



# ***Pride and Prejudice***

## Cambridge IGCSE Study Guide

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# Teacher's Introduction

This critical guide is intended to introduce the themes, plots, characterisations, relationships and settings of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* for Cambridge IGCSE Literature in English (2026 syllabus). It explores these key aspects of the novel while also examining Austen's use of language to create specific meaning and effects. Throughout the guide there are debate prompts, active learning tasks and extended essay questions which support the assessment objectives (AOs) outlined below. The aim of this guide is to provide students with an understanding of the novel and how language is used to create literal and inferred meanings, to enable each student to develop their own justified personal response to the text.

The guide provides an overview of the novel's plot, with useful chapter summaries and commentaries, alongside an analysis of key characters, themes and the social and historical context of the work. It provides a detailed critical evaluation of specific key characters, key relationships, settings and themes. A mind map of relationships is included. The second half of the guide focuses on use of language and is intended to introduce the student to a more formal set of literary and linguistic terms that can be used when formally analysing literature. It looks at how Austen uses language to convey specific effects, before examining the novel's form and structure. The guide also explores how the contemporary social and historical context of Austen's world impacted on the novel overall. This includes significant events in Austen's life, historical events and literary movements. It concludes with a glossary of key linguistic and literary terms, further reading suggestions, and suggested answers to the questions posed throughout the guide.

## How to use this study guide

This guide is intended to be used in a variety of different ways. The debate prompts, active learning tasks and essay questions make it a natural fit for use within classroom teaching and revision. Suggested answers are also included. It can also be a stand-alone study support guide for the student and can be used as such on an individual basis.

## Summary of key features

A clear plot summary	AO1
Analyses of key characters, relationships, themes and settings, chapter summaries and analyses	AO1, AO2
Writer's use of language including an analysis of the novel's form and structure	AO3
An exploration of the context of the novel	AO2
Active learning tasks, suggested essay questions, and debate prompts including suggested answers	AO1–AO4
A glossary of key terms and suggested further critical reading	AO1–AO4

## Specification information

- Pride and Prejudice* appears on the 2026 Cambridge IGCSE syllabus as part of Paper 1: Prose (Section B) which is 1 hour 30 minutes long.
- It is made up of Poetry and Prose with two questions on two texts: one poetry and one prose.
- It is worth 50 marks and is externally assessed.

### Remember!

Always check the exam board website for new information, including changes to the specification and sample assessment material.

Students will be examined on their ability to meet the following assessment objectives:

Assessment Objective	Description	Weighting in Paper 1
AO1	Show detailed knowledge of the content of literary texts in the three main forms (drama, poetry and prose), supported by reference to the text.	25%
AO2	Understand the meanings of literary texts and their contexts, and explore texts beyond surface meanings to show deeper awareness of ideas and attitudes.	25%
AO3	Recognise and appreciate ways in which writers use language, structure and form to create and shape meanings and effects.	25%
AO4	Communicate a sensitive and informed personal response to literary texts.	25%

## Text edition

The text referred to throughout is the Penguin Classics Edition with notes by Vivien Jones, published in 1996, revised edition published in 2014 (ISBN 978-01314339518). For Component 2, students must use the prescribed edition: Penguin Books; 1st Edition, September 2004, ISBN 9780141439518.

December 2024

# Introduction to the Text for Students

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* continues to be one of the most popular novels in English literature. It is a wonderful romance, involving two particularly interesting and appealing individuals, told by a writer who understood her society and the characters she drew from it with unique perception. Austen writes in a style that makes perfect sense of her world for us. She offers us something that is both limited and yet complete, a vision of a society in which, despite its restrictive pressures, its hero and heroine can find love and fulfilment on their terms. At the same time, the less attractive aspects and characters of her society are humorously exposed and finally placed by a writer who sees to it that people get their just deserts.

For modern teenage readers, however, the novel sometimes presents a few difficulties as it is written about a world where values and behaviour were, in some ways, very different from today. We all live in a much more open, far less formal kind of society than Austen's upper middle-class one of the early nineteenth century. Her ladies and gentlemen can sometimes, at first at least, seem remote from modern life with its apparently relaxed attitudes to so much. Her style on the surface at least, it may appear unexciting, and she seems to have moral values that not always agree with or would find severe. Unlike many writers, good and bad, she involves descriptions of the appearance of physical things – either people or places in our own modern world where image is now so important and so dominant, with the Internet age often appearing to be a second best 'reality' to the visual truth of a world.

I hope to argue in this guide, however, that these are only surface difficulties, and that closer engagement with this wonderful novel can actually reveal not just a great witness and explorer of a now lost age, but one who can take us more deeply into our own world as well. Austen was fascinated by how people behave, what makes them what they are – good and bad – and sometimes bring out our best side. She explores nothing less than key life experiences and how we judge other people, as well as just how tough society can be for the individual. In the end, I believe, very much ours, and this book, still popular as a great and enjoyable read, has been recreated many times in modern media and film versions, continues to speak to us.

This is because *Pride and Prejudice* has so much more to offer us than just a very entertaining love story. It has given us a wonderful love story that works on a romantic and emotional level for the reader, but also on a psychological one too. In it the hero and heroine do not just fall in love, but take a journey that can help us to understand ourselves and their world. They take a journey that can help us to understand ourselves as well as the very different world we live in today. Jane Austen, a writer, and through her characters and their drama of seeing and re-viewing the world, helps us to understand so much more. Like many great writers, she becomes our conscience (our self-awareness of what is really going on in the world) in her novel. She shows us what was there then, and what still we can observe in people and society.

A great recent biographer of Austen, the scholar Park Honan, tells us that Austen was a woman of few more valuable purposes than that in literature, especially as we live in a time when so much is muddled and confused. Austen seeks to find out what really matters in life and she does so in a vastly entertaining way. Moreover, Austen wrote *novels*, a word that in a particular form that is relatively recent in literary history and which many writers of the modern genre (genre is a type of literature like a play or short story or a sonnet). She wrote to deal with the real world, ordinary people and the things that matter in their lives.

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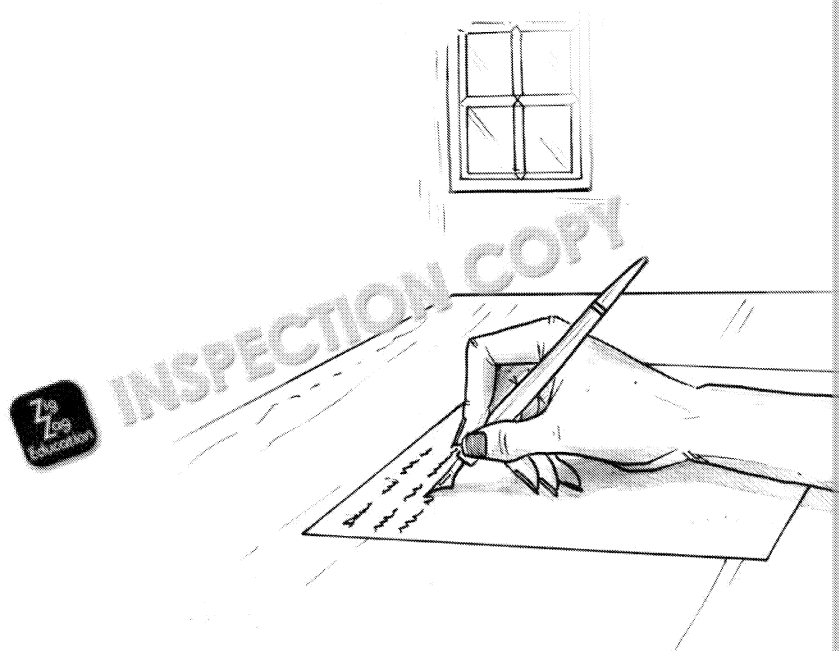




and gentlemen seem a long way from twenty-first century Western society, I hope the continuing relevance of what she is writing about and how she writes. For all the ladies and gentlemen, she is actually creating a world that focuses on how we deal with the stuff of real life – families, friends, relationships, the societies that surround us – and not the stuff of fantastic adventures, or supernatural tales, but the private life that defines meaning. Not for her the wars that were raging across Europe or the great cultural changes in Britain, or the politics of opportunity, wealth and poverty, but rather an unsparing focus on how we behave in the narrow worlds we mostly inhabit; how we can make the worst lives in the areas of experience which in the end mean most to us: our private and moral choices of ordinary life vastly exciting and deeply meaningful. For her, this is the most exciting and challenging thing there could be.

The story's appeal does rest largely of course in the fact that it is so appealing a romance. Arrogant Darcy and the intelligent, independent, lovely and amusing Elizabeth are characters with whom we secretly wish to be in love, and who mirror our own dreams. They seem at first to delight in one another but have an underlying connection and the world around them gradually wins them over to each other, and defeats the forces of a society that would hold them apart. Darcy's passion helps him to overcome his pride and love for her makes her realise her own prejudices. Both are idealised (better than real) ways, yet deeply attractive ones whose very real flaws make them even more interesting. Elizabeth is indeed, one of the most attractive heroines in literature – lovely, warm spirited, intelligent, and able to laugh at herself – an image in some ways of what the readers would want to be themselves. She is capable of change in the end. Alongside these two are a host of other characters with a good deal of understanding of types that are easily recognisable – Mr Bennet the sarcastic, Mrs Bennet a neurotic, gossipy, comical, snobbish mum but one desperate for the approval of her daughters, the pompous, crawling, ridiculous Mr Collins; the odious snobbish Lady Catherine detestable; the kindly Gardiners; the studious bookish Mary who has not a clue about the world; of course, the rebel Lydia who behaves like many a rash adolescent (and grown-up) and is a bit too much.

Behind these wonderful characters and a heart-warming plot in which love wins the day, there are many more inspiring ideas and themes. The comments she makes on what is good and bad in the people in it ring true today, despite the changes to customs and manners, and the book is a needed food for thought and reflection that we need to make sense of the worlds we live in.



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# Why Read Austen Today

Great books tell us more about the world they were written in but also our keys to understanding why the book is so popular and highly regarded.

- **Relationships and Love**

At the centre of most people's lives is the desire to find love and understand it. Already, Darcy and Elizabeth connect deeply even when they are quarrelling. It is their eventual union that they overcome, not least their own views of each other. The delight in how they finally recognise what they mean to each other, despite their differences. Moreover, they are two independent and interesting characters who refuse to restrict people. The book begins with a famous line about a 'truth universal in human nature' then goes on to show the difference between an idea about things and the experience of them. No one can readily share. Everyone in their life experiences the difference between what they want and what others (parents, say, or society) tell them to have, and Austen's novel, like most great novels, explores that issue.

- **Comical Criticism of Society and People**

One of the many delights of the book is that it is a comedy – things work out happily for the good, and not so well for the bad. In literary terms, comedy is what we call a genre, a form or type of literature. In comedy, in a literary sense, writers are not just out to make us laugh, but to present a world in which things mostly work out for the best in the end. There is something utopian (idealised) about Austen's world, for all its truth to life – it speaks to our secret hopes that good triumphs, that people find true love and understanding and that justice wins in the end – at the end of the novel, people get what they deserve.



- **Psychological Insights**

Jane Austen writes in a very amusing way, but also in a way that interests us with her psychological insights. At the time she was writing, the novel was developed by eighteenth-century writers like Samuel Richardson. Austen takes us on a journey of the mind as we share her hopes and disappointments and learn what she is thinking.

- **Austen and the Age of Reason**

Jane Austen is in some ways one of the last representatives of the Age of Reason, or as the Enlightenment, a series of values and ideas that dominated the eighteenth century. In particular, many people looked at the world from a more scientific and rational perspective. They began to seek explanations for how the universe worked, from biological organisms. Things were perceived a bit more as machines and taken to pieces and understood. This, in part, is Jane Austen's view of the world. She explains people in moral and psychological terms – to show how they behave in terms of reason. At the end of her novels, there is no mystery or uncertainty about things for us, placing people and their fate according to their ability to act rationally and morally. While readers may disagree with some of this, it is an enormously satisfying experience to read her books as things make sense. This is very different from a lot of modern writing.

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**Key Terms**

- **The Enlightenment** – a series of values and ideas about the world based on science
- **Genre** – a form or type of literature
- **Materialism** – valuing money and possessions over people and humanity
- **Prejudice** – making your mind up about something (making assumptions) before you know
- **Psychology** – the study of the mind

- **Austen's Novels As Romances**

Her novels are aspirational ones for all that – this means that she is both well aware of the failings of her society and of 'human nature' but she suggests a kind of human perfection is possible – Darcy and Elizabeth come not only to be passionate about each other but to understand each other in the end and they are a kind of model of what could be, of how encouraging people to become their best selves.

- **Austen's Social Vision**

Jane Austen frequently attacks her society in ways that many people admire. She attacks values that were mostly derived from the Christian tradition, but whatever the things we all deplore even if we are often guilty ourselves of practising them. She has a tendency to be materialistic – to value wealth and money and things above people. She holds a mirror up to a world where lots of people are snobbish, cruel, and self-regarding, vain, hypocritical and full of themselves and their own opinions. Even her middle-class and upper middle-class characters were often blinded by their own prejudices (making your mind up about someone or something before you really understand them). In this, she is often incredibly funny and waspish – stingingly amusing in her criticisms.

- **Austen: Radical or Conservative in Outlook?**

Critics argue a great deal about her outlook on her world – whether or not she was radical for her society or whether she accepted things more or less as they were. Did she think it was so that it was fairer? Did she believe people were made the way they are born? Is Mr Bingley unpleasant because society only allows her to be a pretty sex object? Is Mr Darcy's way? Did she really care about the poor, the many people lower down in society? What are the chances of Elizabeth and Darcy? Did she really attack the reasons why her society's women often just objects to be traded in the 'business' of marriage, and characters who are arrogant and set in their ways?

I believe in her own way she is superb at showing the limitations of her society. She shows people whose status was so low that they constituted a kind of underclass or a deviant class. Whatever you think of these questions, this guide should give you some answers. In an often very unnerving and challenging way that we take more responsibility for ourselves. Jane Austen made her own universe – she insisted that we think about the world as we don't. She thought or show want of thought for others. In her world, the consequences in revealing whether or not a character is thoughtful or not are this harsh and say how can poor Lydia really deal with her feelings for Wickham? she fancies him? At the same time, Austen makes it clear we are 'moral age' and we believe in God in a way that many modern readers would not accept, but in the end, Trilling has pointed out, she insists that we take on the power of judgement for ourselves in the domestic world. There are no easy excuses in her world. The fine writing gives us brings about obligations, duties to others; to see clearly the world, its pains, its challenges, but also, in the end, its wonderful rewards.

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- **Austen and the Status of Women**

Austen wrote at a time when women were beginning to emerge from a his-  
citizens in a way that is hard to understand today. The class of women she  
freedoms or equality that women today have begun to establish. One pow-  
is to see just how Austen was beginning herself to reinvent the role and sta-  
probably the most intelligent character in the book. She turns the man down  
him. She shows the most discrimination (judgement and understanding) re-  
failings with Lydia. (Interestingly, many of Austen's father figures are rather  
often associated with fathers, men, was beginning to shift away from them  
the most mobile, moving characters in the book – she walks off on her own  
her friends, stays with others. The book shows her becoming empowered –  
influence, being active, not the passive woman of much tradition. She decid-  
what her life will be – unlike the more traditional Charlotte who marries beca-  
She thinks and feels for herself and her laughter is a kind of criticism of the  
of pudding-like characters such as Mr Collins who takes himself so seriously  
Mrs Bennet's incessant chatter are signs of a woman stretching herself, try-  
discontent in a state of affairs in which men are so taken up with a sense

- **Austen's Style**

Austen often tells it as it is in a wonderfully understated yet precise prose  
with epic events or grand adventures, but instead continues to develop  
which was turning the everyday into the focus of great art, something that  
humble way in modern soap operas.



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# Plot Summary

The plot means the main events of the story, presented by the author as a sequence of main plot events; Netherfield Park, a local large country estate, has finally been purchased. Mr Bingley soon arrives with his friend Mr Darcy and his sisters Caroline Bingley and Jane. The Bennets live nearby with their five daughters: Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Kitty and Lydia. Mr Bingley invites them to a ball, where Mr Bingley first notices Jane and is attracted to her. Elizabeth decides that she really does not like him. Jane is then invited to tea at Netherfield by Caroline. Elizabeth stays there for a while. Elizabeth decides to visit her and walks through the fields to see her for acting like a lower-class person. This strengthens Elizabeth's dislike of him.

Mr Collins, Mr Bennet's cousin and the heir to Mr Bennet's estate in case of his death, visits Longbourn, the village where the Bennet family live. He quickly decides that Elizabeth is the most attractive. Lydia then takes a stroll into Meryton, the nearby town, and meets Mr Wickham. Elizabeth at once likes Wickham and they talk about their childhood. Wickham tells her that he was disfavoured by Darcy's father above Darcy himself. He tells her that he disinherited him. Elizabeth becomes even more prejudiced against Darcy, unaware of the truth. Everyone assumes that Jane and Bingley will marry soon as it is the most likely outcome.

