 1948; the British Nationality Act 1948 gave the people of the colonies a common citizenship and the right to settle in Britain.
- The **Windrush generation** met the colour bar and the Notting Hill riots (1958); the Race Relations Act 1965 was the first law against racial discrimination, while the Acts of 1962 and 1971 restricted immigration.
- In 2018 the **Windrush scandal** revealed that the hostile environment policy had treated legal residents as illegal immigrants.
- **Postcolonial literature** is the writing of former colonies and their diasporas; **writing back** (Rushdie, 1982; Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1989) answers the colonial canon.
- Tagore's *Gitanjali* (1912; Nobel Prize 1913) includes poem 35, a single-sentence prayer for a country free in mind.
- Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), titled from Yeats, tells Okonkwo's tragedy and ends in the District Commissioner's colonial view; "An Image of Africa" (1975) criticised Conrad.
- Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) writes back to *Jane Eyre*; Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) uses **magic realism**; Selvon, Levy and Smith write the multicultural city (diaspora, hybridity).
- **World Englishes**: Kachru's inner, outer and expanding circles (1985); outer-circle varieties and creoles have regular features; English as a lingua franca values intelligibility.
- In exams and formal writing, use **standard English**, consistently British or American; a CV and a covering email follow fixed conventions.
- Connections: De Amicis's emigrants in *Sull'oceano* (1889); Herodotus III.38, "custom is king of all"; the census as a source on a changing population.

ESERCIZI

History and Literature

1. ● Which of these countries became independent from Britain first?
   - **A.** Ghana
   - **B.** Nigeria
   - **C.** Jamaica
   - **D.** Kenya

2. ● In 1948 the passengers of the *Empire Windrush* were, in law,
   - **A.** foreign workers with temporary visas
   - **B.** refugees from the Second World War
   - **C.** British subjects with the right to settle in Britain
   - **D.** citizens of independent Caribbean states

3. ● The phrase “the Empire writes back” was first used by
   - **A.** Chinua Achebe, in "An Image of Africa"
   - **B.** Rabindranath Tagore, in his Nobel lecture
   - **C.** Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, in 1989
   - **D.** Salman Rushdie, in an article of 1982

4. ● The title *Things Fall Apart* comes from
   - **A.** an Igbo proverb
   - **B.** a poem by W. B. Yeats
   - **C.** a line of *Heart of Darkness*
   - **D.** the Book of Psalms

5. ●● True or false? Correct the false statements. a) Bangladesh became independent from Britain in 1947. b) The Race Relations Act 1965 banned discrimination in housing and employment. c) Tagore translated *Gitanjali* into English himself. d) In *Wide Sargasso Sea* the woman whom *Jane Eyre* calls Bertha Mason is Antoinette Cosway. e) The Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 made it easier for Commonwealth citizens to settle in Britain. f) Saleem Sinai is born at the moment of India’s independence.

6. ● Match each author to a work and a date. Authors: Selvon · Rhys · Rushdie · Levy · Smith · Tagore. Works and dates: *White Teeth* (2000) · *Gitanjali* (1912) · *Small Island* (2004) · *Midnight’s Children* (1981) · *The Lonely Londoners* (1956) · *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966).

7. ●● Explain each term in one or two sentences, with an example from the chapter: a) writing back; b) magic realism; c) diaspora; d) hybridity.

8. ●●● Short answer (50–80 words). What was the Windrush scandal, and why did it hit people who had arrived as children especially hard?

Text Analysis

9. ● T1. How many lines of *Gitanjali* 35 begin with *Where*? What is the name of this device, and what is its effect on the reader?

10. ●● T1. Paraphrase lines 3 and 6 in plain modern English, without images.

11. ●● T1. Tagore asks for a freedom that is first "inner". Find three words or phrases that support this reading and explain them.

12. ●● T2. Explain how the last paragraph of *Things Fall Apart* changes the point of view, and why this is the novel's strongest act of writing back.

13. ●●● T2. Write a PEE paragraph (Point, Evidence, Explanation; 100–120 words) on the title the District Commissioner chooses for his book. Quote only the title.

