STUDY GUIDE

Pride and Prejudice
Jane Austen

WITH CONNECTIONS

HOLT, RINEHART AND WINSTON
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Using This Study Guide

Approaching the Novel
The successful study of a novel often depends on students’ enthusiasm, curiosity, and openness. The ideas in Introducing the Novel will help you create such a climate for your class. Background information in About the Writer and About the Novel can also be used to pique students’ interest.

Reading and Responding to the Novel
Making Meanings questions are designed for both individual response and group or class discussion. They range from personal response to high-level critical thinking.

Reading Strategies worksheets contain graphic organizers. They help students explore techniques that enhance both comprehension and literary analysis. Many worksheets are appropriate for more than one set of chapters.

Novel Notes provide high-interest information relating to historical, cultural, literary, and other elements of the novel. The Investigate questions and Reader’s Log ideas guide students to further research and consideration.

Choices suggest a wide variety of activities for exploring different aspects of the novel, either individually or collaboratively. The results may be included in a portfolio or used as springboards for larger projects.

The Glossary and Vocabulary list (1) clarifies allusions and other references and (2) provides definitions students may refer to as they read. The Vocabulary Worksheets activities are based on the Vocabulary Words.

Reader’s Log, Double-Entry Journal, and Group Discussion Log model formats and spark ideas for responding to the novel. These pages are designed to be a resource for independent reading as well.

Responding to the Novel as a Whole
The following features provide options for culminating activities that can be used in whole-class, small-group, or independent-study situations.

Novel Review provides a format for summarizing and integrating the major literary elements.

Novel Projects suggest multiple options for culminating activities. Writing About the Novel, Cross-Curricular Connections, and Multimedia and Internet Connections propose project options that extend the text into other genres, content areas, and environments.

Responding to the Connections
Making Meanings questions in Exploring the Connections facilitate discussion of the additional readings in the HRW LIBRARY® edition of this novel.

This Study Guide is intended to
• provide maximum versatility and flexibility
• serve as a ready resource for background information on both the author and the book
• act as a catalyst for discussion, analysis, interpretation, activities, and further research
• provide reproducible masters that can be used for either individual or collaborative work, including discussions and projects
• provide multiple options for evaluating students’ progress through the novel and the Connections

Literary Elements
• plot structure
• major themes
• characterization
• setting
• point of view
• symbolism, irony, and other elements appropriate to the title

Making Meanings Reproducible Masters
• First Thoughts
• Shaping Interpretations
• Connecting with the Text
• Extending the Text
• Challenging the Text

A Reading Check focuses on review and comprehension.

The Worksheets Reproducible Masters
• Reading Strategies Worksheets
• Literary Elements Worksheets
• Vocabulary Worksheets
About the Writer

Jane Austen

More on Austen


Also by Austen

Sense and Sensibility (1811)
Mansfield Park (1814)
Emma (1816)
Northanger Abbey (1818)
Persuasion (1818)

A biography of Austen appears in Pride and Prejudice, HRW Library edition. You may wish to share this additional biographical information with your students.

Jane Austen, the sixth of seven children, was born on December 17, 1775, in Steventon, a small town in Hampshire in south-central England. She was devoted to her family, and she was close to all her siblings. Her elder (and only) sister, Cassandra, however, was her most intimate confidante. Her mother was a witty woman, known for her storytelling abilities, and her father, a country minister, educated his daughters at home after sending them away for brief stints at various boarding schools. George Austen kept an extensive family library, and the children were well read in serious literature, as well as in contemporary popular fiction. In many ways, Austen lived the quiet country life experienced by many of the characters in her novels. She spent most of her time with her family, and she attended the country dances and parties that are described so well in books like Pride and Prejudice, but her brilliant writing sets her apart from other women, real or imagined.

In her youth she began writing humorous, often parodic, short stories and plays, which were read aloud or performed at home for the amusement of her supportive and approving family. Her Juvenilia (the Latin title refers to work produced by authors or artists when they are young) was written between 1787 and 1793 and was published in three volumes. Love and Freindship (her own spelling), one of her best-known early pieces, is a parody of the sentimental fiction popular at that time. An epistolary novel, that is, a novel comprised solely of epistles, or letters, between the characters, Love and Freindship makes fun of literature that places excessive emphasis on emotion and romance. She apparently wrote primarily for the enjoyment of her family, who always remained her most attentive audience.