Mr Bingley hosts a ball at Netherfield to which everyone is invited. Elizabeth and Mr Darcy exchange sharp yet witty remarks. The following day at Longbourn, Mr Collins proposes to Elizabeth, to the anger and shock of Mrs Bennet. He decides to propose to Elizabeth instead and is accepted. Jane receives a letter from Caroline telling her that Mr Bingley has gone back to London indefinitely. Jane is devastated as she hoped Bingley would stay.

Elizabeth visits Charlotte in her new home with Mr Collins where she also meets Mr De Bourgh, who is Darcy's aunt. One day, she meets Colonel Fitzwilliam, Darcy's cousin. During conversation, he tells her that Darcy was congratulating himself from a very unwise marriage with a young lady from an inappropriate family over the fact that he must mean Bingley and Jane and, knowing Jane's sadness over Bingley leaving, she is angry. Darcy then comes to tell her how, despite his better judgment and in spite of his class connections, he loves her. He proposes. She turns him down and, when he tells her she knows how much unhappiness he caused her sister Jane. He does not deny it, but directs his thoughts and speech towards her. The next morning, he gives her a letter. In it, he explains why he separated Bingley and Jane and he tells her the truth about Wickham, a scoundrel who tried to elope with Darcy's 15-year-old sister, something that was completely in the time that this novel is set. Elizabeth starts to realise what a bad judgment she made before she got to know him; she starts to see what a truly good person Darcy is.

Elizabeth and Jane make their journey back to Longbourn as the troop of soldiers marching through the village. Lydia receives an invitation from Mrs Foster, the wife of the Colonel of the regiment, to visit Brighton. At first Elizabeth advises against it, Mr Bennet agrees. Elizabeth goes with Mr Gardiner to Brighton. While there, they decide to visit Pemberley, Darcy's family estate. In the woods and he greets Mr and Mrs Gardiner civilly despite their lower-class status. Wickham is fishing on the estate and seems greatly changed. Elizabeth realises then how much she has fallen in love with him. She then receives a letter from Jane telling her that she has eloped with Wickham, at first it seemed to her that Wickham was a good man, but it was all a lie. Wickham seems to have no intention of marrying Lydia but is persuaded to do so by her involvement. His desire to help to save Lydia's reputation convinces Elizabeth that Darcy and Bingley then return to Netherfield and call on the Bennets. Soon after Mr Bingley and Elizabeth to Darcy. Both engagements turn into successful marriages.

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## Chapter 1 – Introducing Mr and Mrs

### Summary

The novel begins with a conversation between Mr and Mrs Bennet regarding Netherfield Park. Mrs Bennet states that 'a young man of large fortune' named Mr Bingley is soon to 'take possession' of the house at Netherfield, which is just a few miles from their own home, Longbourn (p. 5). Mrs Bennet excitedly tells her husband about Bingley's wealth of 'four or five thousand year' and her hopes that one of their five daughters will marry him (p. 6).

Believing that their new neighbour 'must' be in love with one of their 'grown-up' daughters, Mrs Bennet asks her husband to visit Bingley as soon as he moves into Netherfield Park (p. 6). Mr Bennet has a relaxed attitude and teases her by pretending not to understand why she wants him to call on Bingley. However, she comes to the conclusion that he won't make the visit. The chapter closes with a paragraph which gives some further insight into the Bennets and their different character traits.

### Commentary

The first chapter is obviously a very important one, and it is worth reading. It introduces most of the themes (key ideas in the book), characters and tells us what Austen writes. There is so much that could be said about it, but here are some key points:

- ❖ In a very short space of time, Austen introduces the majority of her key themes.
- ❖ Irony is used from the start – irony is the linguistic device by which what is actually said means the opposite. It is a very common form of writing because it is interesting and engages the reader in what the writer means more directly. For example, that Darcy's and Bingley's minds are made up for them by society, the very things that they are before they even appear. In other words, right from the start, Austen's view of people operates in her world – they have money and so must marry. This invites us to ask more deeply, what about love and understanding and exactly what she then goes on to explore in her novel – just how people's relationships are often shaped by what they think they are supposed to want. At the same time, her irony offers us more choice and more insight into the Bennets of the world and their universal truths. For example, Lizzy and Darcy cannot marry at first, and only later when they reach more deeply into their own way, society's expectations.
- ❖ Marriage and love may not be the same at all. Notice that key word – 'love' is used on in the text and suggests how women – and men to some extent – are treated as objects, things with a market value, or, as to quote a modern philosopher, as childbearing capital, not as first and foremost independent people. So the conflict between individual choice and the conflict between those things – key themes are established.

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◆ Observe how quickly and easily through dialogue (conversation) Austen introduces Mrs Bennet, a great talker, has the first words – and she shows herself to be foolish if concerned for her children. Her ‘prejudices’ are quickly established. Her children’s future are the centre of her attention; nothing else matters. Her conclusions as so many characters do about what will happen (an early chapter called ‘First Impressions’). She is a silly but determined woman. Mr Bennet is a more reflective and deeper character who obviously finds his wife hard to live with. The book shows to be lacking too as he often fails to deal responsibly with his wife. He is to be sarcastic, or playful to avoid his wife and other things that are difficult. Elizabeth is singled out as the preferred daughter – and the book continues to suggest that she is the only one in ways that fit in with our ideas of a heroine.

◆ Note too how Mr Bennet can visit and seek introductions to other families in ways that were denied to women. In those days, the roles of women were very limited – men had all the status and power, and perhaps the freedom. Mr Bennet is a comment on that in that her frustrations can be understood in a world where most women could only sit and wait. Women’s roles were often just passive ones.

◆ Observe the style and art of the author clearly. Austen uses what we call an omniscient narrator – a voice, sometimes called a narrative voice that seems to know everything and moves from judgements to reported conversation to psychological insights with apparent ease.

◆ Note how the plot is driven by the arrival of the stranger, Mr Bingley, the tensions between what society expects and what the individual wants.

◆ There is already a good deal of comedy in the first pages, from crisp dialogue. Mrs Bennet like, ‘She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and little temper. When she was discontented she fancied herself nervous’ (p. 7). Austen sometimes called epigrammatic – the short and humorous summing up. In her literary career, Austen wondered if parts of *Pride and Prejudice* were too harsh. It is cheerful – that sometimes truth was sacrificed to a good line. We do know that it was written and revised over a long period of time, and perhaps some of the sharper comments owe something to relative immaturity. Although Austen could do a good deal of satire even in her last complete novel. The key thing the humour is to provide satire – a comical criticism of people and society that exposes their faults.

◆ Finally, Austen chose a narrow world – she chose to focus on a few families in a narrow area of society, but that means she writes with more depth about that world than others who paint broad canvases and use lots of description. It is also worth noting that she sends up that narrowness of focus in the attitude she believes, as we all tend to do, that the world revolves around her and her family.

#### Key Terms

- **Epigrammatic** – humorous and short
- **Irony** – when what is said is the opposite of what is meant
- **Omniscient** – all-knowing voice
- **Narrator** – the person who tells the story
- **Satire** – criticism of people and society

#### Debate Prompt

Mr and Mrs Bennet have different views on their children.

#### Exam Tip

This first chapter introduces the main characters and themes of the whole novel. It’s worth paying attention to the details.

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## Chapter 2 – Preparing for the Ball

### Summary

The narrator informs us that Mr Bennet has called on Mr Bingley, having at the end of the chapter continues with a conversation between Mr and Mrs Bennet and they learn that the family are to attend a ball in two weeks' time. Mrs Bennet is delighted that Mr Bennet has not attended Netherfield Park and she is anxious that all her daughters may not be introduced to Bingley at the ball. After hearing his wife's matter, Mr Bennet slyly admits that he has indeed made an 'acquaintance' with much to the 'astonishment' of his family (p. 9). Mrs Bennet is thrilled at this as her daughters will be able to dance with Bingley at the coming ball. Her mood is now in full swing, because of course her own children will be the centre of attention.

### Commentary

Notice how Mr Bennet teases his wife about his visit, pretending not to go. In the book we sympathise with him as his wife is so obviously irritating, but as the reader we wonder how sensible this kind of behaviour is as it seems to contribute to his isolation. When he withdraws to the library, a manoeuvre that gathers symbolic significance, implying he hides away from things.

We learn a bit more about Kitty and Lydia and Mary. Lydia and Mary are the more important, as Kitty is very much a shadow of Lydia in the story. Note how studious Mary is. One of the comments Austen makes in her novels is how real experience is the best teacher. Her novel explores how both Elizabeth and Darcy have to correct their first impressions through experience of each other and their world. She often criticises characters who are bookish in their interest, and her first novel, *Northanger Abbey*, belongs to a long-established literary tradition in which the heroine has too many ideas from reading romances and has to have them put right by experience of a much more ordinary world. Mary is another victim of prejudice in the story – the kind of prejudice that derives from reading things and not testing them against experience. Lydia's misplaced self-confidence is much in evidence early on; she is very forward and often says and does rather stupid things ('for though I am the youngest, I'm the tallest', p. 10). It is interesting that she is her mother's favourite, just as Elizabeth is her father's. To some degree the parents' favourites mirror their own characters.

#### Quote Prompt

Lydia seems at first glance to be a sensible character.



#### Extended Essay Question

What does the difference between what Mr Bennet does and what he says say about his character?

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## Chapter 3 – Enter Mr Darcy

### Summary

Excited by the coming ball at Meryton, the Bennet sisters ponder over Mr Bingley's personality and are pleased to hear from their neighbour Lady Lucas that he is 'extremely agreeable' (p. 11). Mrs Bennet plans a dinner party at Longbourn. Bingley is away and unable to attend. Bingley soon returns home to attend (with Caroline Bingley and Mrs Louisa Hurst), his brother-in-law (Mr Hurst) and his

At the ball, the guests gossip about the 'good-looking and gentleman-like' Mr Bingley and for much of the evening, Mr Darcy is admired from afar as a 'fine figure of a man' (p. 12). However, Darcy's lack of social skills lets him down and his refusal to be introduced to and dance with women he doesn't know is judged by other guests as a sign of bad manners.

### Debate Prompt

Lydia's first words tell us a lot about her character. Discuss.

While Bingley is friendly and enjoys every dance, he cannot convince his friend Darcy to behave similarly and a conversation between the two men is overheard by Elizabeth Bennet, who Darcy describes as 'tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me' (p. 13). Mrs Bennet develops a 'bitterness' for Darcy after hearing about this, but overall, the Bennet ladies enjoy the evening, particularly Jane, who is pleased to have danced with Mr Bingley twice (p. 14). They return home to recall the events of the evening with Mr Bennet.

Key Term  
• Symbol  
represent

### Commentary

In this chapter we meet the rather too agreeable Mr Bingley and the proud and interesting character himself – pleasant, an ideal match for Jane – but Austen shows us of him, perhaps in that he is rather too easily influenced and prejudiced himself.

- ❖ Darcy is first pronounced the most 'handsome' man in the room then 'disagreeable countenance' when he is discovered to be proud (p. 12). This shows Darcy's arrogance and snobbish attitude, but it is worth noting that she also shows the ladies' views of the gentleman (which seems to be founded on looks and themselves) and is showing how from warmth to disgust towards him. This is different in the way she reacts when they believe him proud (p. 12). Austen shows us how first impressions are shallow and easily changed, and how they may be

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- ◆ Darcy's contempt for his surroundings and his pomposity do stand out; but it is worth thinking about how much is shyness as well as arrogance, and about how his criticism of the rather narrow little world may in the end have some substance. Of course, his rejection of Elizabeth, 'not handsome enough to tempt me' is massively ironic (p. 13). He thinks he cannot like her because of her position in society and his shallow impressions of her are as much based on his vanity as on his actually looking at her. When he does really see her, he fancies her – and is torn between his feelings and social status and expectations. Austen shows how many writers have done, how in the end, love and passion triumph over obligations and expectation.

**Active Learning**  
What do we learn about Darcy and Bingley? Make notes.

- ◆ Finally, Elizabeth's reaction to Darcy's put-down is worth noting: 'She told the story with a great spirit among her friends; for she had a lively and cheerful disposition that delighted in anything 'ridiculous' (p. 14). Elizabeth's lack of self-pity, her spirit and her amusement contribute to making her the attractive heroine she is, and incidentally, to attracting Darcy who tends to take himself and his world far more seriously. It is also worth noting how Elizabeth does not resent her sister's success but shares in her happiness – her lack of selfishness is a very positive quality. Many of Austen's novels deal with sisterly relationships, largely because there was more equality and often stronger relationships in those days between women who shared status than with men who belonged to, and lived in, a very different world.

### Debate Prompt

*Darcy's first words towards Elizabeth make it obvious that they would be a good match. Discuss.*



### Extended Essay Question

Prejudice is a theme that runs throughout the novel. Discuss how it is shown by Darcy towards other characters.

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## Chapter 4 – Reflecting on the B

### Summary

In private, Jane and Elizabeth Bennet talk about the ball and Jane describes We learn more about the Bingley family; that Mr Bingley earned his fortune sisters are 'proud and conceited' (p. 17). The narrator also provides further 'steady friendship' between Bingley and Darcy by describing their different

### Commentary

We see the warmth and intimacy between the two elder sisters here, altho more independent and intelligent one, discriminating (judging and choosing carefully perhaps than the open and rather naïve Jane (a characteristic that indifference or complacency perhaps with some reason). Elizabeth comme the world are good and reasonable in your eyes' (p. 16). Clearly, Elizabeth is she prides herself a little too much – at least before having to revise sev Elizabeth st through the Bingley sisters who are rather unpleasant, perhaps frustrated characters who, through their status as females, are denied much marriage objects. Note that a lot of their wealth comes from trade – in th acceptable source of money than inheritance, although they choose to forg whose money comes from trade. Austen's novel suggests attitudes to such particularly when we meet the Gardiners later in the novel.

We learn about the parallel friendship between Darcy and Bingley. Bingley acknowledges Darcy's 'judgement' (abstract nouns are very important in Jane Austen; her use of them implies that they can be measured and tested securely) and the fact that he is 'clever', but the narrative voice slides easily from Bingley's reflections to her own views as she pronounces Darcy 'haughty, reserved and fastidious' (p. 18). These words are well worth considering carefully as they are not as damning as they may seem at first. 'Fastidious' implies choosy rather than just snobbish. Both Elizabeth and Darcy in that sense are 'fastidious' in that they are looking for something more than is typical in their society, or looking beyond society's expectation and values for something of their own; in other words, being independent, something that appeals to modern readers very much.

#### Active Learning Task

Austen privileges, or gives more time and space, to Lizzy's reflections. What does this tell us here? Discuss in pairs.



#### Extended Essay Question

Elizabeth and Jane's conversation shows their closeness, but what do w views of people, and what does that tell us about their characters?

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## Chapters 5 and 6 – Falling in Love

### Chapter 5

#### Summary

Miss Charlotte Lucas pays a visit to Longbourn where she discusses the matter of the ladies. The ladies discuss how, at the ball, Charlotte overheard Mr Bingley call a woman in the room. The ladies discuss Mr Darcy's perceived negative qualities and her mother that she will never dance with him.

#### Commentary

This chapter highlights the way that Darcy is being perceived by the society that he is 'ate up with pride' and it would be a 'misfortune' to be liked by him. A great deal of prejudice is set as she makes up her mind about him with little of his character. Jane attempts to speak up for Darcy but Mrs Bennet's mind is in a discussion of the nature of pride and whether it is ever justified. Mary's pride and vanity perhaps deserve more reflection than they often get. In particular a comment from Mary – bookish and rather pompous – but there is a way in which there can be a good kind of pride as well as negative one. Where pride is rooted in strength it can be a positive thing.

#### Debate Prompt

Jane is right about Darcy's shyness because

### Chapter 6

#### Summary

Elizabeth Bennet and Charlotte Lucas discuss the possibility of Mr Bingley and Darcy has developed romantic feelings towards Elizabeth, though she is objecting. At the party at Lucas Lodge, Sir William Lucas attempts to get Elizabeth to dance with Darcy. Darcy admits to Miss Bingley that he considers Elizabeth to be a 'pretty woman' and she attempts to tease him about the possibility of marriage and having Mrs Bennet as an in-law' (p. 28).

#### Commentary

Charlotte Lucas is Elizabeth's best friend apart from her sister, Jane, and she is in contrast to Elizabeth. Charlotte is much more realistic and perhaps unromantic about marriage. Notably here she remarks that if Jane wants to win Bingley she must be practical. She also remarks that 'Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance' and both these comments but they are figures that there is more substance to them. Charlotte eventually marries the unromantic, pompous Mr Collins. This is of course having to do with some of her own judgements and beliefs. Charlotte is also confirming the idea that Jane is a bit too complacent in love, trusting too much and to make rather than being active enough in her demonstration of her affection.

