

Pride and Prejudice

Study Guide

by Tiffany A. H. Colonna

For the novel by Jane Austen



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A Progeny Press Study Guide

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Note to Instructor

How to Use Progeny Press Study Guides. Progeny Press study guides are designed to help students better understand and enjoy literature by getting them to notice and understand how authors craft their stories and to show them how to think through the themes and ideas introduced in the stories. To properly work through a Progeny Press study guide, students should have easy access to a good dictionary, a thesaurus, a Bible (we use NIV translation, but that is up to your preference; just be aware of some differences in language), and sometimes a topical Bible or concordance. Supervised access to the Internet also can be helpful at times, as can a good set of encyclopedias.

Most middle grades and high school study guides take from eight to ten weeks to complete, generally working on one section per week. Over the years, we have found that it works best if the students completely read the novel the first week, while also working on a prereading activity chosen by the parent or teacher. Starting the second week, most parents and teachers have found it works best to work on one study guide page per day until the chapter sections are completed. Students should be allowed to complete questions by referring to the book; many questions require some cross-reference between elements of the stories.

Most study guides contain an Overview section that can be used as a final test, or it can be completed in the same way the chapter sections were completed. If you wish to perform a final test but your particular study guide does not have an Overview section, we suggest picking a couple of questions from each section of the study guide and using them as your final test.

Most study guides also have a final section of essays and postreading activities. These may be assigned at the parents' or teachers' discretion, but we suggest that students engage in several writing or other extra activities during the study of the novel to complement their reading and strengthen their writing skills.

As for high school credits, most Christian high schools to whom we have spoken have assigned a value of one-fourth credit to each study guide, and this also seems to be acceptable to colleges assessing homeschool transcripts.

Internet References

All websites listed in this study guide were checked for appropriateness at the time of publication. However, due to the changing nature of the Internet, we cannot guarantee that the URLs listed will remain appropriate or viable. Therefore, we urge parents and teachers to take care in and exercise careful oversight of their children's use of the Internet.

Synopsis

At the turn of the 18th century, the accomplishment considered highest for any English gentleman's daughter was to be well married. A good match was one that provided comfort and financial security for both the young lady and her suitor. Much of the story of *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen's famous romantic comedy of manners, revolves around this theme.

Elizabeth Bennet is the second of five daughters born to a gentleman of moderate wealth and property living near the town of Meryton, in Hertfordshire, England, at the dawn of England's Regency period, sometime during the Napoleonic Wars (1792–1815). Mr. and Mrs. Bennet have failed to produce a male heir for the family's estate, Longbourn, so Longbourn has been entailed upon Mr. Bennet's cousin, the ridiculous Mr. Collins. With no estate or adequate inheritance of their own, the five Bennet girls find themselves in need of suitable matches that will ensure financial security for themselves and their family.

Elizabeth and her father share a common sense of humor; they have the fortunate ability to laugh at the follies of themselves and others, most often those of Mrs. Bennet and the three youngest Bennet girls, appropriately described by their father as "very silly." Having been given a large amount of freedom throughout their formative years, Mary, Catherine (Kitty), and Lydia have very little in the way of sensible education, class, or developed talent. Lydia, the youngest, is the most spoiled, selfish, and unrestrained of them all and her shortcomings eventually prove most painful to her family. On the contrary, Elizabeth and her elder sister, Jane, are ladylike, educated, and accomplished. They are the only two women in the Bennet family with the sense of propriety and grace of manner to meet the stringent qualifications of good society.

The theme of securing a good marriage brings to the story such characters as Mr. Bingley, Mr. Darcy, and Mr. Wickham, young men whose characters and sensibilities cause in turn both joy and despair to the Bennet family. As the story unfolds and each of the young men's characters are discovered, Elizabeth finds herself having to discern the difference between true goodness and the mere appearance of it. She begins to discern that there is much more goodness in Mr. Darcy than she had previously believed and she finds she must let go of both her unfounded prejudices and her pride if she is to ultimately choose the man who truly deserves her love.

Chapters 31–35

Vocabulary:

Read each sentence below paying close attention to the usage of the underlined word. Use a dictionary to identify its part of speech (such as noun, verb, adjective, etc.) and give its definition.