Continuing this intense phase of literary production, Austen began drafting three of her six major novels in 1796: First Impressions (the original version of Pride and Prejudice), Eleanor and Marianne (the precursor of Sense and Sensibility), and Susan (later called Northanger Abbey). Not yet twenty-five years old, she was becoming a master of her favorite subject—"3 or 4 Families in a Country Village"—and her fiction continued to be mostly about character. Austen used this admittedly scaled-down version of the world to make insightful, ironic, often serious, and always clever observations on the foibles of human nature and the limitations placed on women in a time when marriage, money, and manners were their crucial concerns.

Pride and Prejudice
Austen's father retired in 1801 and moved his wife and daughters to Bath. It was the first in a series of temporary homes she would occupy over the next several years. After her father's death in 1805, Jane, along with her mother and Cassandra, moved to Southampton, the Royal Navy port on the Channel coast at which two of her brothers were stationed. The Austen women found themselves in a position familiar to many of Jane's heroines: little income left to them after Mr. Austen's death and no advantageous marriage prospects for the girls. In 1809, they finally settled in Chawton, near her hometown of Steventon, on the estate of one of her brothers. Here she entered her second concentrated period of work, which lasted until her death. Allowed time to write and often hiding her manuscripts from the view of visitors, she began revising her earlier works for publication. She also began writing her last three novels.

_Sense and Sensibility_ was finally published anonymously in 1811 when she was thirty-six years old. The book was a success, and _Pride and Prejudice_ soon appeared in 1813. Her brother Henry managed the publication of her books, and the increasing popularity of her work led inevitably to her identity becoming known. _Mansfield Park_ and _Emma_ followed, but her last two novels were published by Henry after her death in 1817 from unknown causes.

Austen never married, although she once found herself in a position that mirrored that of Elizabeth Bennet and Charlotte Lucas as they faced Mr. Collins: She received a marriage proposal from a man she didn't love. Austen echoed Elizabeth's decision and refused the offer, even though the marriage would have provided much-needed financial security.

A loving family, limited socializing, books, and writing were the center of Jane Austen's short life. Her brother Henry wrote of his sister: “Faultless herself, as nearly as human nature can be, she always sought, in the faults of others, something to excuse, to forgive or forget. . . . She never uttered either a hasty, a silly, or a severe expression. In short, her temper was as polished as her wit.” Allowing for the hyperbole that can accompany familial praise, it is still an impressive tribute. Jane Austen used humor and stunning irony to create some of the most entertaining, insightful, and respected works of English fiction.
The Novel at a Glance

Pride and Prejudice

Plot and Setting
Set in late-eighteenth-century England, Pride and Prejudice focuses on Austen's favorite subject: the English country gentry. The story takes place over the course of roughly a year. Mrs. Bennet is eager to see her five daughters married, and when an eligible young—and rich—bachelor leases the neighboring estate, she sees great opportunity for her girls. The novel unfolds around the friendships between the two oldest daughters and two wealthy gentlemen. The central conflict develops between Fitzwilliam Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet, both of whom are headstrong and clever. They eventually overcome their initial prejudice against each other and find their pride transformed into love.

Narrative and Structure
Austen uses conventions from novels and plays to construct her narrative. She borrows from the epistolary tradition (popular in eighteenth-century novels) by using letters to reveal character and advance the plot, and she uses dialogue along with her ironic, omniscient authorial voice to resolve conflict and teach moral lessons.

Major Characters
Elizabeth Bennet, the intelligent and quick-witted heroine, is the second-eldest Bennet daughter and her father's favorite.

Fitzwilliam Darcy, proud, rich, and handsome, falls in love with Elizabeth and eventually wins her affection.

Mr. Bennet is the ironic and rather indolent father.

Mrs. Bennet, shrill and silly, is the marriage-obsessed mother.

Jane Bennet, good-natured, gentle, and beautiful, is the eldest daughter of the Bennet family.

Mary Bennet, who is not especially handsome, is the studious and somewhat pompous middle daughter.

Lydia Bennet, the youngest daughter, is foolish, impulsive, and high-spirited; she is Mrs. Bennet's favorite.

Catherine (Kitty) Bennet, foolish and thoughtless, is an irritable version of Lydia.

Charles Bingley is Darcy's even-tempered friend who falls in love with Jane.
The Novel at a Glance (cont.)  

Pride and Prejudice

Caroline Bingley, the cold, hypocritical sister of Charles, wants Darcy for herself.

George Wickham is Darcy's charming yet immoral adversary who elopes with Lydia.