Darcy clearly begins to feel strongly for Elizabeth, having dismissed her, just as she will never dance with him. Their apparent opposition to each other only as their disagreements and disputes actually suggest a degree of similarity. They are in their judgement, wrong about each other, yet clearly of interest to each other. Darcy complements his refusal to play along completely with society's games. What

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can dance' (p. 26) we laugh at his snobbery but also recognise a critical attitude towards something which perhaps makes him tell the scheming Miss Bingley, despite the game, just how much he does find Elizabeth Bennet attractive. Note too how he is quoting local proverbs to tease Darcy's dignified pomposity – such playfulness is applied to him to her and the reader to Lizzy. See the 'Relationships' section for further exploration of this relationship.

It is worth noting too that dancing and balls were the key kind of courtship in that sort of society; the easy access each sex now has to each other was unknown in Austen's class in those days, so things like balls and dances were crucial for assessing the merits, physical and otherwise, of potential partners. Note how Darcy's sneering at dancing is more than just snobbery but also a kind of awkwardness or self-consciousness too.

**Active Learning**

List all the ways in which Darcy is proud in this chapter. Proud? How do you apply to him?

**Extended Essay Question**

How do Elizabeth's and Charlotte's attitudes differ to love and marriage?



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## Chapter 7 – Jane Visits Netherfield

### Summary

The chapter begins by mentioning the Bennet ladies' financial situation, where two thousand a year will not be inherited by his daughters (p. 29). Catherine learns of a militia regiment near their aunt, Mrs Phillips' home and becomes officers and talking about them excessively, much to their father's annoyance.

Jane receives a letter from Caroline Bingley, inviting her to dine at Netherfield Park but her mother will not allow her to take the family carriage, preferring Jane to travel on horseback as this would allow her to stay the night in the Bingley home since 'it seems likely to rain' (p. 31). Having gone on horseback to Netherfield Park in the rain, the following morning Jane writes a letter to her sister Elizabeth, stating that she is ill with a 'sore throat and headache' and cannot return home for the time being (p. 32).

Elizabeth travels the three miles to Netherfield Park on foot to be with Jane and arrives muddy and red-faced but Mr Darcy admires her appearance. After Elizabeth visits her sister's bedside, she accepts Miss Bingley's offer that she may stay at Netherfield Park until Jane is feeling better.

### Commentary

It may seem strange to us that a walk alone could attract so much discussion. Elizabeth's decision to walk alone to Netherfield to help Jane when she falls ill (partly as a result of her scheming to try to get her daughter stranded there so she can be close to Elizabeth) is a significant moment. Not only does it suggest the strength of her affection for her sister, and her independence in her character, a romantic streak that notably characterizes her, but it also suggests a certain independence in her character, a romantic streak that notably characterizes her. Propriety is a term to indicate a right-thinking sense of behavior in society, or according to a set of moral values; it is linked to the word 'proper'. Elizabeth's departure from what might be seen as conventional or accepted behavior for a woman of her class walking so far alone – suggests that spirit and difference of character. Elizabeth is more modern and more of an individual than for example the social-climber Charlotte, her best friend, who conforms – does what society thinks is right and what she wants – in marrying the pompous Mr Collins for the sake of marriage, not for love.

The business of the entail works out how hard society then was for women and fortune. The fortune is inherited by a male heir, not by his daughters, and the family is at risk of losing their wealth and status unless they make good marriages. When judging Mrs Bennet – perhaps in her behaviour more than we sometimes recognise. That Austen makes her the mouthpiece or spokeswoman for received wisdom or common sense or what general society thinks is itself in Austen herself felt critical of some of the more restrictive attitudes to women could be in her world.

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Note also Lydia's and her sister's interest in the officers. For much of Jane Austen's world is at war with France, and soldiers in the figure of Wickham themselves symbolise breaking into the narrow society of Austen's story – with pretty devastating results. Austen for narrowness of focus, but she recognises the wider world at times when she often challenges the narrow society that some of her less intelligent characters inhabit. It is interesting too that Wickham is connected to the initially disreputable world down on this country world, but who comes to learn that good or bad behaviour is not the privilege of one class or another.

### Debate Prompt

*Mrs Bennett: is she*

### Active Learning Task

Elizabeth's fierce loyalty to and protective relationship with her sister is a key theme here. Find other examples of this protection for her sister in the book.



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## Chapters 8 and 9 – Jane's Illness

### Chapter 8

#### Summary

Elizabeth notices that Mr Bingley is extremely concerned about Jane's ill health. Mr and Mrs Hurst criticise Elizabeth in her absence for travelling across the muddy land. Mr and Mrs Hurst show their fondness for Jane and their disliking of Mr and Mrs Bennet and their friends. Mr and Mrs Hurst but Bingley and Darcy refuse to be drawn into this and defend them.



In the drawing room, Elizabeth is teased by Bingley's sisters for having a low opinion of the Bingleys. Elizabeth corrects them, stating 'I am *not* a great reader, and I have pleasure in many things.' As the conversation continues, 'accomplished' young women are discussed and a brief debate begins concerning whether or not individuals possess the ability to be 'accomplished' at many things (p. 38). Elizabeth confirms that Jane's condition has worsened and Bingley insists on visiting her in the morning.

#### Commentary

We see plenty of examples of snobbery from the Bingley sisters and from Darcy. Elizabeth, although if you look at the remarks Darcy makes about them having uncles who live in an unfashionable part of London so that 'marrying them for any consideration indeed' (p. 37), you can perhaps suggest that he is already subconsciously thinking of marriage with her. Likewise, when he later talks about the qualities in a woman who is a good reader, it is worth noting that Elizabeth has just been doing that. The obvious attraction of Mr Darcy's admiration, and his blunt response as well as Elizabeth's response, show that both Darcy and Elizabeth see through what we call affectation – pretence. This also contrasts with Elizabeth's real concern for her sister – someone else – so

Perhaps the most important exchange so far occurs in Chapter 8 between Elizabeth and Darcy as they argue over women's accomplishments, which is actually an argument over what is typically full of praise for all women – they are all multi-talented. Elizabeth responds to Darcy's remarks about women, partly because Mr Darcy is being so idealistic and unrealistic, partly because of what he says, and partly because of that warmth and down-to-earth quality

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Bingley pretends to be more than she is, Elizabeth herself is attractively modest. In the animation of their argument, there is a kind of agreement, a sort of subtext in which both are actually arguing for women to be taken seriously as attractive objects with talents added like decorations. Mr Darcy's idealism is his search for more than the superficial (surface) attractions of a Miss Bingley. Elizabeth is itself a quiet assertion of the desire of an intelligent woman not to be defined by her to be. Her resistance to his power and opinions begins to interest Darcy because she is just the kind of deep, thoughtful character he seeks.

### Debate Prompt

Darcy holds the same opinion about the Bennet family as Caroline Bingley.



### Extended Essay Question

Compare and contrast the behaviour of Miss Bingley and Lizzy in this chapter.

## Chapter 9

### Summary

After receiving a note from Elizabeth, Mrs Bennet visits Jane at Netherfield. Her illness is not serious. However, wanting Jane to stay in the company of Bingley, her daughter as being too unwell to be moved and Miss Bingley assures her that she will stay for during her illness. Having brought Lydia and Kitty along with her, Mrs Bennet and the Park residents in the breakfast parlour and Lydia reminds Bingley about a proposal for his own ball at Netherfield Park. Bingley confirms that he will gladly organise a ball.

### Commentary

Mrs Bennet's eventual visit to Netherfield confirms Mr Darcy's prejudices about the society. When she boasts that she dines with 'four and twenty families' and to his surprise that 'there is quite as much of *that* going on in the country as in the city', her boasting exposes her to ridicule as she is trying to be more than she really is. Her vanity and self-consciousness show her awareness of her mother's failings, but is also a reflection of her as yet unacknowledged feelings for Darcy. Some critics observe that, in this chapter, both realise, both show a deeper interest in each other than they are fully aware of. Elizabeth's concern about her family's conduct and manners grows through the novel, and her greater awareness and intelligence except for her father who tends not to change, perhaps it owes something to her awareness of Darcy and what he stands for.

Note again the way in which Elizabeth and Darcy converse – they may disagree but their connection and understanding between them that suggests they understand each other. Elizabeth plays up her disagreements with him perhaps because she likes him, and that just fascinates him the more as most of the people in his group are or to be rather bland.



### Extended Essay Question

In what ways does Mrs Bennet make a fool of herself in conversation, and what does this tell us about the world she lives in?

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## Chapters 10 and 11 – Darcy's Proposal

### Chapter 10

#### Summary

Jane's condition has improved slightly and after attending to her sister, Elizabeth sits in the drawing-room and is amused by Miss Bingley's attempts to hold a conversation with Darcy while he writes a letter to his sister. When Darcy has finished his letter, Bingley's sisters sing and play the piano and during this entertainment, Elizabeth notices Darcy staring at her and concludes that he must dislike her. Elizabeth is then surprised when Mr Darcy asks her to dance with him and she refuses to do so but Darcy is not offended and instead feels 'bewitched' by her (p. 51). Bingley is jealous of Darcy's interest in Elizabeth and continues to tease him about this in an attempt to discourage him. Elizabeth recognises that the Bingley sisters dislike her but remains in high spirits, hoping that she and Jane will return home to Longbourn soon.



#### Commentary

This is another chapter in which we witness much delightful conversation between Darcy and Elizabeth that reveals an understanding and sensitivity between them for all their apparent differences. Elizabeth's puzzlement at Darcy's interest in her is typical of Austen's irony but 'liked him too little to care for his approbation' (meaning approval) (p. 51). Elizabeth makes many mistakes in her judgement and this is part of Austen's realism about how we are often wrong about others and ourselves and need to learn, and learn humility in the process. Her blindness when he says for example, 'I do not dare' when she teasingly invites him to dance has been more striking to original readers than perhaps today's where expressions of emotion are more open and casual (p. 50). It makes for delightful comedy and insight into how we know ourselves easily or without effort of mind, and how we take responsibility.

Note how Elizabeth runs off again at the end of the chapter on her own – a display again of individuality and a rejection of the unpleasant society that her friends try to stifle her (p. 52).

**Active Learning**  
Imagine you are the entry of your vision.

**Active Learning**  
When Elizabeth runs off at the end of the chapter in some other example you have found in the text.

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#### Extended Essay Question

What do Darcy and Elizabeth's exchanges tell us about their characters?

## Chapter 11

### Summary

Jane is well enough to join the Netherfield residents in the drawing-room after dinner, where Bingley pays her a great deal of attention and hardly speaks to anyone else. Bingley continues to talk about his plans to hold a ball. Darcy and Elizabeth begin a satirical debate concerning the subject of pride as a character trait. Darcy admits he has 'faults' and a 'temper' which could 'perhaps be called resentful' (pp. 56–7).

### Commentary

In this chapter there is another delightful conversation where we again see, for all their arguing, a degree of engagement between Elizabeth and Darcy. Mr. Bingley's seductive arts in walking around the room to show herself off are quickly pushed aside by Darcy's and Elizabeth's conversation about humour and pride. Elizabeth remarks that she is diverted, amused by 'Follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies' (p. 56). She says in a deliberately blunt way (p. 56). He comments that he tries to avoid any such weaknesses and that he has a real 'superiority of mind'. We laugh with Elizabeth at Darcy's sense of his own superiority. What can also be recognised in the conversation is that they are really defining and describing their personalities to each other, almost exaggerating how they feel as they are. They do not want to give ground. Darcy feels deliberately misunderstood – he says the dialogue stops. Elizabeth senses Darcy's social superiority, his status as a man in his own world, and has to challenge it and tease him out of a self-regard she cannot have. She can do this because they care what the other thinks. When Elizabeth says that Darcy has a 'propensity (tendency) to hate every body' (p. 57) there is more than one person who dislikes her and her class (and in part he does), but there is an unspoken common ground along with everything and everyone else. In a way, she wants to be regarded as she is, as he wishes for that when he says she misunderstands him. They both really care about the other. Love and hate can often be close together, and strangely, arguments can be close together as at the end they understand each other more.

Debate Prompt

Elizabeth represents women in the book and Darcy represents men. Discuss.

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## Chapters 12, 13 and 14 – Mr Collins

### Chapter 12

Elizabeth writes to her mother to request a carriage for herself and Jane but this as she wants her daughters to stay with Mr Bingley for a full week. Mr Bingley agrees to let Jane to stay in his home a while longer but the Bennet sisters agree they will only and borrow Bingley's carriage to travel the next day. Mr Darcy is relieved that Elizabeth is not attracted to him, he dislikes the present situation, whereby Miss Bingley's feelings and is uncivil to Elizabeth. Jane and Elizabeth leave Netherfield and return home to Longbourn where their father is pleased to see them but their mother criticises them for leaving the Bingley household before a full week has passed.

**Active Learning**  
In pairs, summarise what Mr Darcy has that annoys Elizabeth in the novel.

#### Debate Prompt

*Mr and Mrs Bennet have very different parenting styles. Discuss.*

### Chapter 13

At breakfast, Mr Bennet tells his family about a letter he has received from his cousin Mr William Collins, who is the legal heir to Mr Bennet's estate. Mr Collins states his desire to make peace with Mr Bennet, despite a long-standing family feud which existed between their fathers. Since Mr Collins' father has passed away, he invites Mr Bennet to accept an 'olive branch' of peace and recognises that although he is heir to Mr Bennet's finances, he will 'make every possible amends' for the Bennet daughters (p. 62). Mr Collins also states that with the financial assistance of a woman named Lady Catherine de Bourgh, he has become a clergyman. Mr Collins arrives to stay at Longbourn and enjoys complimenting Mrs Bennet on her 'fine' daughters and looking around the house which one day, is due to belong to him (p. 63).

#### Debate Prompt

*Mr Collins is a very comical character. Discuss.*

#### Extended Essay Question

How does Austen use Collins' way of speaking and writing to criticism?

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## Chapter 14

### Summary

After dining with Mr Collins, Mr Bennet asks him about Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Mr Collins replies by praising Lady Catherine and talks about her daughter, Miss de Bourgh, who apparently has 'superior' beauty and, unfortunately, a 'sickly constitution' which prevents her from progressing both in social and educational terms (p. 66). On spending the evening with him, Mr Bennet decides that Mr Collins is an 'absurd' man but enjoys listening to his cousin making unintelligent conversation (p. 67). Later, Lydia rudely interrupts Mr Collins when he is performing a reading from a book and 'sister' Elizabeth criticise her.

### Commentary

This section introduces the absurdly pompous Mr Collins who is a really good example of pride, and whose prejudices, based on rank and privilege are a fine example of failings. There is more about him and the other major characters in a later section. The long-winded letter and the indicators of his character. When he invites himself to Longbourn, he 'propose' 'satisfaction' or visiting without too much 'inconvenience' to himself – in other words he looks at from how it affects himself. He is full of his own views and wants, and comes seeking a wife in the way someone would go into a marriage. He name drops Lady Catherine and believes in her despite her obvious unpleasant status in society, not because of what she is. When he arrives, he is full of a contrast markedly with Darcy's intelligent bluntness of opinion. Character exaggerate are always criticised by Austen – they are essentially false, irrational in some way or other. Sincerity and integrity are often associated with brevity whereas characters who talk too much invariably do so to try to make an impression who are putting on an act. His long-winded apologies are to satisfy himself to please and in the end, please himself.

It is worth noting too that Lydia interrupts his sermon reading (p. 67). Not a lack of respect, even if the joke is mostly on Collins reading something so tedious arrogant assumptions about his audience, but it also shows how she represents challenges traditional moral values. While this leads to her downfall – she has moral ideas – she is a fascinating character who, in many ways, is the more interesting because she won't conform to what is expected. Her heart rules her head to something new in giving her such a strong and independent and demanding study on page 66).

#### Active Learning Task

Imagine you are Mr Collins visiting the Bennets for the first time. Write a diary entry about your time with the family.

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## Chapter 15 – Mr Collins' Intent

### Summary

The chapter begins with a paragraph about Mr Collins' character traits, in which pride and obsequiousness, self-importance, and humility' (p. 69). It emerges that one of the Bennet sisters as part of his plan to make amends with the Bennet family. Initially drawn to Jane, Mrs Bennet still hopes that Mr Bingley will propose to her and encourages him to choose a different sister. Mr Collins settles on Elizabeth, with whom he decides to marry him soon. After irritating Mr Bennet by following him around his study and deciding to accompany the Bennet sisters (all except for Mary) on their walk to the village.

The ladies are soon distracted by the appearance of Mr George Wickham, who is introduced to Lydia and Kitty by an officer named Mr Denny. Mr Wickham is described as a handsome young man who is soon to become a lieutenant. Mr Bingley and Darcy ride into the village on horseback and greet the Bennet sisters, while Mr Collins and Wickham and Darcy both behave in a shocked and uncomfortable manner, much to the confusion of Elizabeth and Jane. The chapter concludes with the Bennet sisters taking Mr Collins to visit to their mother, Mrs Philips, where they discuss their plans to have supper together the following evening and the possibility of Mr Philips extending an invitation to Mr Wickham.

