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INTRODUCTION

1. Jane Austen never married, but she clearly understood that marriage and family are the frameworks of the moral life. *Pride and Prejudice*, as with all of Austen's novels, reflects the very issues Austen understood best: love, marriage, family, and stability within an intimate social setting.
2. She complained that the novel was "too light, and bright, and sparkling," and that it needed "shade," etc. She shared this with her sister Cassandra.
3. The rational and virtuous life is the most attractive and happiest one to live.
4. Darcy is humbled and has a change of heart. For this reason, he serves as an example and inspiration for men. Inside a man's heart is the desire to be chivalrous towards the woman he loves. Darcy is the picture of an ideal man who is allowed to respond to his inherent and natural desire to be chivalrous.
5. Mrs. Gardiner, Elizabeth's aunt, plays such a role. Austen draws attention to the negative characteristics of Mrs. Bennet—her loudness, awkwardness, and public declarations—but she contrasts her with discreet Mrs. Gardiner, who requires Elizabeth to be precise in her language and, most importantly, to restrain her speech. Mrs. Gardiner is "a picture of feminine excellence" (p. xvi).
6. Elizabeth will "owe her happiness ... to the choices of her own will and to the influence upon her of that true friend upon whom she could rely implicitly, her husband" (p. xvii). Austen believes in the Christian-influenced kind of marriage in which the woman is the "natural friend of man"—a conception of marriage that involves not a struggle between the sexes, but rather a dignity, sweetness, and harmony. She believes that the human race can be redeemed by love.
7. No, it is a love story that develops, relying on the evolution, wisdom, and humility of its main characters.
8. Mr. Bennet proclaims to Elizabeth, "My child, let me not have the grief of seeing you unable to respect your partner in life" (p. xx). Mr. and Mrs. Bennet married poorly and have a faulty relationship to a degree. He desires the blessing of a good marriage for her.
9. Answers will vary but may include: the high ideals of gentlemanly and ladylike behavior; to be upright, dignified, and decorous is to be beautiful; we are introduced to a way of thinking that accords with our nature more than the modes of thought we have inherited; we learn to use the language of character more carefully; we learn to distinguish the subtle shades of virtue and vice; we learn about the qualities of soul that are required for a happy marriage.
10. Reading Jane Austen is an important means of healing our minds from the wounds of the modern world. Her tremendous popularity attests to this. She is loved widely and deeply; a testament to such a thing as human happiness exists. We are drawn to her love for the good and her faith in God's providence. Her stories "nourish the virtue of hope" (p. xxi).

INTRODUCTION



In the Ignatius Critical Editions: *Pride and Prejudice*, read the Introduction, pp. ix–xxi, marking the text in key places, and then answer the following questions in your Literature Notebook.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Did Jane Austen ever marry? How does her understanding of marriage affect the framework of *Pride and Prejudice*?
2. What was one of Austen's earliest critiques of the novel *Pride and Prejudice*? With whom did she share this?
3. What type of life do Austen's books suggest is the most ideal?
4. Why is *Pride and Prejudice* a compelling story to men?
5. Who plays an important role in the transformation and shaping of Elizabeth? How do we know Elizabeth has been influenced by this person?
6. To whom will Elizabeth eventually owe her happiness in life? What was Jane Austen's conception of marriage and humanity?
7. Is *Pride and Prejudice* a story about love at first sight?
8. What is Mr. Bennet's concern regarding Elizabeth? Use a direct quote to support your answer.
9. What are some accounts of beauty and ways of thinking that we encounter when we read Jane Austen?
10. What can we gain from Jane Austen today?