Mr. Collins is Mr. Bennet's absurd clergyman cousin who will inherit the Bennets' estate at Longbourn after Mr. Bennet's death.

Lady Catherine de Bourgh, Darcy's aunt, is Mr. Collins's unpleasant and officious patron.

Charlotte Lucas is Elizabeth's particular friend, who marries Mr. Collins for stability and financial security.

Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner, the well-bred and amiable brother and sister-in-law of Mrs. Bennet, live in London.

Themes

The Marriage Market: The first sentence of the novel—"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife"—introduces the primary theme of the book. Mrs. Bennet's obsession with marrying off her daughters encompasses the concern for money and social position that were necessary issues, especially for women, in late-eighteenth-century England. How differences in class and income could dictate a young woman's chances in the marriage market are examined throughout the novel.

Prejudice and Self-Delusion: The ill effects of prejudice, often born of pride, and self-delusion, either intentional or unconscious, are primarily examined through the behavior of Elizabeth and Darcy. But characters such as Mrs. Bennet and even Jane also show that one can make mistakes in judging inner character from outward appearance and preconceived ideas.

Irony

Irony, the contrast between what is real and what is expected, what is said and what is meant, is the key characteristic of Austen's style. She uses her ironic commentary—often light and witty, sometimes sharp and devastating—to highlight the foolishness and hypocrisy of many of her characters. Her authorial voice is often conflated with a character's observations, and it is sometimes hard to distinguish, for example, an ironic remark from Elizabeth or an unconsciously ironic statement from Mrs. Bennet from the irony of Austen the narrator.

A Literary Elements Worksheet that focuses on theme appears on page 54 of this Study Guide.

A Literary Elements Worksheet focusing on irony appears on page 55 of this Study Guide.
Introducing the Novel

Options

**DISCUSSION**

**In Your Opinion: I Do? No, I Don’t!**

Issues concerning marriage are central to *Pride and Prejudice*. Some eighteenth-century views of marriage—marrying for money, arranged marriages, marrying only within your social class—might seem foreign to us today. Or do they? Have students meet in groups to discuss their views of marriage. Ask them to consider

- Mrs. Bennet, who reveals her interest not necessarily in her daughters’ happiness but in their ability to obtain husbands—preferably rich ones;
- under what circumstances they might consider Mrs. Bennet’s ideas acceptable, or even sensible. Bring the groups together, and discuss this topic with the class as a whole.

**READING ALOUD**

**Austen’s Lively Dialogue**

Have students read the opening chapter of *Pride and Prejudice* aloud in order to get a feel for eighteenth-century conversation in general, and for Austen’s brilliant use of language in particular. Have students read the parts of Mr. Bennet, Mrs. Bennet, and the narrator. Then, have them discuss these characters (including the narrative voice); make notes of their character analysis on the chalkboard. Review the concept of *irony*, and have students note instances of irony in this first chapter.

**FILM CLIP**

**Predicting**

Show the class a clip from one of the filmed versions of *Pride and Prejudice*, preferably the A&E video because it is so faithful to the text. Choose the opening scene, or a scene near the beginning. Have students take notes on the characters and conflicts Austen sets up early in the novel.

- Ask students to list those conflicts. (Possible responses: Will Bingley really move into the neighborhood? Will Mr. Bennet go to meet him? Will the Bennets become friends with the Bingleys? Will the daughters get married? Will any of them marry Bingley?)
- Have students predict the outcome of those conflicts. They can refer to their responses as they read the novel.

**BUILDING BACKGROUND**

**Meet Jane Austen**

Send students to the Internet or library for information about Austen’s life, which will provide excellent context and background for the people and events of the novel since she wrote about what she knew. Have students look for the following information:

- Describe the region of England in which she spent most of her life. Provide pictures if possible.
- What occupation did her father practice?
- How many brothers and sisters did she have?
- Was she ever married?
- Were her books popular during her lifetime?
- What did she look like? Provide pictures if possible.
- Provide an excerpt of her letters to her family.
**First Thoughts**

1. Jane Austen presents a variety of characters in the Bennet family. Which of the Bennets do you find most admirable and appealing?

**Shaping Interpretations**

2. How are Mr. and Mrs. Bennet different? What is Mr. Bennet's opinion of his daughters, excepting Elizabeth?

3. Charlotte Lucas presents a practical view of marriage, claiming that she wants to marry for comfort and convenience. What is Elizabeth's response to her friend's ideas?