### Commentary

Austen's comment that Collins 'was not a sensible man' (p. 69) is an important one, as it is stronger in Austen than its commonplace usage today suggests. It speaks of things, a lack of judgement and openness to the world around him – he does not see what we see in his self-satisfied and narrow-minded character, and his worship of Lady Catherine who is critical of others and herself in the best sense, he is unable to see things in his own class and his society. It is also quite arresting to see how calculating he is in his pursuit of Elizabeth, that the Bennet girls are attractive, but his principal thought is to get married. His view of the bride and his feelings quickly switch from Jane, when he finds she is almost engaged to Elizabeth, without considering whether or not she is interested in or not. His unromantic view of marriage is very different from how most people in Western society view relationships, and certainly one that Austen is quarrelling with herself, even if she eventually marries to Charlotte the reality of such arrangements. Rather, Austen contrasts the union of Elizabeth and Darcy the importance of love in all its senses – and the importance of a woman having a choice and being in fact determined that it is right for her and not just a man's.

Finally, we meet Mr Wickham who is of most 'gentleman-like appearance' – a fascinating minor character, the opposite to Collins in his attractiveness and also to Darcy in his lack of integrity and honesty. Austen makes Elizabeth in part as part of a lesson she learns from him, deceived by him too, at least at first. He may be a man-like in appearance – a visual prejudice in reality. At the same time, his character, as Lydia's, does not quite fit easily into the moral and thematic pattern of the novel, and he is discussed in detail in the character section below.

#### Debate Prompt

The fact that Wickham is a member of the military is a visual prejudice in reality.

#### Extended Essay Question

In what ways is Wickham's characterisation different from Darcy's and Elizabeth's with Lizzy?

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## Chapter 16 – Mr Wickham

### Summary

The Bennet sisters and Mr Collins attend Mrs Philips' home, along with Mr Phillips' friends. Mr Wickham is admired by every lady in the room and Elizabeth is attracted to him during a game of cards. Mr Wickham tells Elizabeth that Darcy's father has explained that Darcy prevented him from inheriting money from 'the late Mr Darcy' to provide for Wickham in his will (p. 77).

Wickham claims that instead of his military role, he had intended to build a career in the church but has been unable to follow this path due to Darcy's selfishness in keeping all of his father's wealth to himself. Wickham reveals that Mr Collins' aunt, Mrs de Bourgh is Darcy's aunt. Wickham claims that Darcy will probably marry his cousin, Miss de Bourgh in order to retain their family's collective wealth. Elizabeth tells Wickham about her own dislike for Darcy and leaves her aunt's house deep in thought about their conversation.



### Commentary

When we first read Wickham's conversation with Elizabeth, it seems to confirm her suspicions about the pride of Mr Darcy. Indeed, it casts him in a very ugly light, but Elizabeth is predisposed to dislike him, and to admire Wickham. Perhaps we can again see a kind of unconscious fascination on her part for Mr Darcy – even though she is pleased to hear ill of him, he is almost as much the focus of her thoughts as Wickham. When we read the conversation a second time in the light of our understanding of the whole book, we can observe some of the faults that Elizabeth later comes to recognise in Wickham. Note for example Wickham's comments to her that it 'gives him (me) pain to speak ill of a Darcy' (p. 80) when he has just been doing that for a good while, and also her awareness of the 'delicacy' of what Wickham talks about but not seeing how quick and ready he is to confide in Darcy. She later reflects on the fact that, as a comparative stranger, she should not be so ready to talk so freely so soon. His talkativeness contrasts with the reserve and embodiment of the principle we see so often in Austen that the apparently charming characters often lack sincerity, integrity or stability.

#### Active Learning

Can you find any conversation with quite what he says? references to pride?

#### Active Learning

List the references to this chapter.

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#### Extended Essay Question

How does Wickham's conversation with Lizzy suggest that he is not quite what he seems? Think of other instances in the novel so far where other characters are not what they seem to how they really are?

## Chapter 17 – Mr Collins Talks to Elizabeth

### Summary

Elizabeth tells Jane about her conversation with Mr Wickham. Jane is shocked with Darcy considering their contrasting character traits and raises doubts. Elizabeth remains convinced by it.

Mr Bingley and his sisters visit Longbourn and invite the Bennets to the upcoming ball. Mr Collins tells Elizabeth that he hopes to dance with her at the ball but she looks for Mr Wickham instead.

Elizabeth is shocked when she guesses that Mr Collins wants to make her 'Parsonage' and learns that her mother approves of his intentions (p. 75). Elizabeth's reaction to Collins' compliments is that she hopes that she can avoid the 'serious dispute' with him by proposing to her.



### Commentary

The comment, 'it was not in her (Jane's) nature to question the veracity (truth) of such amiable appearance as Wickham' (p. 84) tells us a lot about Austen's satirical view of even her most favoured heroines, putting them in a perspective that, as in all comedy, reminds of us human weaknesses and vulnerabilities. We all judge by appearance, perhaps especially when we are young and perhaps then more prone to prejudice. Lizzy's triumphant and misplaced 'he is as truth in his looks' and 'to think' similarly reminds us that, for all her many charms, Elizabeth is human. This is a key part of the book in her judgement on some key characters.



#### Exam tip

Look closely at the way that the key characters perceive each other in the first part of the book. This tells us about appearance versus reality (e.g. Wickham, Darcy, Jane, Elizabeth).

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## Chapter 18 – Considering Wickham

### Summary

The Bennets attend the Netherfield ball and Elizabeth is disappointed to discover that Wickham is absent. Believing Mr Denny's claim, that Wickham has chosen not to attend as a 'gentleman', Elizabeth hopes to ignore Darcy throughout the evening since his presence would serve as 'injury to Wickham' (p. 88).

Despite being determined to hate Darcy, Elizabeth accepts his hand for a dance. Elizabeth behaves coldly towards Darcy and broaches the subject of Mr Wickham, who is 'desirous of changing the subject' (p. 91). Elizabeth and Darcy share a satirical conversation in which Darcy suggests that he is 'blinded by prejudice' (p. 92).



Soon after, Miss Bingley approaches Elizabeth to inform her that Mr Wickham 'treated Mr Darcy in a most infamous manner' despite the fact that Darcy 'was kind to him' (p. 93). Elizabeth reacts angrily and thinks Miss Bingley is motivated by 'the malice of Mr Darcy' (p. 93). Despite learning of similar accounts from Jane, Elizabeth remains convinced of Wickham's story.

On learning that he is related to Lady Catherine, Mr Collins decides to introduce himself to Elizabeth despite her protestations. Meanwhile Jane is delighted to be getting to know Mr Collins, having danced with him frequently. Mr Collins then embarrasses her family by speaking of his love for Elizabeth and Elizabeth grows impatient with Mr Collins, whose constant presence prevents her from talking with others for the remainder of the evening.

### Commentary

The ball turns out to be a disappointment to Lizzy: Wickham is absent; she is disappointed to see her family behave in ways that let themselves down, most famously in her father's behavior who shows off and sings badly. Her father's famous dismissal of Mary – 'You are not good enough' (p. 98) – is both funny but also illustrative of the father's inability to take responsibility for his daughters. He resorts to a very cruel piece of sarcasm at the expense of Mary, hiding from, rather than taking responsibility for her lack of discretion.

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It is typical of Wickham that the novel discloses that he should not be what he seems, different from how he appears. We see here Charlotte's much more pragmatic approach in advising Lizzy not to discourage Darcy when he asks her for a dance, and the wonderfully sparky conversation that contrasts with the pudding-like utterances of Miss Bingley. Lizzy teases him again about his solemn manner and we feel once again that her anger comes from more than just irritation, even if she is not aware of her own feelings. Her accusation of him being too easily blinded by prejudices is, of course, ironic. When Miss Bingley tells Elizabeth things she is determined not to hear. She hurts Elizabeth's character 'puzzles' her; but while she thinks she knows the truth about him, Elizabeth is not sure what she thinks of him herself entirely. If we follow this line on their growing relationship, we get a more sense of her subsequent changes of mind, and we understand a fascinating character who, despite his pride, she unconsciously disarms her prejudices. Even her family's behaviour, although correct on this occasion, are perhaps particularly revealing of her consciousness of Darcy, his opinions and some kind of respect for him despite her feelings.

Note how Elizabeth makes up her mind that a marriage between Jane and Mr. Bingley is a conclusion, how dismissive she is of her other daughter, Lizzy whom she has to capture for 'Elizabeth was the least dear to her of all her children' (p. 10). Elizabeth's material things and consequence (status) for herself, not for the feelings of others.

### Debate Prompt

*Mr and Mrs Bennet are good role models for their daughters. Discuss.*



### Extended Essay Question

What exactly are the sources of Elizabeth's embarrassment over her father's behaviour? Which is the most important?

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## Chapters 19 and 20 – The Business of

### Chapter 19

Mrs Bennet insists that Elizabeth should sit alone with Mr Collins, as he has something important to ask her. Mr Collins proposes to Elizabeth and despite her polite refusal of this offer, he has difficulty understanding that she does not want to marry him and continues to make his proposal. After refusing his offer several times, Elizabeth grows tired of Mr Collins' 'perseverance in wilful self-deception' (p. 106), and she leaves the room, determined to speak with her father on the matter. The admirer continues to make his advances.

### Chapter 20

#### Summary

On entering the breakfast room to congratulate Mr Collins, Mrs Bennet is surprised to find that he has rejected his proposal and calls for Mr Bennet to 'make Lizzy marry Mr Collins or I will never see her again' (p. 109). Mrs Bennet also adds that if Elizabeth does not marry Mr Collins, she will 'never see her again', to which Mr Bennet tells his daughter: 'You are discussing the matter, Mr Collins sits alone and considers 'on what motives he will withdraw his proposal.

#### Commentary

Mr Collins' proposal is delightfully self-centred and almost entirely lacking in consideration for Lizzy. While the whole scene is comical and we cannot but side with Elizabeth, her mother's near hysterical reaction when she rejects him underlines just how much family fortunes are and how much pressure there was on women in her class to marry for the sake of status and heirs as much as for love. Mr Collins' insensitivity is highlighted in his complete inability to accept Lizzy's proposal on any matter of form. Mr Bennet's response to the situation is typically laconic – he does not deal with their awkwardness. We feel again for Mr Bennet has given up on his wife and is uneasy with his responsibilities as a father. He retreats to his library.



#### Extend Your Question

From the comical aspects, what does Mr Collins' proposal to Elizabeth tell us about the women in the novel? Why is Mrs Bennet so distressed by Elizabeth's refusal?

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## Chapters 21 and 22 – Happiness in *M*

### Chapter 21

Since his proposal was rejected, Mr Collins rarely communicates with Elizabeth out of ‘resentful silence’ (p. 113). However, Mr Collins continues to stay at the Bennet home, much to Elizabeth’s dismay. The Bennet sisters walk to Meryton and meet with Mr Wickham, who acknowledges that he missed the Netherfield ball in order to avoid Darcy.

#### Active Learning

Imagine you are about recent events at the Netherfield ball.

Jane receives a letter from Caroline Bingley stating that she and her party have left Netherfield. Mr Bingley has been called away on business to London and is unlikely to return before the winter. Caroline also informs that they are soon to meet with Darcy’s sister Georgiana and describes her hopes that Charles Bingley will marry Miss Darcy, since nobody matches her in ‘beauty, elegance, and accomplishments’ (p. 116). Caroline concludes that she wants to remain in contact with Jane by post. After studying the letter with Jane in private, Elizabeth explains that Caroline Bingley is attempting to separate Jane and Mr Bingley, by writing about her brother’s supposed affection for Georgiana Darcy. Elizabeth believes that by bringing Mr Bingley and Georgiana Darcy together, Caroline Bingley hopes to secure her own marriage to Mr Darcy.

#### Exam Tip

Letters are very important to this novel in terms of plot and character development. Look closely at the way that they are used.

#### Debate Prompt

Jane and Elizabeth are closer to each other than to their other sisters. Do you agree?



#### Extended Essay Question

How are letters used in the novel to advance the plot and to develop characters?

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## Chapter 22

### Summary

Charlotte Lucas attends Longbourn and begins talking to Mr Collins where, 'from any return of Mr Collins' addresses' Charlotte takes effort in 'engaging' him (p. 119). In secret, Mr Collins attends Lucas Lodge, where he meets Charlotte. After she accepts his proposal, Charlotte's parents are 'properly overjoyed' at the match for their daughter, to whom they could give little fortune' (p. 120). How much longer Mr Bennet is likely to live and grows excited at the prospect of his husband inheriting the Bennet home.

Charlotte herself is pleased to have secured Mr Collins, largely because of how Elizabeth will react to their engagement and asks her family to keep it being. Mr Collins finally leaves the Longbourn estate but promises a 'quick' return to Longbourn the next day and Elizabeth is astonished to hear about the engagement (p. 123).

### Commentary

There is a kind of awakening for Elizabeth in these chapters that is the first when she has to revise her views, her prejudices about things. Charlotte's encouragement of Mr Collins, astonishes and dismays her, but perhaps convinces the reader: 'Charlotte's kindness extended farther than Elizabeth had any conception of' (p. 123). Charlotte's defence of her action is sobering: 'I am convinced that my chance is fair as most people can boast on entering the marriage state' (p. 123). Then, in that description, 'marriage state'; it sounds so mechanical and far from the situation most hope for. But there is more for Elizabeth to learn for she believes she will suffer and talks of her 'disgracing' herself; in fact, she is wrong. Charlotte lives her excesses and gets on with enjoying the trappings of married life in a way that is as possible. We side with Lizzy, but we also see Austen the realist looking pragmatic about how women in her restrictive world had to make the best of something, and indeed of the status offered to them by a man, even if it seems from the outside so

### Debate Prompt

*Elizabeth misjudges Charlotte and is wrong about marrying for love rather than practical reasons. Discuss.*

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### Essay Question

There are several different attitudes to marriages in the novel. How do you think Austen views marriage? Are there any happy marriages in *Pride and Prejudice*?

## Chapters 23 and 24 – The Possibility of

### Chapter 23

Mrs Bennet is displeased to learn of Mr Collins' engagement to Charlotte and Charlotte 'as foolish as his wife' for accepting the proposal (p. 125). Elizabeth and Charlotte, to the extent that the two friends remain 'mutually silent on the subject', are anxious that she hasn't heard from Bingley since his departure, despite writing to him. Bingley and Elizabeth fears that his sisters will 'be successful in keeping him away'. Mr Collins writes to Mr Bennet to express his thanks for the hospitality he has received and soon after returns to stay with the family, where Mrs Bennet grows resentful of his position as the 'successor' of Longbourn.



#### Debate Prompt

*Mrs Bennet is justified in complaining about Mr Collins' marriage situation in this chapter. Discuss.*



### Chapter 24

#### Summary

Jane receives another letter from Caroline Bingley which praises Georgiana and her conversation with Elizabeth, Jane describes her heartache in believing that Elizabeth describes her disapproval of Charlotte and Mr Collins' relationship. Elizabeth convinces Jane that Bingley's sisters are trying to manipulate her with Caroline's claims. Jane prefers him to marry Miss Darcy: 'a girl who has all the importance of money and pride' (p. 134). Jane is reluctant to think ill of the Bingley sisters and refuses to make claims. The chapter closes with some further information regarding Mr Wickham, who often socialise with him and that most of their acquaintances have chosen the 'worst of men', apart from Jane who 'always pleaded for allowances, and understood their mistakes' (p. 136).

#### Commentary

Despite the awkwardness of her own situation as her mother continues to pressure her for a marriage with Mr Collins, a situation made even worse when she discovers that Charlotte is not as happy as she seems. Elizabeth's pleasing things about Elizabeth is her concern for her sister's happiness rather than her own. Lizzy believes it is the 'wrong' of the Bingley sisters that they are trying to convince Jane that Bingley's sisters are trying to manipulate her with Caroline's claims. Lizzy admires Jane's quiet suffering, but cannot understand her sister's refusal to cast blame, and even becomes angry with her for not liking Miss Darcy and Miss Bingley. Jane's courage in the face of adversity and her goodness and civility. She is another case of someone who is prejudiced, with a narrow view of things and quite mistaking the harsher motivations of others.

Chapter 24 contains one of the most extended and intimate scenes between Elizabeth and Jane. They quite clearly see the difference in their characters – Jane, forgiving and kind; Elizabeth, the best of all; Lizzy more critical and suspicious and wiser, even though she is often wrong. It is interesting that Austen makes Lizzy, the second sister, in many ways the most interesting, while Jane is much more a traditional idea of a female heroine, probably more simply conceived in terms of beauty rather than independence.