1. Mr. Darcy spoke with affectionate praise of his sister's proficiency.

Part of speech: _____

Definition:

2. Lady Catherine listened to half a song, and then talked, as before, to her other nephew; till the latter walked away from her, and making with his usual deliberation towards the pianoforte stationed himself so as to command a full view of the fair performer's countenance.

Part of speech: _____

Definition:

3. "She seems perfectly happy, however, and in a prudential light it is certainly a very good match for her."

Part of speech: _____

Definition:

4. But when Elizabeth told of his silence; it did not seem very likely, even to Charlotte's wishes, to be the case; and after various conjectures, they could at last only suppose his visit to proceed from the difficulty of finding anything to do, which was the more probable from the time of year.

Part of speech: _____

Definition:

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5. She felt all the perverseness of the mischance that should bring him where no one else was brought, and, to prevent its ever happening again, took care to inform him at first that it was a favourite haunt of hers.

Part of speech: _____

Definition:

6. “Mr. Darcy is uncommonly kind to Mr. Bingley, and takes a prodigious deal of care of him.”

Part of speech: _____

Definition:

7. “You are rather disposed to call his interference officious?”

Part of speech: _____

Definition:

8. “That is not an unnatural surmise,” said Fitzwilliam, “but it is a lessening of the honor of my cousin’s triumph very sadly.”

Part of speech: _____

Definition:

9. . . . the avowal of all that he felt, and had long felt for her, immediately followed.

Part of speech: _____

Definition:

10. The five weeks which she had now passed in Kent had made a great difference in the country, and every day was adding to the verdure of the early trees.

Part of speech: _____

Definition:

11. “The situation of your mother’s family, though objectionable, was nothing in comparison to that total want of propriety so frequently, so almost uniformly betrayed by herself, by your three younger sisters, and occasionally even by your father.”

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Part of speech: _____

Definition:

12. “Of what he has particularly accused me I am ignorant; but of the truth of what I shall relate, I can summon more than one witness of undoubted veracity.”

Part of speech: _____

Definition:

13. “In town I believe he chiefly lived, but his studying the law was a mere pretence, and being now free from all restraint, his life was a life of idleness and dissipation.”

Part of speech: _____

Definition:

Questions:

1. Who is Colonel Fitzwilliam? Describe his character.
2. What does Lady Catherine do in Chapter 31 as they all are talking that makes Mr. Darcy look ashamed of his aunt’s ill-breeding (poor behavior)?
3. Darcy keeps visiting Elizabeth, both at the parsonage, and showing up in the park walking, yet he says very little. What does Fitzwilliam find amusing at the end of Chapter 32?
4. What does Charlotte suppose of Mr. Darcy’s reasons for visiting Elizabeth at Hunsford, and what evidence does Elizabeth give to dissuade her?
5. What news does Elizabeth learn of Mr. Darcy during her walk with Colonel Fitzwilliam, and what effect does this news have on her?

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6. What does Mr. Darcy tell Elizabeth, and what does he ask her, on his sudden evening visit to Hunsford? In what ways does he offend at the same time he is asking this?
7. After Elizabeth says no, why does Mr. Darcy write a letter to Elizabeth? What specific issues does he address?

Thinking About the Story:

8. What analogy does Elizabeth use when speaking with Mr. Darcy when he declares to her that he is “ill qualified to recommend himself to strangers”? What message is she trying to convey through this comparison?
9. The opposite of a foil in literature is *parallelism*, purposefully using similar plots, characters, or other story elements to draw attention to and reinforce specific attributes, ideas, or patterns. In what way is Darcy’s outward attitude toward Elizabeth a parallel with Jane’s outward attitude toward Bingley? What is also ironic about the parallels?
10. Were you prepared for the proposal to Elizabeth by Mr. Darcy and the contents of his letter? Looking back, can you see any foreshadowing that may have hinted at these events?
11. What new information are we given regarding Mr. Wickham from Mr. Darcy’s letter?

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she has exposed herself in some public place or other, and we can never expect her to do it with so little expense or inconvenience to her family as under the present circumstances.” He also hopes she will stay out of trouble and find out she is not important. Note: When Mr. Bennet says, “exposed herself in some public place,” is referring to revealing or making obvious her foolishness, not the meaning more commonly used today.

2. Elizabeth learns that they will not have time to tour the Lakes and will have to settle for seeing Derbyshire. She is disappointed at first, but decides to be content with seeing what they will of the country. This news does, however, bring to her mind thoughts of “Pemberley and its owner.” Elizabeth hopes to enjoy Derbyshire without coming in contact with or being at all noticed by Mr. Darcy.