14. ●● T3. The opening of *White Teeth* is comic, the ending of *Things Fall Apart* is tragic. What does each tone allow the writer to say about cultures in contact?

15. ●●● Colloquio link (60–80 words). Link *Things Fall Apart* to one other subject (history, Greek, philosophy or Italian), naming a specific text or event.

Language

16. ● Inner, outer or expanding circle? Write I, O or E: a) Nigeria; b) Australia; c) Italy; d) India; e) Ireland; f) Japan; g) Singapore; h) Brazil.

17. ●● Rewrite these sentences in standard British English for an email to a British university: a) Our interview has been preponed to Tuesday. b) The professor is out of station until Friday. c) Kindly do the needful at the earliest. d) I will arrive next tomorrow.

18. ● Match the Jamaican Creole words and phrases to their meanings: a) *Mi a run*; b) *unu*; c) *pickney*. Meanings: 1 child; 2 you (plural); 3 I am running. Which one comes from Igbo?

19. ●● True or false? a) A creole is a broken form of English. b) Standard English can be spoken with any accent. c) In English as a lingua franca, a native-speaker accent is the main goal. d) Kachru's model describes every country exactly. e) Outer-circle varieties are used in newspapers and schools.

20. ●● Find and correct the mistake in each sentence (✗). a) ✗ *Tagore win the Nobel Prize in 1913.* b) ✗ *In the novel, Okonkwo kills himself because he lost the wrestling match.* (content) c) ✗ *Achebe argues that Conrad's Africa are only a background.* d) ✗ *The Windrush arrived to Tilbury in 1948.* e) ✗ *I write color and centre in the same essay.*

21. ●● Concession (chapter 2) and citation (chapter 6). Join the ideas using the word in brackets. a) Achebe admired Conrad's style. He thought the novel racist. (*much as*) b) The model is simple. It is useful. (*adjective + as*) c) Achebe / say / Conrad denies Africans language (reporting verb *argue*, present tense).

22. ●● Complete the text with one word in each gap. *English is (1) ___ official language in more than fifty countries. In some of (2) ___ it is the first language of most people; in (3) ___ it is used alongside local languages. Most conversations in English today take place (4) ___ non-native speakers, (5) ___ means that being understood matters more (6) ___ sounding British.*

23. ●● Translate into English. a) L'inglese nigeriano non è un inglese sbagliato, ma una varietà con regole proprie. b) Nei temi d'esame bisogna usare l'inglese standard, britannico o americano, con coerenza. c) Benché fossero cittadini britannici, molti passeggeri del Windrush furono trattati come stranieri.

24. ●●● Write five sentences comparing two varieties of English you have heard (in films, songs, on the internet or from people you know). Describe one feature of pronunciation, one of vocabulary and one of grammar, without judging them.

Vocabulary

25. ● Complete with a word from the vocabulary table: heritage · belonging · roots · settled · citizenship · discrimination. a) Her grandparents ___ in Leicester in 1972. b) The 1948 Act gave them British ___. c) A sense of ___ grows when people feel accepted. d) He visited the village in Jamaica where his family's ___ are. e) The law banned ___ in pubs and hotels. f) The festival celebrates the city's Caribbean ___.

26. ●● *multi-*, *inter-* or *trans-*? a) a ___national company with offices in forty countries; b) an ___cultural exchange between two schools; c) a ___lingual child who speaks three languages; d) a ___atlantic flight; e) ___marriage between two communities; f) a ___ethnic neighbourhood.

27. ●● Write a sentence for each: a) *emigrant* and *immigrant*; b) *integrate* and *assimilate* (look up the second); c) a hyphenated identity of your choice.

Writing and Speaking

28. ●●● Write your CV (Europass sections) and a covering email (150–180 words) for a summer job or volunteering position abroad. Follow the model and the checklist.

29. ●● Prepare a three-minute presentation with three slides on one postcolonial writer of this chapter (life, one work, why it matters today). Use at least five expressions from the table of useful language.