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'easiness of temper' of Mr Bingley, by which she means perhaps a lack of independence – he is too easily content, too lacking in determination – is what she is worried about. There is a way in which Bingley, for all the arts of his 'designing friends', does not seem to have a strong character, and certainly he contrasts with the character of Darcy who seems to have a very strong character (p. 131). Elizabeth's comment that her sister is 'too good' is also worth reflecting on. Jane is an idealised character, selfless and kind to a fault (p. 132). Jane's comment that her mother 'had more command over herself' alerts us to that sense of propriety and self-control. In her society, self-control and self-command were much more prized than in our society. We tend to believe that it is wrong to hide feelings. While Jane's self-control can be seen as a strength in another novel might be self-destructive (not showing feelings can eat away at someone's mental health), her self-control gives her some strength in the novel in a society where women in particular were very vulnerable. Look at how at each of the crises in the novel (the emotional Mrs Bennet's collapse under her suffering). Morality is sometimes a necessity.

### Debate Prompt

Is Jane naïve in her reaction?

Finally, the chapter contains one of the most interesting of Austen's observations on Elizabeth's. She comments that 'Thoughtlessness, want of attention to other people's feelings, the business' (p. 134). What Elizabeth is arguing is that we often hurt people and that *that is not a good enough excuse to free us from the responsibility*. Elizabeth's comments embody that sense we have in Austen of intense concentration on the moral agents relentlessly – moral agents in her world. In other words, Austen is demanding much of Jane in a way is arguing back; but whatever you make of this, you can see the focus she puts on our actions in the everyday world, especially a world in which men could get away with so much more than women (and some would say still can). If you like, Jane Austen's morality is partly a way of giving women more power – she may not have the freedom to act as a man could then, but she has an increased authority and power to judge and resolve in her own head the actions of others.

### Active Learning

Elizabeth seems to have many of her views judged correctly.

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## Chapters 25 and 26 – Enter the Gardiners

### Chapter 25

Mr Collins leaves Longbourn again and Mrs Bennet's brother Mr Gardiner comes with his wife. Mrs Gardiner invites Jane to stay with her in London and Elizabeth thinks of Jane having a 'change of scene' but jokes that Bingley will not come since the area where she will be staying is not high class enough for Mr Darcy's connection to Darcy's late father is also mentioned, since she previously lived in Derbyshire. She grows suspicious of Elizabeth's affection for Mr Wickham because in the past, Darcy was a 'very proud, ill-natured boy' (p. 141).



#### Extended Essay Question

Compare and contrast the characters and natures of Mr and Mrs Gardiner.

### Chapter 25 Summary

Mrs Gardiner confronts Elizabeth about her affection for Wickham and warns her to retain her 'resolution and good conduct' (p. 142). In response, Elizabeth states that she is not in love with Wickham. Charlotte Lucas pays a farewell visit to the Bennets and her wedding to Mr Collins takes place soon after. Elizabeth and Charlotte write to each other but the 'intimacy' of their relationship is saddened to receive her dull and formal letters. Jane also writes to Mr Bingley's sisters, who claim their brother is extremely busy and Elizabeth is unlikely to tell him of Jane's presence in London. After four weeks Jane writes that she has indeed been 'deceived in Miss Bingley's regard' for her (p. 145). Elizabeth's attitude towards Jane has significantly altered. Believing Bingley to be her sister, Elizabeth hopes that Jane will soon forget about him.

#### Key Term

**Stock character**  
characters of persons easily recognisable in the sycophantic flatters people Mr Collins

### Commentary

Mr Gardiner is introduced as a 'sensible, gentlemanlike man' (p. 137), and the Gardiners are indeed a kind of model, the balanced parents that Lizzy and Jane never had as it were.

#### Detail

Elizabeth Gardiner

Note how Charlotte marries for motives other than real love, and that Wickham, a charming character, is quickly attracted to a lady of far more fortune than Elizabeth. She is not that bothered when he transfers affections to another. She, like all Jane, has a kind of half-hearted relationship with the novel's handsome but shallow (the type was a stock character in drama of the time and reappears in various books). Jane Austen provides her with a plausible, attractive rogue before discovering a truth that is both emotional and rational with some kind of long experience, rejecting attractive reality – prejudice – for sense.

Note how even Mrs Gardiner, a sensible character in the novel, adjusts her prejudices. At the end of Chapter 25 she searches around in her memory and has been spoken of as a 'very proud, ill-natured boy' (p. 141). Such shifting of perspective illustrates how easily we all can judge by rumour or appearance, or popular opinion, how hard to find something bad, and, of course, finds it.



#### Extended Essay Question

'Handsome young men must have something to live on' says Elizabeth. How does she direct her attentions to a richer lady. To what extent is marriage about money?

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## Chapters 27, 28 and 29 – Lady Catherine

### Chapter 27

Elizabeth travels to visit Charlotte at Hunsford but stays a night in London on the way with Maria and Sir William Lucas. Here, she sees Jane and her aunt (Mrs Gardiner) and they attend the theatre. With her aunt, Elizabeth discusses the end of Jane's acquaintance with Bingley and her own interest in Mr Wickham.

**Active Learning**  
In groups, identify the main themes of the chapter about Jane and Mr Wickham.

### Chapter 28

Elizabeth continues to Hunsford where she is greeted by Mr and Mrs Collins. After a tour of the house and grounds, Maria Lucas tells Elizabeth to look outside, where Mrs Jenkins and Miss de Bourgh are present. Elizabeth comments that Miss de Bourgh 'looks sickly and cross' (p. 156) and shows bad manners by refusing to come into the house. Charlotte and Elizabeth are all invited to Rosings – the de Bourgh home, for dinner the following day.

**Debate Prompt**  
Elizabeth's visit to Rosings is a turning point in the novel. Discuss the significance of Mr Collins's role in this chapter.

### Chapter 29

#### Summary

Mr Collins looks forward to the dinner at Rosings and talks of little else in the evening. Elizabeth, Maria, Sir William and Mr and Mrs Collins attend Rosings where Lady Catherine de Bourgh who is presented as a rude, self-important woman. After dinner, Lady Catherine while her guests remain silent and enjoys 'dictating' to Charlotte about her plans for the future (p. 160). Lady Catherine asks Elizabeth a range of personal and patronising questions. Elizabeth hears that the Bennet girls grew up without a governess to teach them drawing and music. The guests play some card games then return home.

#### Commentary

We learn about Wickham's interest in Miss King, because of her money – a reflection of the materialistic or mercenary nature of aspects of Jane Austen's society. Elizabeth's possible trip to the Lake District, an area that the romantic poets such as Wordsworth found popular when Austen was writing her novels. 'What are men to rocks and trees' and also, 'Stupid men are the only ones worth knowing' (p. 152). Both these comments reflect Lizzy at this stage in the novel – she is typically playful, but her speech also reveals the weakness of Bingley, the arrogance of Darcy, the ludicrous Mr Collins, and, of course, Mrs Gardiner thinks, perhaps some disappointment in the changeable nature of the novel sees men inevitably from her, female, perspective, reflecting on how poor they do appear to her at this point in the novel, and her sex, in our eyes.

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Mr Collins turns out to be as house proud of his 'humble abode' as we could expect. More interesting is the way Charlotte copes with his often foolish comments. 'I can hear' (p. 154). This is a fascinating insight into the way the marriage carries half truth that Elizabeth would not allow herself. Like all great heroines, Lizzy more than exists in the relationship between these two, however realistic the probable realities of most marriages where, in ordinary life, people find error and turn a blind eye to them.

Elizabeth's relationship to the pompous and grand Lady Catherine, whose pride and threatening, is one of the delights of the novel. Lady Catherine, in an odd way, believes she has a right to say and do much as she pleases because of her birth. She is rude to her, but she fails to show her the deference (giving way to someone's superior or forced respect) that she thinks she is due. Austen was hardly someone who would have been out of structure of her time, but here, and even more so in *Persuasion*, her last novel, she goes that go beyond class and traditional rights and respect. Austen insists that people have to some degree if they are to earn respect. The loud domineering (pushy) Mrs. Collins is right by birth. The wonderful comedy of Elizabeth's reaction to the marriage of her friend and Mrs Jenkinson, the lady who lives with her, outside the Collins' house – 'she had got into the garden' (p. 156). The earthy reference to pigs and the allusion to 'the garden' reflects Lizzy's contempt for snobbery and pretentiousness (pretending to be more than we really are; it is also the kind of language, earthy and informal, that Elizabeth uses to Darcy's presence to tease and deflate him). More psychologically fascinating is the notably sickly looking Miss De Bourgh 'will make him (Darcy) a very proper match' (or thought) explicitly and what is implied are slightly different here. Elizabeth's mind by thinking that a proud, humourless man deserves a cross, sickly wife and a lack of kindness and health. However, underneath the wit of her thoughts, it is her sense of what is much at the forefront of her mind. Collins warns Elizabeth that Lady Catherine's 'distinction of rank preserved' (p. 158). Not only does this underline her snobbery but also how Lady Catherine is a complete block to social change, whereas the even more snobbish Lizzy does cross class and money barriers in a way that was perhaps more successful.

Elizabeth sees right through Lady Catherine and her pride and vanity. She is the first creature ever to 'trifle' with Lady Catherine and not be in awe of her (p. 158). She observes that 'mere stateliness of money and rank' (p. 158) are not impressive patterns of the book, Lady Catherine is a kind of gross exaggeration of Darcy's looks down at first on the society to which Lizzy belongs and has to struggle against. Lady Catherine reminds us spectacularly of the way in which true class is not dependent on birth or rank but on what and who you are.

### Debate

Does Elizabeth stand up for herself against Lady Catherine?  
How? Discuss.

### Active Learning

List all the ways in which Lady Catherine amuses herself.  
What exactly is her purpose?

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### Extended Essay Question

How does Mr Bennet's ineffectual parenting affect his daughters' future?

## Chapters 30, 31 and 32 – Darcy Returns

### Chapter 30

Elizabeth continues to stay at Hunsford, where Lady Catherine occasionally arrives to instruct Charlotte in household duties. Mr Darcy arrives at Rosings accompanied by his cousin Colonel Fitzwilliam and they visit Hunsford, where Mr Darcy assures Elizabeth that he hasn't seen Jane in London.

#### Debate Point

Colonel Fitzwilliam's opinion of Darcy's apparent

### Chapter 31

The Hunsford household accept an invitation to dinner at Rosings where Colonel Fitzwilliam and Elizabeth enjoy a conversation about music which Lady Catherine rudely interrupts. Elizabeth's sister George is present and soon after, Elizabeth begins to play the piano. Mr Darcy stands near her and they discuss his inability to talk to strangers.



#### Extended Essay Question

Pride and vanity are themes that occur throughout the novel. How does Austen explore these themes in this chapter?



#### Exam Tip

The themes of pride and class occur throughout the book. Examine

### Chapter 32

#### Summary

While sitting alone the next morning, Elizabeth is surprised to receive a visit from Mr Darcy. In conversation, she asks him why his party left Netherfield so suddenly the previous evening. He claims that Bingley may give up Netherfield. Charlotte arrives back from a visit to Mr Darcy and claims that Mr Darcy 'must be in love' with Elizabeth for having called on the previous evening 'on the way' (p. 175). In response, Elizabeth concludes that Darcy must simply be bored 'finding nothing to do' (p. 175). However, Darcy soon makes further visits to Hunsford at Elizabeth's house but generally sits 'without opening his lips' (p. 176).

#### Commentary

We witness again in these chapters as Darcy returns to the scene, some surprising developments in Elizabeth and him. She teases him but he is notably warmly disposed to her provocations. Perhaps the strength of his growing admiration for her is best expressed in his comment, 'I never see you perform to strangers' (p. 171). This remark tells us that perhaps quite a lot of his arrogance and pride are actually shyness, social awkwardness, and a way we sense when they speak to each other, as if each has something reserved for the someone special in their lives. Darcy is making a claim to know Elizabeth in a quite an intimate way; ironically, Lizzy is looking to see if he really loves Lady Catherine.



#### Extended Essay Question

Examine why Darcy is often silent when he is around Elizabeth and explain how his silence to build up comedy, suspense and tension in her narrative.

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## Chapters 33 and 34 – Mr Darcy Proposes

### Chapter 33

Elizabeth keeps accidentally meeting Mr Darcy in the park, where he insists on talking to her. She then meets Colonel Fitzwilliam who mentions Darcy's claim that he is 'the inconveniences of a most imprudent marriage' (p. 181). Elizabeth presumes that he is therefore 'trying to separate Mr Bingley and Jane' (p. 182) and she becomes annoyed and has a headache and doesn't attend Rosings for tea that evening.



#### Extended Essay Question

How do Darcy and Elizabeth's relationship affect other characters in the novel?

### Chapter 34

#### Summary

Elizabeth decides to study the letters Jane has written to her since her stay at Rosings. Each letter fails to convey the 'cheerfulness' which she usually associates with Jane. She is then astonished when Mr Darcy calls to see her and tells her he loves her.

Due to her 'deeply rooted dislike' of him, Elizabeth becomes angry and tells Darcy that she has 'never desired' his 'good opinion' and that he has bestowed it 'most unwillingly' (p. 186). She then confronts him about his plans to ruin the relationship between Bingley and her 'most beloved sister' and Darcy admits that he did indeed do 'everything' in his 'power' to separate them (p. 186). She also mentions Mr Wickham and her understanding that Darcy has 'withheld the advantages' which have been 'designed for him' (p. 187). Elizabeth then tells Darcy that he is 'the last man in the world' she would want to marry and he leaves the house while she begins to cry (p. 189).

#### Commentary

Elizabeth's blindness to Darcy's growing intimacy is both comical and a reflection of her pride and prejudices stop her from seeing what is really going on. She fancied Jane, whereas the more realistic and pragmatic Charlotte Lucas sees his behaviour for what it is. 'He must be in love with you.' Moreover, Charlotte knows that Darcy has political influence in the church and a match between her friend Lizzy and him would be a great advantage.

Convinced by rereading Jane's letters and talking to Colonel Fitzwilliam that Bingley and Jane are in a deeply hostile frame of mind and highly prejudiced against her, Elizabeth proposes to him. To modern readers his proposal sounds odd and arrogant.

In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you. (p. 185)

Elizabeth's reaction is comical: '(her) astonishment was beyond expression, and she hardly seems romantic – I'm doing this against my will – but modern readers can appreciate his words 'ardently I admire and love you' are (p. 185). People tend to

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quite carelessly, but Jane Austen's serious characters do not and a word like weight in her work because it is used so sparingly. Of course, there is come interesting way, Darcy's proposal, though passionate and sincere, is not dis is full of thoughts about himself. Darcy goes on to declare how he is lowering himself in social terms – his sense of 'her inferiority' – and reveals himself again as a snob, riding for a fall, but the huge difference is he is in love, and does deeply care, and, as Elizabeth goes on to realise, he is making sacrifices to propose to her in a way that only underlines a depth of real feeling (p. 185).

#### Active Learning

List the reasons why Darcy's proposal is so different from the others.

Elizabeth's rejection, and her apology for awakening in him uncutting, and she throws back at him his comments by suggesting that his st deep if he has had such reservations. She is hurt; she wounds him back. He reduced to silence. With the norms of the time where much could not be always on propriety and the sense that behaviour in public at least a large degree of this is powerfully intense stuff. She tells him that she could because of what he did to her sister in splitting up her relationship. Darcy h done so, but his words, 'Towards *him* I have been kinder than towards mys Elizabeth the more. She cannot hear the passion in his words for her, the si only the insult and the confirmation it makes to her of his treatment of his Wickham and her view that Darcy has treated him badly, and finishes with world' whom she would ever marry (p. 188). There may be some irony in th because she does marry him of course in the end, but because perhaps it s since she met him, she has been in some way measuring him up for marria stands the obvious meaning on its head, but think of the intensity and con and it is possible to speculate at least that maybe Elizabeth has been lookin even if in a negative sense. He composes himself and leaves, but what is als both characters are trapped in some ways by their pride and prejudices, ye for each other argues for another kind of outcome in which two such passio and will one day recognise each other. Their feelings will overcome their limitations, their mutually wounded pride, just as eventually their understanding will match their passions.

#### Debate Prompt

*Darcy is justified in feeling ashamed of Elizabeth.*



#### Extended Essay Question

In what ways do both characters display pride and prejudice in this chapter?