BASIC FEATURES & BACKGROUND

Characters

1. **Elizabeth Bennet** – Optimistic, bright-spirited, and witty. Elizabeth is the second eldest Bennet daughter. She maintains the highest standards of propriety, which sets her apart from the other members of her family. A fair amount of pride and prejudice causes her to misperceive Mr. Darcy's initial manners towards her and others as arrogant and rude.
2. **Fitzwilliam Darcy** – Stately, handsome, and wealthy. Darcy has a haughty and superior nature that alienates him from others, especially Elizabeth. Darcy is at times awkward and cold, yet he always maintains civility and formal politeness. His demeanor is never inviting. Enamored with Elizabeth, he assumes she will reciprocate his feelings.
3. **Jane Bennet** – The eldest Bennet daughter and closest confidante and friend to Elizabeth. Jane is beautiful and benevolent. She equals Elizabeth in propriety and social formality. Her temperament, however, is more placid and composed, and mistaken for indifference in regards to her feelings towards Bingley.
4. **Charles Bingley** – Good natured, handsome, and wealthy. A friend of Mr. Darcy, Bingley takes up residence at Netherfield. The key distinction between Bingley and Darcy lies in Bingley's affable and sociable manners. Bingley is greatly admired by all, especially Jane, who becomes the object of his affection. Another aspect of Bingley is that he is impressionable and too easily influenced by his sisters and Darcy.
5. **Mr. Bennet** – The father of the Bennet girls and the favored parent of Elizabeth. Mr. Bennet is intelligent and rife with perceptive sarcasm regarding the foolishness of his wife and younger daughters. This sarcasm replaces any true paternal involvement with his daughters, and his neglect is evident and distressing to both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy. His silence and disengagement is as frustrating as Mrs. Bennet's loud and overbearing ways.
6. **Mrs. Bennet** – The mother of the Bennet girls. Mrs. Bennet is loud and indifferent to most rules of social decorum. Her intentions are mostly good at heart, and her main objective is the marriage of her daughters. Her brazenness causes frequent embarrassment for Elizabeth and mortification for Darcy.
7. **Lydia Bennet** – The youngest Bennet daughter. Fatuous, flirtatious, and indulged by Mrs. Bennet, Lydia desires frivolity and soldiers in red coats.
8. **George Wickham** – Handsome and superficially charming, Wickham captures the attention of many ladies, including Elizabeth. A lifelong acquaintance of Darcy, he is sly and scandalous.
9. **Mr. Collins** – The cousin who will inherit Longbourn. Collins is effusive with his apologies, his thankfulness, and his devotion of Lady Catherine.
10. **Mary Bennet** – The third-born Bennet daughter, Mary is plain and disappears behind her contrived, bookish quips.
11. **Catherine Bennet** – The fourth-born Bennet daughter, Catherine is the flirtatious cohort of her sister Lydia, and never seems to leave her side.
12. **Lady Catherine de Bourgh** – The wealthy aunt of Darcy with the inherited title of "Lady." Lady Catherine is a bully, often abusing her entitled right of appropriate condescension. She intimidates most of those in her circle.

❁ VOLUME I ❁

Central Quote:

“Your plan is a good one,” replied Elizabeth, “where nothing is in question but the desire of being well married; and if I were determined to get a rich husband, or any husband, I dare say I should adopt it.”

— (p. 23)

PRE-GRAMMAR | Preparation

Prepare the student for understanding the Central One Idea by drawing upon his or her prior knowledge or experience.

1. a. List five good manners you have been taught and five bad manners you have been cautioned against. These might pertain to conversations, behavior at meals, treatment of others, behavior at church, behavior in certain public places, hygiene, hosting a social event, etc.

- b. Why are rules of decorum important for society? How do they reveal the character of a person?

2. Recall a time when you formed an opinion about someone's character because of a negative first impression. Or, relate an instance when you formed an opinion about someone as a result of another person's misjudgment of him or her. Did your opinion change after you explored the truth about the person's character, or after you got to know him or her?

❖ Chapters I-II (1-2) ❖

GRAMMAR | Presentation

The student is presented with and discovers essential facts, elements, and features of the novel.