Towards the Exam

Reading (B2). Read the text and answer the questions that follow.

Tabella 12.8 Reading text — "A Carnival in Two Rooms" (written for this book)

When the Notting Hill Carnival fills the streets of West London every August bank holiday, few of the dancers know that it began indoors, in winter. In January 1959, a few months after the riots of the previous summer, the journalist and activist Claudia Jones hired St Pancras Town Hall for an evening of Caribbean music, dance and food. Her aim was not only to entertain. Jones, who had been deported from the United States for her political activity, believed that a community under attack needed to see its own culture celebrated in public. The event was broadcast by the BBC, and similar indoor carnivals followed in the next few years. The outdoor carnival grew from a different root: a children's street festival organised in Notting Hill in 1966 by local residents, among them the social worker Rhaune Laslett, who wanted to bring the area's many communities together. Steel bands joined the procession, and within a decade it had become a Caribbean carnival attended by tens of thousands. Today it is one of the largest street festivals in Europe. Historians still discuss which of the two origins matters more; most agree that the carnival needed both — the pride of a diaspora and the street life of a mixed neighbourhood.

30. ●● According to the text, why did Claudia Jones organise the 1959 event?

A. To raise money for the victims of the riots

B. To show a community under pressure its own culture celebrated in public

C. To protest against her deportation from the United States

D. To start a street festival in Notting Hill

31. ●● What does the writer say about the outdoor carnival?

A. It was organised by Claudia Jones in 1966

B. It was always a Caribbean carnival

C. It began as a festival for the children of the area

D. It was first broadcast by the BBC

32. ●● Key-word transformations. Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first, using the word in capitals (2–5 words). a) Although the passengers were British citizens, they were treated as foreigners. DESPITE — ___ British citizens, the passengers were treated as foreigners. b) It took months for Maggie to prove her right to stay. SPENT — Maggie ___ her right to stay. c) "Why did you come to England?" the officer asked Gilbert. WHY — The officer asked Gilbert ___ to England. d) People say that Porta Palazzo is one of the largest markets in Europe. SAID — Porta Palazzo ___ one of the largest markets in Europe.

33. ●●● Colloquio prompt. Your material is this line by Tagore: "Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls" (*Gitanjali* 35, 1912). In three or four minutes, explain what it means, connect it to one English author of this chapter and to two other subjects, and end with your own view of the line today.

PER APPROFONDIRE

- [ASH] B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths, H. Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*: the introduction, on the term “postcolonial” and on writing back.
- [CRY] D. Crystal, *English as a Global Language*: chapters 1–2, on the circles of English and why English became global.
- [NOR] S. Greenblatt (ed.), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, vol. F: the section on nation and language, with Achebe, Rhys and Rushdie.
- [SAN] A. Sanders, *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*: the chapter on literature after 1945, for postcolonial writing in Britain.
- [ABR] M. H. Abrams, G. G. Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*: the entries “postcolonial studies” and “magic realism”.

Glossario del capitolo

Colour bar
discriminazione razziale (di fatto) — an unwritten rule excluding people from jobs, housing or places because of the colour of their skin.

Commonwealth of Nations
Commonwealth delle nazioni — a voluntary association of independent, equal states, most of them once part of the British Empire.

Covering email
email di accompagnamento — a short formal email that introduces an applicant and the CV attached to it.

Creole
creolo — a full language that grew from contact between languages, such as Jamaican Creole from English and West African languages.

Decolonisation
decolonizzazione — the end of colonial rule and the transfer of power to independent states, especially after 1945.

Diaspora
diaspora — a people scattered from its homeland that keeps links with it across generations.

English as a lingua franca
inglese come lingua franca — English used for communication between people who do not share a first language.

Europass CV
curriculum Europass — a standard CV format promoted by the European Union.

Hostile environment
ambiente ostile — the British policy, from 2012, of making it hard for people without proof of immigration status to work, rent or use services.

Hybridity
ibridità — the mixing of cultures that produces new, plural identities.