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## Chapter 35 – A Letter from Darcy

### Summary

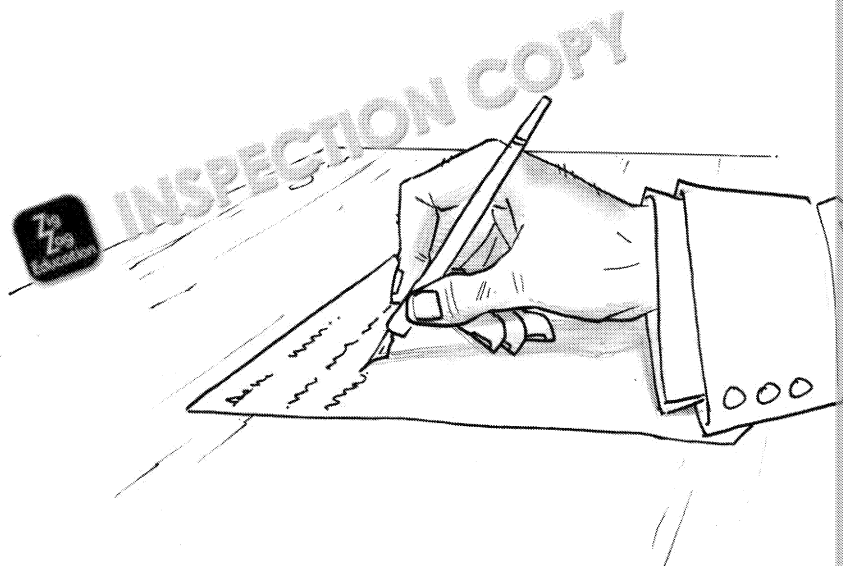
Darcy gives Elizabeth a letter in which he admits that he encouraged Bingley didn't believe she felt any 'sentiment' towards him and therefore, believed 'connection' (pp. 192–193). Darcy also notes that the younger Bennet sister 'total want of propriety' but he praises Jane and Elizabeth for portraying the family (p. 193). Darcy continues by claiming that he took efforts to ensure the Hertfordshire and that along with Caroline Bingley, prevented him from knowing London. Darcy then discusses Mr Wickham and states that his father wanted 'valuable family living' and 'legacy of one thousand pounds' from his estate. Wickham didn't actually want to be a clergyman and instead, took three thousand from Darcy, claiming he wanted to study law but in reality, Wickham merely 'dissipation' (p. 195). After three years, Darcy claims that Wickham wrote to him and stating his intentions to be ordained. Darcy claims that his refusal to do so was Wickham's 'revenge' of him. He concludes his letter by discussing Wickham's sister Georgiana one year beforehand, as a revenge tactic which would also cost her fortune of thirty thousand pounds.

### Commentary

We do not often see into the thinking of other characters apart from Elizabeth, dominated by Austen's authorial voice and Elizabeth's perspective on things through the convention of a letter, to see what Mr Darcy has been thinking. As novels were written entirely in the form of letters, giving the writer the ability to be clear, but the subtleties of the third person narrator allow the writer to move from one character to another while being able to direct our responses even more by having them reflect on the novel itself. In Austen's hands, this is immensely clever, but she still relies on the characters and they often tell us a lot about the writer – particularly here and with Lydia.

Her reading and rereading the letter here advance our understanding of his character; it also symbolises her beginning to reread or review events from a less partial, prejudiced or personal point of view. Leading her, in the next chapter, to reflect, 'How differently did everything now appear...' (p. 201).

**Active Learning**  
In groups, discuss the letter when Elizabeth reads it through the letter.



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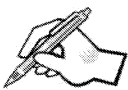
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## Chapters 36, 37 and 38 – Time to Part

### Chapter 36

Elizabeth considers Darcy's letter and views his style as 'haughty' and 'all pride'. Though she feels little sympathy for Darcy regarding his treatment of Jane, with the news about Wickham but begins to realise that his portrayal of Darcy. Elizabeth also realises that Jane's modest behaviour around Bingley probably 'complacency' rather than 'sensitivity' (p. 202). Elizabeth also feels ashamed of Darcy's 'mortifying' reference to her family but is 'soothed' by his written defence of Jane (p. 202).



#### Extended Essay Question

Elizabeth remarks 'My vanity... has been my folly' (p. 202). As the text develops, how do Elizabeth and Darcy reflect more deeply on events in this chapter?



### Chapter 37

Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam leave Rosings and Lady Catherine invites them to dinner. At dinner, Elizabeth explains that she too must leave for Longbourn so she has 'unjustly' treated Darcy and reads his letter in private so many times by heart (p. 206). At this time, Elizabeth doesn't feel 'the slightest inclination' to reflect on Darcy's claim that Bingley's affection for Jane is genuine (p. 206).



#### Active Learning Task

Pick out all the ways in this chapter that Elizabeth thinks of others and tries to be fair even during her own trials.



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## Chapter 38

### Summary

Before Elizabeth and Maria leave Hunsford, Mr Collins tells Elizabeth how he will come to stay. Maria and Elizabeth travel to London where they meet with Jane and Elizabeth considers when might be the best moment to tell her sister about Darcy.

### Commentary

She grew absolutely ashamed of herself. – Of neither Darcy nor Wickham could she think, without feeling that she had been blind, partial, prejudiced, ignorant.

In some kinds of fiction, the crisis or moment of change is on events and actions, and this is true too of Austen's work where marriage or failure to marry constitute the key action. But her novel is also a psychological one, and here the crisis is one of character, judgement and vision – much more realistic than the actions of most adventure stories. Elizabeth even comes to realise that Darcy's view of Jane – he had not suspected any depth of attachment, reflects the characteristic of her sister that she has half been aware of herself and which Charlotte had warned of – namely that Jane had not made her affections clear enough. Elizabeth is a taught a lesson in humility – humbling her pride, and she is made to confront her prejudices. That she has the ability to recognise these, and change, unlike some characters who can never see things or themselves clearly, is a sign of her maturation – growing up – her ability to reason, and to correct ideas against experience, key things in Austen's world. Elizabeth indeed launches into a systematic reflection on so much, including the failures of her own family – even her father whom she reflects would 'never exert himself' (p. 206) to put things right. This may seem pompous, but Elizabeth's disillusionment – the breaking of her ideas of things – actually gives her the leading moral authority in her family, and even take on her father and challenge him over Lydia. Her reward, in due course, is to marry the man whom, we can sense she has always had some underlying fascination and admiration for, but which can now be matched by rational (reasoning) appreciation.

Some critics believe that the second part of the novel is not as interesting as the first. Elizabeth's critical energies are somehow tamed as she comes round to accept Darcy's point of view; but he has to change too and her spirit retains its independence. Revisions of opinion are significant, and some suggest not completely convinced. As we have suggested, the subtext of the relationship to be at work already before the marriage. Elizabeth's coming to love Darcy may not seem such a shift, certainly not a complete one.

There is one mark that is especially worth noting here and that is Elizabeth's decision to end their stay. She comments, 'how much I shall have to conceal' (p. 210). She has never seen, a very different one from ours where the vulnerability and mark of the heart demanded much silence. Elizabeth is forced into silence to protect herself and her strength and integrity, and toughness in going through all this alone further.



#### Extended Essay Question

How have recent events changed Elizabeth's character and opinions?

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## Chapters 39, 40 and 41 – Lydia B

### Chapter 39

On their way back to Longbourn, Elizabeth, Jane and Maria meet Lydia and them that Mr Wickham is sure to remain single, since Mary King (whom the him) has moved to Liverpool. On returning to Longbourn, Mrs Bennet is ple Elizabeth while Lydia talks about Wickham a great deal over dinner.



#### Extended Essay Question

How does Austen suggest Lydia's immaturity in this chapter?

### Chapter 40

Elizabeth tells Jane about Darcy's proposal and letter but decides not to include the facts about Bingley. The sisters decide that they should keep the information about Wickham's true character as a secret for the time being. The chapter ends with Mrs Bennet telling Elizabeth that Bingley 'use manner by leaving for London and not returning (pp. 219–220).

#### Active Learning

Discuss what the you think they ha



#### Extended Essay Question

'One has got all the goodness, and the other the appearance of it' (p. with reference to Darcy and Wickham. Where else in the novel so far their appearance?

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## Chapter 41

### Summary

As the regiment prepare to leave Meryton, Lydia and Kitty grow dismayed at the fact that they shall soon no longer be able to meet with officers such as Mr Wickham and they badly want to follow the officers to Brighton but Mr Bennet is strongly against this. However, Lydia is ecstatic to receive a letter from the colonel's wife Mrs Forster, inviting her to accompany her to Brighton. Elizabeth decides to warn Mr Bennet about the 'disadvantage' which will arise if Lydia attends Brighton, but he declares that Lydia should go, since the trip will teach her 'her own insignificance' (pp. 223–224). Prior to Lydia and the regiment leaving Meryton, Wickham attends Longbourn for dinner, and attempts to seduce Darcy but Elizabeth refuses to join in with him.

### Commentary

Austen switches the focus back to Lydia and Wickham when Elizabeth returns with confirmation of at least some of Darcy's views in Lydia's excitable and foolish behaviour. Austen invests her with an energy and truthfulness that prevent her from being completely out of passion running beyond reason. As they travel back in the carriage, Lydia is 'crammed in' (p. 212) in typical fashion. She displays her self-absorption and carelessness before an inconvenience now strikes the reader as foreshadowing (anticipating) her carelessness, confirmed in the disputed scheme of hers to go to Brighton. Lydia's

Elizabeth's confession of what has happened to Jane is worth careful reading. In the playfulness of tone, we can note just how much respect for Darcy comes through in her father about Lydia's increasingly foolish behaviour, and the unsuspecting but pointed comments that perhaps some of Lizzy's lovers have been 'frightened away' perhaps underline the way Lizzy now feels about Darcy's view of her and her need to help her sister and warn her father are sincere. Typically and disastrously, Elizabeth's danger by saying, 'Lydia will never be easy till she has exposed herself in so public a manner' following chapter suggests that Mr Bennet has made a poor marriage himself. In trying to correct his wife's foolishness, or protect her from setting the wrong example psychologically, Austen is showing how her heroine is moving on, distancing herself from her father as she finds her own feet and muses consciously and unconsciously on her future as Darcy. Put simply Lizzy grows up and accepts some of the responsibility for

### Debate Prompt

*Mr Bennet sabotages the futures of his daughters. Discuss.*

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## Chapters 42 and 43 – A Visit to Pemberley

### Chapter 42

The relationship between Mr and Mrs Bennet is described in more detail and it is revealed that he does not feel any 'real affection' for his wife (p. 228). Since Lydia has gone away, Kitty and Mrs Bennet constantly complain about the 'dullness of everything around them' and though Lydia sends letters to her mother, these are 'always long expected and always very short' (pp. 229–230). Accompanied by her aunt and uncle (Mr and Mrs Gardiner), Elizabeth travels to Derbyshire where her aunt suggests they should visit the grounds at Pemberley – Darcy's home.

#### Debate



Knowing more about Mr Bennet's marriage makes us feel sympathetic towards him and his treatment of his wife and children. Discuss.



### Chapter 43

#### Summary

Elizabeth arrives at Pemberley and is impressed by the 'beautiful wood' with the 'handsome stone building' of the house itself (p. 235). She decides that 'there might be something!' and almost feels regret for shunning Darcy (p. 235). The house is shown to her by Darcy's housekeeper Mrs Reynolds who shows them painting master and the 'very wild' Mr Wickham (p. 237). Discussing Darcy, Mrs Reynolds says he is 'affable to the poor' and that she has 'never heard a cross word from him'.

#### Commentary

As Lydia leaves the scene, and Lizzy's doubt about her parents grow, the Gardiners take her off to Derbyshire where Darcy's great country estate cannot escape the rejection of him. As mentioned already, the Gardiners are surrogate parents. Their movement in and out of the story, and their good sense contrast with the selfishness of her father, and the idle chatter or blundering of her mother. There is no conversation about visiting Darcy's estate, but there is fascination, a 'great deal of curiosity' that shows how the relationship is still active (p. 232).

#### Extended Essay Question



How do Elizabeth's feelings for Darcy begin to change and how is this reflected in the text?

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## Chapter 43—A Visit to Pemberley (C)

### Summary

Darcy unexpectedly appears and he and Elizabeth hold an awkward conversation. Elizabeth realises the 'impropriety' of her visit to Pemberley and feels 'uncomfortable'. Walking around the grounds, Elizabeth longs to know 'whether, in defiance of her friends, she is really dear to him' and Darcy appears again and asks to be introduced to Mr and Mrs Gardiner. Elizabeth obliges (p. 242). Darcy shows excellent manners when interacting with Elizabeth, dispelling her presumption that he only wants to meet them because he mistakes them for 'people of fashion' (p. 244).

Elizabeth continues to think about Darcy and his motives for behaving so politely. It seems impossible that he should still 'love' her (p. 244). After some time, Darcy writes to tell her that he did not really think ill of her and he would be arriving at the house that day. His friends, including Mr and Mrs Gardiner and his sisters, are to join him the next day and he will introduce them to Elizabeth, since Georgiana 'particularly wishes to be acquainted with her' (p. 245).

After realising that Darcy does not 'think really ill of her' despite her past behaviour, Elizabeth decides to walk with him and they share an awkward 'silence', though ultimately broken by 'the utmost politeness' (pp. 245–246). As they leave Pemberley, Mrs Gardiner asks Elizabeth to describe Darcy as 'so disagreeable' since, as Mr Gardiner states, Darcy 'behaved, polite, and unassuming' (p. 246). Elizabeth then explains the true nature of Darcy's character in order to 'say something in vindication' of Darcy's rumoured behaviour towards her (p. 246).



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## Commentary

Elizabeth, although assured the family are absent, of course now encounters the house, the praise of his servants and her own changed awareness all contribute to her feelings for him.

- There is clear symbolism in Lizzy seeing the pictures of Darcy, and of course the first time, just as when she read the letter she heard him for the first time. One of the most interesting sentences in the book is when she looks at the picture of him and notices the smile on his face. 'It arrested her...with such a smile over the face, which she sometimes to have seen, when he looked at her' (p. 240). Not just a pleasant surprise, sense, reserved for her, occasioned by looking at her. Can this be confirmation of the feelings she actually had for him earlier but were dismissed because of her own prejudice? Perhaps – or perhaps it is the adjustment of another prejudice. Her insight at last not just of him *but also of herself and what her feelings are*.
- Pemberley represents a late eighteenth-century idea of perfection in a way that meant something particular to her culture. In later Austen's time, there was a growing preference for wild landscape that imitated an idea of human nature trying to escape the restrictions of reason. In her landscape as there is balance in her admired ideal of human nature are 'neither formal, nor falsely adorned' (p. 235). Here is a kind of admired simplicity, controlled but not artificial – the sort of values we can see in her where openness and cultivation exist comfortably side by side.
- Some find the fulsome (over the top) praise of the Pemberley servants and her feelings, difficult. When she comments, 'to be mistress of Pemberley now has sometimes occasioned criticism that her love for Darcy is crystallised in material worth. While this cynical interpretation is easy to dismiss in so much as it reminds us of the more complex priorities that a female had to negotiate. More difficult perhaps to get round is the reappearance of Darcy himself and who has lost perhaps all of his old arrogance (which is still there for Lizzy after she has rejected him). The famous BBC adaptation of the story managed the apparent transformation of his character with his plunge into the sea (much appreciated by female admirers!), symbolising a kind of rite of passage where he, like Elizabeth, has lost some of his prejudices, and that now the two can understand each other, they can appear to be what they always had the potential to be. They can know their own feelings but also respect and be tender to each other.

### Debate Prompt

*Is Darcy's character change convincing. Why / why not? Discuss.*

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## Chapters 44 and 45 – Good and Bad

### Chapter 44

Elizabeth meets Miss Darcy and despite reports of Georgiana being 'exceedingly proud', Elizabeth realises that she is in fact just 'exceedingly shy' (p. 249). Bingley also greets Elizabeth and she finds it difficult to resent him due to his manners and 'good-humoured ease' (p. 249). Elizabeth carefully observes the behaviour of Bingley and Georgiana and is soon 'satisfied' that nothing had 'occurred between them that could justify the hopes of his sister' (p. 250). Mr and Mrs Gardiner guess that 'Darcy is very much in love' with their niece but they do not discuss this with her (p. 252). It also emerges that 'on his return to Derbyshire', Wickham 'left many debts behind him, which afterwards Mr Darcy discharged' (p. 252).



#### Active Learning Task

Why do you think Georgiana is an important character in this section of the book? Write a profile of this character and why she is important.

### Chapter 45

#### Summary

Elizabeth and Mr and Mrs Gardiner attend Pemberley for dinner and Bingley joins them. Darcy attempts to initiate a conversation between his sister and Elizabeth but she interrupts by discussing the militia who were present in Meryton and thus their friendship with Mr Wickham. As Elizabeth responds to this 'ill-natured attack' Darcy has refrained from telling anyone about Georgiana's elopement with Wickham (p. 257). After Elizabeth and her relatives leave Pemberley, Miss Darcy goes to Darcy and Georgiana but they refuse to agree with her remarks.

#### Commentary

The process of revision – re-vision – seeing again and adjusting her prejudice, noting that Darcy's sister is made interestingly vulnerable. Rather like Lady Catherine, Austen is perhaps suggesting how each family has its strengths and weaknesses. Georgiana is not an unattractive character like Lady Catherine's daughter, as Elizabeth thinks at one point for Darcy. She is just someone who notably lacks Lizzy's conventional representation of a perfect sister. Just like Lydia, she is vulnerable but also a suitable companion for Lizzy, lacking her confidence but ready to learn and be awed for her. In a male-dominated world, sisterly relationships were empowering and provided a counterbalance to men's authority. Austen's relationship with her sister is one of the most significant in her life and this is often reflected in her writing.