READING NOTES

1. **"A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year."** (p. 4) – Mr. Bingley's inherited income from his father is 100,000 pounds, and he probably has other investments that generate an annual income of 4-5,000 pounds. Moreover, Mr. Darcy's annual income is 10,000 pounds. During the Regency Era, the annual expenses of a very great house averaged around 5-6,000 pounds per year. Yet even with an income of 1,000 pounds a year, a family could afford several female servants, a coachman, a footman, a couple carriages, and a pair of horses. During this period, there were less than 400 families whose annual income was 10,000 or more pounds.
2. **Netherfield Park** – the large country estate leased to Mr. Bingley
3. **establishment** (p. 4) – a place of residence; its furnishings and grounds
4. **quickness** (p. 5) – intelligence; quick-wittedness

WORDS TO BE DEFINED

Definitions Bank

a period of two weeks

irritating, provoking

uproar, as from a crowd

showing a strict regard for
what is proper; meticulous

to do something one considers
beneath one's dignity

whim; impulsive change of
mind or behavior

1. You are over **scrupulous** surely. I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you, *adj.* (p. 4)
_____ showing a strict regard for what is proper; meticulous
2. You take delight in **vexing** me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves. *v.* (p. 5)
_____ irritating, provoking
3. Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and **caprice**, *n.* (p. 5)
_____ whim; impulsive change of mind or behavior
4. Mrs. Bennet **deign**(ed) not to make any reply; but unable to contain herself, began scolding one of her daughters. *v.* (p. 6)
_____ to do something one considers beneath one's dignity
5. When is your next ball to be, Lizzy?
To-morrow **fortnight**. *n.* (p. 6)
_____ a period of two weeks
6. though when the first **tumult** of joy was over, she began to declare that it was what she had expected all the while, *n.* (p. 7)
_____ uproar, as from a crowd



Read Chapters I-II, marking the text in key places according to the method taught in "How to Mark a Book."

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Give four reasons why Mrs. Bennet is excited about Netherfield being taken.
_____ The man renting it is young. He is single. He has a large fortune. He will be there before Michaelmas.

2. List five characteristics of Mrs. Bennet revealed in Chapter I.
_____ Answers will vary: impatient; loud; anxious; shallow; ignorant; temperamental;
_____ easily discontented.

SOCRATIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Answers will vary. The narrator admits that the man in question may have no thoughts or intentions to marry, but he is still considered property of someone’s daughter. As well, it is ironic that Mrs. Bennet appears to be the person arranging for the circumstances to arise that the young man will fall in love and eventually marry one of her daughters. The scene finally reveals that it is the young ladies who are desperately in want of a husband to secure their futures; and it is the man who is at liberty to choose whomever he wishes. The line also sets the tone for the novel in that it reveals that the men will possess the fortunes and the women will be subject to their choosing. The women will have little authority with regard to whom they will marry.
- 2. Mr. Bennet declares that he “respects her nerves,” that they are his “friends,” and that he knows them intimately because she has mentioned them for twenty years! Mr. Bennet is using sarcasm, but our sympathy is given to him as we realize that Mrs. Bennet’s complaint happens quite frequently, revealing a questionable aspect of her character.

- 3. What is Mr. Bennet’s reason for giving his daughter Lizzy (Elizabeth) preference over the others?
Mr. Bennet feels the others are “silly and ignorant like other girls” (p. 5), and Lizzy is more quick-witted than her sisters.
- 4. What is Mrs. Bennet’s sole purpose in life?
To have her five daughters married.
- 5. *I do not believe Mrs. Long will do any such thing. She has two nieces of her own. She is a selfish, hypocritical woman, and I have no opinion of her.* (p. 6)
Explain the presence of irony in Mrs. Bennet’s statement.
Mrs. Bennet contradicts herself. She harshly judges and criticizes Mrs. Long, but then finishes her statement by proclaiming she “has no opinion of her.”
- 6. What did Mr. Bennet do that put the household into a “tumult of joy”?
Mr. Bennet called on Mr. Bingley and made a formal introduction.

LOGIC | Dialectic

The student reasons with the facts, elements, and features of the novel; sorts, arranges, compares, and connects ideas – and begins to uncover and determine the Central One Idea. Discussion of the Socratic Questions may include note-taking in the Literature Notebook, or they may be answered in written form in the Literature Notebook.

SOCRATIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
May be verbally discussed or answered in written form in your Literature Notebook.

- 1. *It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.* (p. 1)
This famous, yet somewhat ambiguous opening line could be perceived as an example of **irony**. Using examples from the scenes that follow in Chapter I, explain how Austen uses this playful line to portray a deeper, contradictory reality.
- 2. *“Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves.”*
“You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least.” (p. 5)
Explain Mr. Bennet’s use of witty sarcasm.