3. She is only comfortable visiting when she confirms that the Darcys will not be at home.

4. While viewing Pemberley, Mr. Darcy unexpectedly arrives home and she meets him.

5. Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner realize that Mr. Darcy is in love with Elizabeth.

6. Elizabeth’s hope is renewed when Bingley asks if all her sisters are still at Longbourn, as well as by the fact that Bingley remembers his time with her family with such clarity (including the date of the ball) and that he seems to pay no special attention to Miss Darcy.

Thinking About the Story:

7. Elizabeth tells Wickham that Darcy improves on acquaintance, that she saw him often, and that she believes Mr. Darcy the same in essentials that he always was. She also says that Darcy has not actually improved, but she simply understands his disposition better. Wickham explains that Darcy is pretending the appearance of what is right, he was only good because he fears his aunt, and he is hoping to marry Miss de Bourgh.

8. Mrs. Reynolds’ comment that she has known Mr. Darcy since he was four years old and has “never had a cross word from him” astonishes Elizabeth. This is surprising because she had always thought “that he was not a good-tempered man.” Such a comment from a respectable and longstanding servant of the household carries great significance.

9. Elizabeth is expecting that Mr. Darcy will want to escape their company as soon as he realizes who the Gardiners are because they are socially “beneath” him, as he mentioned so ungraciously during his past proposal of marriage. Elizabeth is surprised and greatly pleased to see him quickly recover from his surprise and commence lively conversation with them. Elizabeth is thankful that Mr. Darcy can see that at least some relatives of hers are honorable and worthy of respect.

10. Answers may vary, accept all reasonably supported answers. a. *cause:* Lydia has gone; *effect:* health, good humour, and cheerfulness reappears at Longbourn; b. *cause:* Elizabeth finds out Darcy’s family is not at home. *effect:* her concern is removed, she can answer that it is fine to go see it, and they plan to visit Pemberley; c. *cause:* Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner are amazed that Darcy is visiting them to introduce his sister to Elizabeth; *effect:* they now suspect that Mr. Darcy is partial to Elizabeth and likes her. d. *cause:* Miss Bingley is jealous and believes that Darcy admires Elizabeth; *effect:* She continues verbally baiting him by criticizing Elizabeth; (or) *cause:* Miss Bingley continues verbally baiting Darcy by criticizing Elizabeth. *effect:* Darcy finally answers that Elizabeth is the prettiest woman he knows. (or) *cause:* Darcy finally answers that Elizabeth is the prettiest woman he knows; *effect:* Miss Bingley is left having only caused pain to herself.

11. Answers may vary, but may mention some of the following: Miss Bingley is ungracious, jealous, unkind to others, and critical. Elizabeth holds her tongue even when she doesn’t want to, she is gracious and thoughtful. This foil between the two women shows Elizabeth’s good qualities and explains some of the reasons Mr. Darcy cares for Elizabeth. Their social positions also play into the foil: Darcy would expect that the higher born lady, Miss Bingley, would have the better manners, but it is actually Elizabeth, lower born, who is most gracious and actually wittier.

Dig Deeper:

12. Elizabeth was sorry and concerned by her father’s decision, but decided not to dwell on it. It was not in her nature to fret over unavoidable evils or to be anxious and worry when it wouldn’t change things. The verses tell us to not be anxious, to pray, and to not worry about tomorrow, as each day has enough to take care of. Elizabeth handles this situation much like these verses suggest. Personal answers will vary.

13. Answers will vary. Elizabeth’s concerns seem much wiser than her father’s answer, and he does not seem to take his position as father and parent seriously. A child will naturally behave childishly, but it is up to adults, particularly parents, to demonstrate and teach wise behavior. Childishness, such as silliness and flirtatiousness, left too long can become habits and patterns of thought that are difficult to change later. The older we get, the harsher the consequences for foolish behavior.

14. Sentences will vary. Mr. Darcy seems to be very kind and generous to the people who work for him and the people and merchants in the surrounding area. Everyone Elizabeth talks with has a good report for Mr. Darcy. Lady Catherine, however, is domineering, intrusive, and dictatorial, forcing her will on even the townspeople. Mr. Darcy’s actions compare