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#### Extended Essay Question

Why do the Bingley sisters remain so hostile to Elizabeth?

## Chapter 46 – The Elopement

### Summary

Elizabeth receives two letters from Jane, the first of which explains the ‘uncertainty’ that Lydia has eloped to Scotland with Wickham (p. 260). The second letter ‘brings news’ that the couple may not be in Scotland since it is likely that Wickham ‘will not marry Lydia at all’ (p. 261). The letter also states that Colonel Forster ‘has seen the couple but without success and that he believes Wickham is ‘not a man to be trusted’ (p. 262). Bennet is ‘really ill, and keeps to her room’ while Mr Bennet is very angry with Elizabeth for ‘concealing their attachment’ (p. 262). Though Jane is ‘distressed’ that her sister is in ‘distressing scenes’, she asks that Elizabeth return home ‘as soon as possible’ (p. 262).



After reading the letters, Elizabeth runs to the door, hoping to find Mr and Mrs Gardiner before they get too far from the house but she is surprised when Mr Gardiner appears at the front door. After instructing a servant to go after the Gardiner, Elizabeth is ‘miserably ill’ and Darcy stays with her as she cries and tells him about Lydia. Darcy is ‘grieved’ and ‘shocked’ at the news but promises to keep it a secret. Elizabeth is ‘convinced’ that this ‘unhappy truth’ is unlikely to remain a private matter for long (pp. 262-263). After Mr Gardiner has left, the Gardiners return to the house and together with Elizabeth, they go to Longbourn.

### Commentary

Lydia’s running off with Wickham is a shocking event and she blames herself in part for it. Elizabeth is a more complex character (although she is not deceived about it like everyone else at first). In this part of the book’s emerging relationship, Elizabeth is more of a comfort and eventually take action to help Lydia. In this part of the book he plays the more traditional role of hero comforting a heroine. Elizabeth is a more awkward, thoughtful, challenging and difficult figure he is earlier. Elizabeth’s help over Lydia will end their developing relationship and it helps make clear to Elizabeth that she has no esteem for him.

To some modern readers the fuss might seem disproportionate, but reader should remember the vulnerability of women of her class then. In the eyes of her society, unmarried women of her class were a source of disgrace and scandal because marriage was the only way to secure financial and social security for a girl. To modern eyes, when Lydia runs off

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him, her behaviour hardly seems as catastrophic as the novel suggests, but in a different context that did not just oppress women and their sexuality, but that Lydia is ruining some of her most important life chances and choices by running away, cheapening and degrading herself. Elizabeth observes moreover that 'Lydia's encouragement to attach herself to any body' (p. 266). Wickham's character in the novels, the rather irresponsible male seducer. Lydia is his foolish victim, but she is also driven by her own passions. In a recent edition of the novel, the writer Patricia Meyer Schiller argues that novelists before Austen tended to represent male sexuality as the destructive force, while Lydia contributes to her own downfall, how she is up for sex and adventure as a female victim. In advancing the cause of women by representing their claims in more complex ways, even Lydia's behaviour plays its part in Austen's novel.

Some of the writing in this part of the novel seems perhaps less ambitious and more conventional than earlier in the book. Lydia's disgrace – if it is that – obviously forces Darcy to prove himself and overcome his final prejudices against the women of the Bennet family. He is forced to go down into it and take on responsibility for the attractive characters; and, of course, his connection with Wickham brings back the story of Lydia's seduction, however, and the way Austen writes about it with a moral comment is not unusual in the writing of the time. What is really fascinating is her very obvious forwardness in the novel and her complete lack of shame. It is just that Austen represents female passion so tellingly, but that in some ways the moralising that goes on at times that is really worth more thought, and is discussed below.

### Debate Prompt

*Lydia is foolish and immature rather than knowingly going against the traditions of her time. Discuss.*

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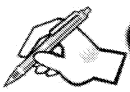




## Chapters 47 and 48 – Searching for

### Chapter 47

Elizabeth and the Gardiners arrive at Longbourn and are greeted by a tearful Mr Bennet, who tells them that there has still not been any news from Lydia and Wickham. Mrs Bennet and Mr Gardiner intend to join her husband in London and help to search for the couple. Elizabeth believes that some violence will break out between Mr Bennet and Wickham. After dinner, Elizabeth tells the family the fact that they failed to inform their family about Wickham's true reputation. This chapter also features the letter which Lydia wrote to Harriet Forster, dated 15th March, which 'surprise' everyone by going to Gretna Green to marry Wickham, who she calls 'my dear' (p. 276). Elizabeth advises Jane that 'under such a misfortune as this, one can hardly be too cautious of one's neighbours' (p. 278).



#### Essay Question

Does the use of language in Lydia's letter suggest her foolishness?

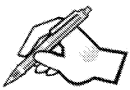
### Chapter 48

#### Summary

The villagers of Meryton gossip about Mr Wickham, who they consider to be 'a man of the world' since he left 'every tradesman in the place' in debt (pp. 278–279). Mr Wickham writes to Longbourn, asking how he might find out about Wickham's 'connections', but Elizabeth has not heard from her only link to such information. The Bennets also receive a letter from Mr Collins regarding Lydia's 'licentiousness' and his intention to disown her for her 'heinous offence' (pp. 281–282). It also emerges that Mr Wickham has debts in Brighton. Mr Bennet arrives back home and admits he is 'to blame' for not telling Kitty that he will be a stricter father in future (p. 284).

#### Commentary

Much of the most revealing parts of these chapters are the letters the family receive from Mr Wickham and from Mr Collins. Again, note the point made earlier about how they all reveal the minds of individual characters whose private thoughts we rarely share. Elizabeth's silliness are underlined when her letter begins, 'You will laugh when you know the end of this story' (p. 276). When she comments on the whole affair, 'What a good joke it will be' (p. 278), it shows a complete lack of thought, reflection or remorse. It underlines her vulnerability to the power of passion over reason, and prejudice (judging by appearances) over experience in human affairs. It is almost as if Lydia's story runs against the grain of the book, and in more ways than one. Collins writes to his family too and his empty sympathy and appalling judgement that 'The death of your daughter would have been a great blessing in comparison' (p. 281) exposes his sham Christianity, and his worship not of principles or compassion but of social appearances. He even congratulates himself on avoiding a marriage to a family who have now sunk themselves so much in the eyes of society.



#### Extended Essay Question

How have Mr Bennet's views of Lydia been prejudiced up until this point?

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## Chapters 49 and 50 – The Economics of

### Chapter 49

Mr Bennet receives a letter from Mr Gardiner, which states that he has found a suitable match for Lydia. In order to secure the marriage, Mr Gardiner explains that money Lydia will eventually inherit from Mr Bennet, he must also give her a 'pension' of £1000 per annum during his lifetime (p. 286). After discussing the matter with Elizabeth, Mr Bennet explains that regardless of his own contribution, Mr Gardiner is likely to have to give £1000 a year in money to Wickham in order to ensure he will marry Lydia. Understanding that Elizabeth will inform their mother, Mary and Kitty about the news and Mrs Bennet will be 'happy!' and begins to tell her daughters about the expensive garments which will be required for the wedding (p. 290).



#### Extended Essay Question

What is the connection between marriage and money in the novel? Why is it necessary for Mr Bennet to give Wickham money in this way?

### Chapter 50

#### Summary

Mr Bennet considers how he will repay the debt to Mr Gardiner and the fact that the 'arrangement' has been 'done with so little inconvenience to himself' since his 'pocket allowance' exceeds the one hundred pounds he is agreeing to pay Wickham. Mr Bennet also explains to his wife that the Wickhams will not be welcome at Longbourn and that he will not pay for Lydia's wedding clothes, to which Mrs Bennet is in 'horror' (p. 294). Meanwhile, Elizabeth feels upset that Darcy is unlikely to be marrying 'the man he so justly scorned' (p. 295). Mr Bennet receives another letter from Mr Gardiner stating that Wickham is leaving the corps to join the army and that Lydia and Wickham are now living in the north of the country, much to Mrs Bennet's upset. Elizabeth and Mr Bennet tell their father that Lydia 'should be noticed on her marriage by her parents' at Longbourn after the ceremony (p. 297).

#### Commentary

Money and the social consequences of Lydia's and Wickham's behaviour do play a significant role in the novel. It is worth remembering that, however much moralising goes on, Austen is realistic about the facts of marriage then, although that does not mean she approves of them. Mr Bennet's attempted severity to his daughter as punishment for her folly, and Mrs Bennet's obsession with buying her clothes and 'setting her off' continue to display the limitations of how they know how to deal with her and what she has done. There is no way in which Elizabeth can help elsewhere in the book. Elizabeth is so closely identified with the author's feelings that she is almost anything at all, making the best of things, but Austen does invite us to consider the consequences of their actions in great detail. However much their running of the household and perhaps love at least on Lydia's side, the consequences are all bound up with money, recognition, social status, where to live and what livelihood Wickham needs.



#### Extended Essay Question

What do the contrasting reactions of Mr and Mrs Bennet tell us about their attitudes to money and marriage?

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## Chapter 51 – Lydia's Wedding: Wealth

### Summary

Lydia and Wickham arrive at Longbourn after their wedding ceremony and are treated coldly by Mr Bennet who, along with Jane and Elizabeth is 'shocked' by the young couple' (p. 298). Lydia talks unashamedly about her wedding and 'is no longer' and runs out of the room, only to return for dinner, during which Lydia 'get husbands' for her sisters (pp. 299–300). Elizabeth can sense that Wickham is 'not equal to Lydia's for him' (p. 301). The chapter concludes with Lydia announcing her wedding and Elizabeth writes a note to Mrs Gardiner to find out why.



### Commentary

The arrival of the newly-weds at Longbourn is announced at first with just 'They came' (p. 298), the brevity of which speaks volumes about the gap between Lydia and the way they are seen by the rest of the family, with the exception of Mr. Bennet. Lydia is too stuffed full of a misplaced sense of the consequence of the day to realise the implications. Moreover, 'Lydia was Lydia still' (p. 298) – she has learnt nothing from her previous behaviour and complete lack of sensitivity to others' feelings continues to demonstrate her immaturity that do not suggest her future will be easy. We see that Wickham is not equal to her regard for him as Elizabeth has suspected and note how Darcy is in rescuing the situation and attending the marriage for Elizabeth's benefit. Elizabeth does not understand that yet. Lydia's behaviour and treatment may seem harsh to some, but the emphasis on money and status and consequence make clear, Lydia *has lost* a husband. Perhaps the most remarkable thing though is not the traditional warnings about the dangers of passion, especially for women, but the way in which Austen's Lydia is so unrepentant and forward voiced. Even her Wickham seems merely a man who sits near Elizabeth and who tries to continue a relationship that has ended. It is Lydia, even more so than Lizzy who holds our attention, and who does not subside into remorseful caricature.

#### Debate Prompt

Lydia is a more interesting character than Elizabeth.

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#### Extended Essay Question

How does Austen use language to suggest that Lydia is still unashamed of which she has behaved and the way in which she has been judged?

## Chapter 52 – Giving Credit to Darcy

### Summary

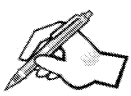
Elizabeth receives a letter from Mrs Gardiner which explains that Mr Darcy supplied Wickham with the payments that Mr Gardiner was previously credited for. Darcy searched for the eloped couple and attempted to encourage Lydia to leave with them and cooperate. Therefore, Darcy decided to offer his finances and convince Wickham to order that the Bennet family's reputation could be saved.

Mrs Gardiner states that Darcy's 'motive' in supplying the couple with money was that he should have made 'Wickham's worthlessness' known to the community. It has been 'impossible for any young woman of character to love or confide in him'. Mrs Gardiner also expresses her anger at Lydia's 'wickedness' and emphasises Darcy's 'pleasing' behaviour and generosity (p. 307).

After reading the letter, Elizabeth feels indebted to Darcy and is described as 'modest' (p. 308). While she is considering how mistaken she has been about Darcy, Mr Wickham approaches her and attempts to cover up the lies he told about Mr Darcy. He embarrasses him by alluding to the facts but states that since they are now friends, they should not 'quarrel about the past' (p. 311).

### Commentary

Darcy's revolution from snob to romantic hero is now complete in Lizzy's eyes. She is indebted to him and how much he has done and how much pride he has. Then Austen gives one last teasing conversation between Wickham and Elizabeth, showing continuing warmth on his side for her and makes us aware again of his character. In some ways rapport with her. Elizabeth, however, is eager really 'only to get on with her manners and attempts to excuse himself remind us of her former prejudice'. She is so readily persuaded by his talk (p. 311). Their relationship is completed with them set side by side with the comment he 'hardly knew how to look' (p. 311) in once the victim of his male wiles, she is now the female victor who reserves ground.



#### Extended Essay Question

Examine the final meeting of Elizabeth and Wickham. How are their relationships changed by these meetings?

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## Chapters 53 and 54 – Bingley's Return

### Chapter 53

Lydia and Wickham depart for Newcastle, leaving Mrs Bennet feeling 'forlorn' on learning that Mr Bingley will be returning to Netherfield to shoot birds, Jane is a little 'distressed' and 'confused' on hearing this news, she feels neither Bingley and will 'leave him to himself' (pp. 313–314). Bingley arrives with Mr Longbourn where, despite her 'dislike of Mr Darcy', Mrs Bennet resolves to Elizabeth feels 'astonishment' at Darcy 'seeking her again' but also feels 'depressed' as her may be 'unshaken' (p. 316). Darcy and Bingley's conversation is rather awkward for a very little while their mother gives the men 'diffident attention' and makes them 'uneasy' (p. 318). As the men are ready to leave, Mrs Bennet reminds Bingley of a promise to 'take a family dinner' with the Bennets (p. 319).



#### Extended Essay Question

How does Mrs Bennet continue to show her foolishness in this chapter, and why is this important?

### Chapter 54

#### Summary

A large party is assembled at the Bennet home, including Bingley, who spends the evening with Elizabeth. Elizabeth struggles to find opportunities to talk with Darcy. After briefly asking Darcy to dance, Elizabeth is placed on a separate card-playing table and is unable to interact with Darcy for the rest of the evening. After the guests have left, Elizabeth lightly teases Jane about her feelings for Bingley.

#### Commentary

Suspense is maintained in this part of the story by the behaviour of Darcy – he is relatively silent in her company, as perhaps he must be with Mrs Bennet to avoid social gaffes amid her contriving to bring Jane and Bingley back together again. It is Darcy who is invited to laugh at Mrs Bennet, yet she is only more clearly playing society games with other characters. Critics disagree on the extent to which Austen is attacking society, but there is clearly no radical (someone who is interested in root and branch change) Mrs Bennet allows her to poke fun at some of the codes by which her society operated as well as targeting an individual.

#### Debate Prompt

Why is Darcy's silence: is it caused by rudeness, embarrassment, or something else?



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## Chapter 55 – Bingley's Proposal

### Summary

Mr Bingley calls at Netherfield alone and accepts an invitation from Mrs Bennet for the following evening. The next day, Bingley arrives early and Mrs Bennet encourages him to stay alone with her without success. After dinner, Mrs Bennet attempts to make the drawing room so that Jane and Bingley can be alone and although they do so politely and with a 'command of countenance', her 'schemes' are 'ineffectual'. Mrs Bennet asks Bingley to come back the following morning to go shooting with her. After the outing, Bingley stays for dinner and later, Elizabeth is surprised to enter the drawing room and Jane in 'earnest conversation' (p. 327). Bingley whispers 'a few words' to Jane before Jane embraces Elizabeth and explains that he has proposed to her (p. 327). Elizabeth then tells her mother the news while Bingley refrains from speaking with Mr Bennet to show respect for 'claim the good wishes and affection of a sister' (p. 328). After a pleasant dinner, Elizabeth conceals her joy. Bingley's engagement gives him 'great pleasure' and Jane tells Elizabeth that she has concealed her joy from him but she hopes they will soon 'be on the way to London' (pp. 329–330).



### Commentary

Wickham and Lydia are soon forgotten by Mrs Bennet when she finds, as she has before, that Jane has been proposed to. Her comment to her eldest daughter that 'I was sure you would not do anything!' (p. 329) betrays once more her materialistic prejudices; Jane's father shows realistic judgement when he recognises their similarity of tempers and that 'nothing will ever be resolved' (p. 329).



#### Extended Essay Question

How does Mrs Bennet become a mouthpiece for many of her society's prejudices in this chapter?