Inner, outer and expanding circles
cerchio interno, esterno e in espansione — Kachru's model (1985) of English as a first, a second and a foreign language.

Magic realism
realismo magico — narrative in which marvellous events are told as part of ordinary reality.

Postcolonial literature
letteratura postcoloniale — the literature of former colonies and their diasporas, written in the light of colonial experience.

Standard English
inglese standard — the variety of grammar and vocabulary used in education, publishing and official writing.

Windrush generation
generazione Windrush — the people who came from the Caribbean to Britain between 1948 and 1971, named after the *Empire Windrush*.

World Englishes
gli inglesi del mondo — the varieties of English used as a first, second or international language around the world.

Writing back
rispondere scrivendo — answering a text of the colonial canon from the point of view of the colonised (Rushdie, 1982).

Soluzioni

1. A (Ghana, 6 March 1957; Nigeria 1960, Jamaica 1962, Kenya 1963).

2. C (British subjects; from 1 January 1949, citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies).

3. D (Rushdie, 1982; the book by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1989, took the phrase as its title).

4. B ("The Second Coming", 1920, line 3).

5. a) F — in 1947 it was East Pakistan, part of Pakistan; it became independent from Pakistan in 1971. b) F — the 1965 Act covered public places; housing and employment came with the 1968 Act. c) T. d) T. e) F — it began to restrict their right to settle. f) T.

6. Selvon — *The Lonely Londoners* (1956); Rhys — *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966); Rushdie — *Midnight's Children* (1981); Levy — *Small Island* (2004); Smith — *White Teeth* (2000); Tagore — *Gitanjali* (1912).

7. *Traccia.* a) Answering a canonical colonial text from the colonised's point of view: Rhys and *Jane Eyre*; Achebe and Conrad. b) Marvellous events told as ordinary reality: Saleem's telepathic link with the midnight's children. c) A people scattered from its homeland that keeps its links: the Caribbean diaspora in Britain; from Greek "scattering". d) The mixing of cultures into new identities, seen as creative (Bhabha): Irie in *White Teeth*.

8. *Model answer.* In 2018 it emerged that many people of the Windrush generation, living legally in Britain for decades, had been treated as illegal immigrants under the hostile environment policy, which required employers, landlords and hospitals to check immigration status. Many lost jobs, homes or medical care; some were detained or deported. Those who arrived as children on their parents' passports had never had documents of their own, so they could not prove a right they had always had. (78 words)

9. Seven (lines 1–7). Anaphora: the repetition builds suspense and accumulates conditions until the main clause in line 8.

10. *Model.* Line 3: where society is not divided by the prejudices of family, caste and religion. Line 6: where people think clearly instead of following old customs without question.

11. *Traccia.* "the mind is without fear" (courage as a mental state); "knowledge is free" (education open to all); "the clear stream of reason" (thinking for oneself); "the mind is led forward… into ever-widening thought". Political freedom follows from them ("let my country awake").

12. *Traccia.* The narrator, close to the Igbo characters for almost the whole novel, suddenly enters the Commissioner's mind; his plan to reduce Okonkwo to "a reasonable paragraph" and his title expose the colonial archive's blindness. The reader, who knows the whole story, sees the irony: Achebe gives the colonised the novel and the coloniser one paragraph.

13. *Model PEE.* (P) The District Commissioner's title reveals how colonial power rewrites violence as order. (E) He decides to call his book *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*. (E) "Pacification" is a euphemism for conquest, and it hides the arrests, the fine and the humiliation the reader has just witnessed, and Okonkwo's death; "primitive" denies the complex laws, poetry and religion Achebe has described for a whole novel. The title is Achebe's final irony: the coloniser's book will turn a tragedy into an ethnographic footnote. (about 100 words)

14. *Traccia.* Comedy lets Smith show the contradictions of multicultural life without making her characters victims, and chance as a ruler of lives; tragedy lets Achebe show the destruction of a whole society and the moral weight of colonial power. Rea-

dings may differ; credit any answer that links tone to purpose.