4. Why is it significant that Lydia is Mrs. Bennet's favorite daughter?

5. At the first Meryton ball, Darcy refuses to dance with Elizabeth. Why does he snub her, and why does she refuse his offer to dance at the next assembly?

6. It becomes apparent that Caroline Bingley dislikes Elizabeth, and is, in fact, jealous of her. Why is Caroline antagonistic toward Elizabeth? How does Elizabeth feel about Caroline, and why?

7. After his initial disregard for Elizabeth, Mr. Darcy becomes increasingly interested in her. Why is he so concerned about her growing admiration of her?

8. As you become familiar with Austen's ironic tone, what can you conclude about her attitude toward artifice and hypocrisy? Cite the text to support your views.

**Connecting with the Text**

9. In remarking on Jane's favorable impression of the Bingley sisters, Elizabeth affectionately teases her sister, "Oh! You are a great deal too apt, you know, to like people in general. You never see a fault in anybody." Do you think you are more like Jane, who is "honestly blind to the follies and nonsense of others," or more like Elizabeth, who in most cases prides herself on being an accurate judge of character?

**Challenging the Text**

10. One critic writes that "in all Austen's novels, but especially in *Pride and Prejudice*, pursuing happiness is the business of life," and some would argue that this is not subject enough for a major work of fiction. Do you think that following this small collection of characters as they pursue their versions of happiness an admirable or appropriate mission for a novel? Explain your response.
Characterization
Although we become well acquainted with Jane Austen's characters, she actually gives very few physical details about them.

Review the central characters in this section, and list details you find describing their physical appearances.

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<th>CHARACTER</th>
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<td>Caroline Bingley</td>
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<td>Charlotte Lucas</td>
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FOLLOW-UP: On a separate sheet of paper, write a paragraph expanding the above descriptions to include one character's actions, dialogue, and thoughts.
Shedding Light on Austen’s Characters

In Jane Austen’s day, such primitive means of lighting as rush lights and tallow candles were still used, although Austen’s characters, for the most part, would have been affluent enough to afford the finest wax candles. According to an instruction book of the time, called The Servants Guide, “Wax candles, four in the pound, will last about eleven hours and should be used only when the evening is expected to be five hours as, in that case, each candle will serve for two nights. Shorter candles, of six to the pound, are preferable when required to burn six or seven hours.” Some of Austen’s gentry might even have used gaslight, which was slowly becoming an alternative to candlelight as the primary means of interior illumination. William Murdock, a Scot, who was known for having made improvements to the steam engine, was the first to use coal gas to any great extent for the illumination of homes. In 1792, he lighted his home and offices with coal gas. But most homes remained candlelit until the mid-nineteenth century.

INVESTIGATE

- Research the major scientific developments of Jane Austen’s time.

The Word Place

Georgian Accessorizing

Coburg bonnet—crownded bonnet
Cornette—cap covering the hair

Clothes Closet

The Height of Fashion

At the end of the eighteenth century, men and women alike rebelled against the stifling conformity of fashions dictated by the style of the royal court. Men adopted less artificial dress modeled after riding costumes: a linen shirt, a neckband folded into a triangle and tied around the neck (a cravat). Trousers were tight, tucked into tall boots, and a vest, or “waistcoat” (pronounced wes’kat), and a double-breasted dress coat based on a hunter’s riding coat, cut high with large lapels in the front and long tails in the back, were commonly worn. Such is the costume that Mr. Darcy would have favored.

Women’s fashions reflected a taste for classical simplicity: high-waisted dresses that fell loosely in natural folds, without bustles or stays. Wearing closefitting gowns, some women chose to mimic the appearance of classical Greek statues.
Literary Elements Worksheet 1

Pride and Prejudice

Narrative Structure
Like many eighteenth-century novelists, Jane Austen uses letters between her characters to reveal information about other characters and to advance the action of the plot. Much important news is reported in the letters characters write to each other.

The chart below traces the correspondence between key characters. You are given the context of each letter. Identify the writer of the letter and the information revealed in the letter.

1. ____________ writes a letter from London to Elizabeth, who receives it at Longbourn.
   Information revealed:

2. ____________ writes a letter to Elizabeth and gives it to her on her walk at Rosings.
   Information revealed:

3. ____________ writes a letter to Elizabeth in Derbyshire.
   Information revealed:

4. ____________ writes a letter to Elizabeth about Lydia’s wedding.
   Information revealed:

5. ____________ writes a letter to Mr. Bennet with a rumor about Elizabeth and Darcy.
   Information revealed:

FOLLOW-UP: On a separate sheet of paper, explain why you think Jane Austen uses correspond-ence to convey information to the reader.
Vocabulary Worksheet 1

Pride and Prejudice

A. Circle the letter of the word or phrase that most nearly defines the italicized word in each excerpt.

1. “I honour your circumspection. A fortnight’s acquaintance is certainly very little.”
   a. caution       b. well-rounded attitude   c. feeling of esteem   d. observation

2. “I would not be so fastidious as you are,” cried Bingley, “for a kingdom! Upon my honour I never met with so many pleasant girls in my life, as I have this evening . . . .”
   a. cooperative   b. malicious           c. offensive         d. overly critical

3. “. . . [C]onsidering the inducement, my dear Miss Eliza, we cannot wonder at his complaisance, for who would object to such a partner?”
   a. hesitation    b. agreeability       c. motivation        d. inflexibility

4. “The insipidty and yet the noise; the nothingness and yet the self-importance of all these people!—What would I give to hear your strictures on them!”
   a. demands       b. sharp criticisms   c. witty remarks      d. considered opinions

5. When breakfast was over, they were joined by the sisters, and Elizabeth began to like them herself, when she saw how much affection and solicitude they showed for Jane.
   a. hospitality   b. enthusiasm         c. concern           d. familiarity

6. Miss Bingley moved with alacrity to the piano-forte . . .
   a. eager willingness          b. an indifferent attitude
   b. poor judgment             c. a sense of apprehension

7. “. . . My good opinion once lost is lost forever!”
   “That is a failing indeed!”—cried Elizabeth. “Implacable resentment is a shade in character . . . .”
   a. impartial                b. Uncalled-for      c. Intolerable       d. Unappeasable

8. Mrs. Bennet, who had calculated on her daughters remaining at Netherfield till the following Tuesday, . . . could not bring herself to receive them with pleasure before. Her answer, therefore, was not propitious . . .
   a. unimportant             b. favorable          c. considerate       d. certain

9. But their father, though very laconic in his expressions of pleasure, was really glad to see them . . .
   a. thoughtless            b. agitated          c. sensible          d. brief

10. “. . . We are each of an unsocial, taciturn disposition . . .”
   a. uncommunicative        b. cynical          c. out-of-date        d. malicious

11. “. . . Mr. Bingley . . . will vouch for the good conduct, the probity and honour of his friend . . .”
   a. peculiarity            b. intelligence     c. integrity         d. affection

12. . . . having no feelings of diffidence to make it distressing to himself even at the moment, he set about it in a very orderly manner . . .
   a. insensitivity          b. difficulty        c. annoyance         d. insecurity

13. . . . the assiduous attentions which he had been so sensible of himself, were transferred for the rest of the day to Miss Lucas . . .
   a. foolish                b. constant         c. energetic         d. impatient
Vocabulary Worksheet 1 (cont.)

Pride and Prejudice

14. Her disappointment in Charlotte made her turn with fonder regard to her sister, of whose rectitude and delicacy she was sure her opinion could never be shaken ...
   a. personal story  b. tranquility  c. moral virtue  d. affection

15. . . . It should seem by her manner of talking, as if she wanted to persuade herself that he is really partial to Miss Darcy . . . I should be almost tempted to say that there is a strong appearance of duplicity in all this.
   a. deception  b. repetition  c. indecisiveness  d. recklessness

B. Read carefully the definition of each word. Then, write a sentence of your own using that word.

16. odious, adj.: arousing disgust or loathing
   ____________________________________________________________

17. veracity, n.: truthfulness; honesty
   ____________________________________________________________

18. trepidation, n.: anxiety; apprehension
   ____________________________________________________________

19. tractable, adj.: easily controlled; docile
   ____________________________________________________________

20. propensity, n.: a natural inclination
   ____________________________________________________________

C. Circle the letter of the pair of words that best expresses a relationship similar to that expressed in the original pair.

21. proxy : shareholder ::
   a. physician : nurse
   b. understudy : actor
   c. principal : teacher

22. panegyric : hero ::
   a. reprimand : wrongdoer
   b. sermon : minister
   c. biography : author

23. hackneyed : cliché ::
   a. illness : hospital
   b. educated : professor
   c. breakfast : cereal

24. pedantic : trivial ::
   a. dour : jolly
   b. elegant : graceful
   c. pacifist : peaceful

25. supercilious : humble ::
   a. concise : direct
   b. expensive : valuable
   c. benevolent : greedy