15. *Model (Greek). Things Fall Apart* can be read beside Herodotus III.38: like Darius's experiment with the Greeks and the Callatiae, Achebe shows that every people judges others by its own customs. The District Commissioner's "primitive tribes" is the view Herodotus calls madness, while Achebe's detailed account of Igbo law reflects Herodotus's curiosity about other peoples. Both teach that understanding begins with describing a culture from inside. (about 70 words)

16. a) O; b) I; c) E; d) O; e) I; f) E; g) O; h) E.

17. a) Our interview has been brought forward to Tuesday. b) The professor is away until Friday. c) Could you please do what is necessary (deal with this) as soon as possible? d) I will arrive the day after tomorrow.

18. a) 3; b) 2; c) 1. *unu* comes from Igbo.

19. a) F — it is a full language with its own grammar. b) T. c) F — intelligibility is the main goal. d) F — it is a simplification. e) T.

20. a) Tagore **won** the Nobel Prize in 1913. b) Okonkwo kills himself after he has killed a messenger and his clan does not follow him (in chapter 1 he wins a famous wrestling match as a young man). c) ...Conrad's Africa **is** only a background. d) ...arrived **at** Tilbury... e) Use one variety consistently: *colour* and *centre* (BrE) or *color* and *center* (AmE).

21. a) Much as Achebe admired Conrad's style, he thought the novel racist. b) Simple as the model is, it is useful. (or: Simple though the model is, ...) c) Achebe argues that Conrad denies Africans language. (Also: *Achebe argued that Conrad denied...*, if the lecture is reported as a past event.)

22. (1) an (*the* is grammatical but not true of all of them); (2) them; (3) others (also: *many*, *most*); (4) between (also: *among*); (5) which; (6) than.

23. a) Nigerian English is not broken (wrong) English but a variety with its own rules. b) In exam essays you must use standard English, British or American, consistently. c) Although they were British citizens, many Windrush passengers were treated as foreigners. (or: Despite being British citizens, ...)

24. Open answer. Check that each sentence describes a feature neutrally ("In Australian English, ... is pronounced...") and gives an example.

25. a) settled; b) citizenship; c) belonging; d) roots; e) discrimination; f) heritage.

26. a) multinational (or transnational); b) intercultural; c) multilingual; d) transatlantic; e) intermarriage; f) multi-ethnic.

27. *Traccia.* a) An emigrant leaves his or her country; an immigrant arrives in a new one: *Millions of Italian emigrants became immigrants in Argentina.* b) To integrate is to become part of a society while keeping one's own culture; to assimilate is to absorb the majority culture and lose one's own. c) e.g. *She describes herself as Italian-Brazilian.*

28. Assessment: CV sections complete and in reverse chronological order, no unnecessary personal data; email 150–180 words, clear subject line, three paragraphs with concrete evidence, correct opening and closing (*Yours faithfully / sincerely*), formal register, consistent spelling.

29. *Traccia.* Slide 1: life and context (e.g. Achebe, Nigeria, 1930–2013); slide 2: one work (*Things Fall Apart*, 1958: Okonkwo, the ending); slide 3: why it matters today (writing back, African literature, the Conrad debate). Expressions: *My talk is in three parts...; As you can see on this slide...; This brings me to...; What is striking here is...; To sum up...*

30. B.

31. C.

32. a) Despite being British citizens... (2 words; *Despite the fact that they were* is too long for the limit) b) Maggie spent months proving her right to stay. c) The officer asked Gilbert why he had come to England. d) Porta Palazzo is said to be one of the largest markets in Europe.

33. *Model answer (outline).* Meaning: a society not divided by family, caste or religious barriers; Tagore's prayer for an India free in mind before it is free politically (1912, before independence). English au-

thor: Achebe — Umuofia is divided from within (Nwoye) and broken from outside; or Zadie Smith's London, where walls between communities are tested. History: Partition (1947), when new borders literally broke a country into fragments. Greek: Herodotus III.38, custom as king, the walls between peoples' customs. Personal view: walls today may be digital (online "bubbles") as well as national; the line still asks for curiosity and reason.