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## Chapter 56 – ‘A Scandalous Falsehood’

### Summary

Lady Catherine de Bourgh makes an uninvited visit to Netherfield, where she talks about the house and grounds and refuses to be civil with Mrs Bennet. After a walk with her around the grounds, Lady Catherine explains that the purpose of her visit is a ‘report of a most alarming nature’ – the ‘scandalous falsehood’ that Darcy and Elizabeth are engaged (p. 334). Lady Catherine asks Elizabeth a series of rude and personal questions about Darcy, to which she refuses to provide answers. After explaining that Darcy and her daughter have been ‘intended for each other’ since birth, Lady Catherine finally tells Elizabeth that she is ‘a young woman without family, connections, or fortune’ and therefore, is unsuitable for her nephew (pp. 335–337). Elizabeth calmly admits that she is not engaged to Darcy, but refuses to tell Lady Catherine that she will ‘never enter into such an engagement’ (p. 337). Having ‘insulted’ Elizabeth ‘in every possible method’, Lady Catherine leaves feeling ‘seriously displeased’ (pp. 338–339). When her daughter comes home, Mrs Bennet wonders why their ‘prodigiously civil’ guest departed without returning to the house to ‘rest herself’ (p. 339).

### Commentary

In terms of the plotting of the novel, with Lizzy and the reader still more or less over the outcome of the Darcy–Elizabeth relationship, the arrival of Lady Catherine’s challenge to their marriage that is still not finalised is a master stroke. Perhaps in other ways, but most important in the book, for in it Lizzy’s defence of a possible match between Darcy and herself represents what the critic John Carey has called ‘the defeat of aristocratic pretensions by the aspirant middle-class’. It also represents a final defeat of prejudice, class-based or otherwise – by truth – Darcy and Lizzy care for one another in ways that must overcome the rules of society. Lizzy’s replies to Lady Catherine, particularly her comment that Darcy is ‘a gentleman’s daughter; so far we are equal’ (p. 337), represent something that Elizabeth challenges all Lady Catherine’s arrogant sense of her class superiority. In this chapter, she recovers some of the subversive energy, the critical spirit that made her so attractive a heroine earlier in the book. Lady Catherine asks her if she knows her place, claiming the privilege she no longer deserves (p. 335). Elizabeth retorts with ‘I am not a lady, and I have no business to concern myself with your concerns and matters. I am only a private person, and I am entitled to know *mine*’ (p. 335). That italicised possessive pronoun, that resolute ‘I’, that gives her indeed power to herself, marks in this chapter much both Elizabeth, and indeed the novel’s own conscience, independence of society’s expectations and proprieties, and it speaks to us all of one of the novel’s enduring powers of appeal, namely that it orders its world according to its own sense of right and wrong, not that of others.

#### Debate Prompt

*This chapter is the most important in the novel.*

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#### Extended Essay Question

How is Lady Catherine’s family pride undermined in her behaviour here?

## Chapter 57 – ‘So Disgraceful a Match’

### Summary

Mr Bennet approaches Elizabeth with a letter from Mr Collins, which warns him that Lady Catherine ‘does not look on the match’ between Darcy and Elizabeth ‘with a friendly eye’ (p. 343). Elizabeth pretends to join in with her father’s ‘pleasantry’ over the letter, but in reality, she feels ‘mortified’ as he points out that Mr Collins’ letter is ‘absurd’, since Darcy has ‘probably never looked at’ Elizabeth ‘in his life’ (p. 343). In his letter, Mr Collins also discusses the ‘sad business’ of Lydia’s marriage to Wickham and the chapter concludes with Mr Bennet jokingly asking Elizabeth if Lady Catherine has visited ‘to obtain her consent’ to Darcy’s rumoured proposal (pp. 343–344).

### Commentary

One of the delights of reading Austen’s work is that she is always alive to the complexity of human character and situation. Here Elizabeth is unable to echo her father as he reads a letter from Mr Collins disapproving of any potential match between Darcy and Elizabeth, slavishly echoing Lady Catherine’s imperious example. Mr Bennet, who is now lying in bed, comments: ‘For what do we live, but to make sport for our neighbours, and laugh at them in our turn?’ (pp. 343–344). Such a comment in context is crucial. It illuminates a wider critical or satirical purpose in Austen which is to expose the dishonesty of the social hierarchy. Elizabeth cannot speak for she has not been formally asked, but her father’s comment reveals her former prejudices, and the mixture of the serious and the comic enables Austen to explore feelings and awkwardness, and remind us of the need to be humble and not to judge situations that we often fail to see properly because of earlier failures of judgement.

#### Active Learning Task

Discuss in pairs why Austen delays the climax of the novel and why she allows Mr Bennet to tease Elizabeth about Darcy.

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## Chapter 58 – Elizabeth and Darcy

### Summary

Darcy returns to Longbourn and takes a walk with Elizabeth, who finally conveys an 'unexampled kindness' to her 'poor sister' Lydia (p. 345). Darcy explains the situation before asking if her 'feelings are still what they were last April' since his own feelings are 'unchanged' (p. 346). Elizabeth informs him that 'her sentiments' have 'undoubtedly changed' and describes her 'pleasure' in knowing he still cares for her (p. 346). Darcy, 'violently in love', to the extent that a recent visit from his aunt, Lady Catherine, has prompted him to pursue Elizabeth further (p. 346). Elizabeth and Darcy continue to discuss and explain how their attitudes towards each other have changed over time. Darcy reads the letter he wrote and describes it as 'bringing as a 'selfish and overbearing' man, but one altered by his 'dearest friend Elizabeth!' (p. 349). Darcy also explains the situation about his 'interference' in his relationship with Jane and states that Bingley



### Extended Essay Question

Why is Mr Collins so supportive of Lady Catherine's views?



### Commentary

Ironically we learn that Lady Catherine's mission to Longbourn has taught Elizabeth that Lizzy may be wrong. The whole chapter represents a kind of warm re-evaluation of each explanation and ask forgiveness for their past misunderstandings and mistakes. It prepares us for the happy ending in which reason and feeling now meet in



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## Chapter 59 – Elizabeth Explains

### Summary

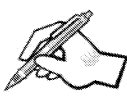
After their walk, Elizabeth and Darcy return to the house for dinner. Elizabeth's news about her engagement to Darcy will be a difficult task because, except for him, Elizabeth confesses to Jane after dinner and though she initially reacts 'satisfied' when Elizabeth proclaims 'her solemn assurances of attachment' she informs her sister about Darcy's 'share in Lydia's marriage' (p. 354). The next day Mr Darcy is annoyed when the 'disagreeable' Mr Darcy returns with Bingley but he and Elizabeth's consent should be asked in the course of the evening' (pp. 354–355). Mr Bennet, who then asks to see Elizabeth in private regarding her engagement, expresses his fear that Elizabeth is 'out of' her 'senses' for 'accepting' a man who she had formerly disliked. Elizabeth assures her father that she loves the 'perfectly amiable' Darcy (p. 356) and explains the truth behind the payments relating to Wickham and Lydia's marriage. Mr Bennet, who is relieved, tells her she will not have to repay the debt. On hearing the news of her engagement, Mr Bennet declares Darcy to be a 'handsome', 'charming man of years!' (p. 357).

### Commentary

Elizabeth now has to endure one last trial as a kind of light punishment for her former prejudices and her secrecy, however necessary, in facing her family's acceptance of a man she had seemed to dislike. Her father's examination of Darcy shows him acting and talking in a responsible way, not hiding behind irony. Darcy is reminded in his earnestness of how he feels he has made an unequal marriage – respect for his wife had rapidly disappeared and he entreats Lizzy not to mind, however grand and wealthy the status of Darcy may be.

Elizabeth assures him that she loves and respects him, and so Mr Bennet is left to tease her, like the novelist, while warmly congratulating her and approving of her match. Mrs Bennet's shallowness shines again as she thinks only of the material wealth Lizzy must have.

**Active Learning**  
Highlight the words that show love and esteem.



### Extended Essay Question

How does Mr Bennet prove his real affection for Elizabeth here?

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## Chapter 60 – Taking Stock of the Story

The chapter begins with a conversation between Darcy and Elizabeth where Darcy admits 'his having fallen in love with her' (p. 359). Darcy cannot recall a particular moment when he first admired Elizabeth but describes feeling as if he had fallen 'in the middle' of it, 'not knowing how or why' (p. 359). They also discuss reasons why Darcy became attracted to Elizabeth, including her 'impertinence', the 'liveliness of (her) mind' and the fact that her behaviour was 'unlike any woman' (p. 359). Darcy also claims that by attempting to separate Elizabeth from her family, he actually provided valuable 'intelligence' which gave him 'hope' that Elizabeth was 'a creature in the world' (p. 361). Meanwhile, Mr Bennet writes to Mr Collins, asking Darcy instead of Lady Catherine, as he feels the former has 'more to give' (p. 362). Darcy's aunt but the contents of the letter are not revealed and soon after, the Collinses are removed from an 'exceedingly angry' Lady Catherine (p. 362). Elizabeth feels 'anxious' about the embarrassing behaviour of Sir William Lucas, Mr Collins and Mrs Philips and contemplates the day when they will 'be removed from society so little people' (p. 362).

### Debate Prompt

How does this chapter suggest strengths in Darcy and Elizabeth's relationship? Discuss.



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## Chapter 61 – Married Life

### Summary

This final chapter discusses how Elizabeth and Jane's marriages have impacted the family, beginning with Mrs Bennet who feels 'delighted pride' at the fact that her 'daughters' are now wed (p. 364). Mr Bennet is described as missing Elizabeth at Pemberley frequently while Jane and Bingley have moved away from Netherfield 'miles' of the Darcys (p. 364). Kitty has shown 'improvement' through spending time with her two eldest sisters in 'society so superior to what she had generally been in' (p. 364). Mary remains at home but is 'necessitated to acquire accomplishments' by Mrs Bennet who feels 'unable to sit alone' (p. 365). Mr Bennet is unchanged, as a letter to Elizabeth suggests, when Lydia asks her for financial help (p. 365). Despite Mr and Mrs Bennet's 'unsettled' lifestyle, Jane and Elizabeth find monetary 'relief' and 'a happy home'. Lydia's behaviour coincides with the 'reputation' she had given herself (p. 365–366). The narrator also mentions that Miss Bingley and her husband's marriage brings her to behave with 'civility' towards Elizabeth, while George Wickham and Elizabeth get along as Darcy had hoped (p. 366). Lady Catherine struggles to accept the new settlement but eventually regains contact with him and the novel concludes by citing Elizabeth's feelings towards the Gardiners who 'had been the means of uniting the families' (p. 366).

### Commentary

The final chapters match moral and human worth neatly and nicely with parents and children. The ends are tied up with justice being granted in appropriate measure to good and evil. Elizabeth receives a letter from Mr Bennet in which Lizzy's father asks for congratulations and she sharply concludes that Mr Collins would be best advised to stand by Darcy's side despite his objections, because 'He has more to give' (p. 362). Such a short commentary on self-interest, money, status, power and what really matters in terms of marriage is distinct from just social approval. Lydia writes with congratulations but signs off with a sigh (p. 365). Elizabeth tries to help but the implication is clear that their ill-founded marriage is based on the simple passion that began it. Mrs Bennet visits Jane but only 'talked' of her happiness and even the now thoroughly noble Darcy may have his limitations in whom he has married (p. 364). Lady Catherine has to accept the new settlement, but the last word is given to the Gardiners whose model marriage and whose status as surrogate parents as they gave Elizabeth and others in the story have the last word. Perhaps this status may have been questioned by others in the novel, but their status as a family transcends any class prejudices. Their final blessing is a symbol of a changing world where a poor character triumphs over privilege, and social rank over the silly prejudice of the aristocracy.



#### Active Learning Task

Discuss in groups how Austen's narrative voice shifts in the final chapter.



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# Characterisation

Characterisation is the way in which the author creates characters and portrays them to the audience.

## Elizabeth Bennet

Elizabeth, or Lizzy, has always been one of the most popular heroines in English literature. Like all good heroines she stands up for what is right and wins her reward in the end. She rejects Darcy's arrogance, and Lady Catherine's bullying. She stands up for her sister, sets her father right, feels for others when they go wrong like Mr. Collins. She is rarely taken in, admits her mistakes, has an independent spirit and energy that make her comments and observations astute and fascinating. She is her father's favourite, and knows (more than the time) what is right but is never arrogant about it. She can see herself justly correctly and she laughs at herself. She can admit she is wrong. Moreover, she has some faults that make her human and someone we can identify with.

Some might feel that Lizzy is almost too good to be true – and perhaps then a kind of model in the book – but she is often wrong in her judgements of people. Austen shows how even someone who is intelligent can often form the wrong view. They stop thinking clearly, or when they judge by too little information, first by their own and then others' views.

In some ways, she is a rather isolated character, but not a lonely one, as she is as clear-sighted, or as deep-thinking as she becomes. She does not get on with Mr. Collins, she sees too clearly her foolishness and shallowness. There is a particular warmth with her father, but he is too distant as a father figure, and the times were too different for her confidant. While she is intimate with her elder sister, the relationship is not perfect. Her view of people is too kind and forgiving. We are much more drawn to the character of Mr. Darcy, more interesting (in some ways Austen was breaking with tradition here by making a more interesting, more empowered). Her best friend outside the family, Charlotte, when she marries Mr Collins and shows a kind of dull self-sacrificing attitude to marriage that Elizabeth does not approve. Only when she meets Darcy do we sense that she has an equal in intelligence, difference, and then he is far above her in class, rank and privilege. Her closest relationship is with the reader. That is what the novel does, shares the characters' feelings and thoughts in an especially close way with the reader. Elizabeth and her heroines in her other novels are all meant to like – perhaps Austen recognised

Elizabeth and her heroines are all a bit of a rebel and makes her own mind up about what is right and wrong. She stands up for herself on at least two significant occasions in the novel – when she rejects Mr. Collins's proposal and when she rejects Mr. Darcy's proposal. She is a woman of power and privilege – Darcy or Lady Catherine – she rejects stupidity like Mr. Collins. She believes in what is right without much support from her parents – or anyone else. She does what she is told and will not accept male authority. When Mr. Bennet proposes to her, Mr Darcy's proposal to Lizzy he comments that Darcy is a man he would not have liked earlier in the book has done just that. She lacks self-pity when things go wrong. She is less than she could be because of jealousy or rejection as others in the book.

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She is certainly prejudiced however, and sometimes a bit smug about her judgement of most of us, she adjusts her view of people to what she feels not what is right. His slick and easy charm, but is blind to Darcy's genuine regard and feelings. She misses some of the truth in what Darcy says to her at first. However, Lizzy re-viewing things. She learns in the book to see things the right way – she is making an adjustment as Lady Catherine or Mr Collins, who represent a static society, on a journey whereby she overcomes the limitation of her first impressions that reinforces them. Her abilities to question and challenge become more searching and more developed in the novel leading to her final confrontation with the bullying Lady Catherine, the dragon of pride and prejudice whom she can finally slay.

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Her relationship with Darcy is the real centre of the book. In it Austen pursues perhaps not, the idea that a woman of middling social status can eventually achieve equality with a man of much higher privilege and rank. In their exchange of depth and energy that mark out these two odd souls for each other. Elizabeth and Lizzy engage, provoke, tease at a deeper level. Lizzy's male power or ego – even at the end, her love and respect reserve some room for part as she declares of him that 'She remembered that he had yet to learn to be a man was rather too early to begin' (p. 351). Such an expression of continuing playful earnestness at the end of the novel shows us that while Lizzy has learnt to grow up, going to remain Elizabeth Bennet too. Unlike so many female heroines before her, she is in a meaningful and deep way with her hero without losing all the freedom of being a true character.

### Debate Prompt

Elizabeth is an outsider in her society and her family. Discuss.



### Debate Prompt

Darcy and Elizabeth are outsiders in the novel. Discuss.



### Extended Essay Question

Is Elizabeth's characterisation (the way a writer creates a character) too good to be true?

## Mr Darcy

Mr Darcy remains, like Elizabeth, one of the most curiously attractive characters for female readers, he is something of a male fantasy figure. Just about the most recent poll evidence at the start of the second decade of the twenty-first century, Proud, prejudiced, a snob, socially ill-adjusted, not given to talking very much, none of this easily explains his appeal. He is fabulously rich – far better off than the equivalent of a multi-millionaire in today's world, and Lizzy is not blind to his wealth, especially when he visits Pemberley and rather likes it. Perhaps some of his distance and reserve of arrogance that surrounds him from the start. He is a cold, intelligent, but not easily pleased. He falls in love against all his pride and prejudice, beneath him socially, but is clearly helpless against the feminine charm of Lizzy, established in his first appearances, but it is less than the power of a woman to transform him for the better (is there another female fantasy here?). When he is again, having learnt a lesson and changes into a better person prepared to support Elizabeth's family. He remains masculine in a traditional sense, however – determined, feelings yet passionate and principled, riding to the rescue at the moment of crisis.

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Darcy's pride is clear – indeed, oddly enough it is a part of his fascination in the book that seems to condemn pride. Like his snobbery, it is a way in which he defines himself or distinguishes himself from others. Yet that is largely condemned in the book as he attaches too much value to class and his class but it is also an expression of a certain kind of individuality. Snobbery is a kind of not fitting in, a seeking for some kind of identity outside the norm. While it can be the unhealthy prejudice of a group, a class seeking to conserve its privileges as it is with Lady Catherine, it can also be a claim to be different, saying something about how we see ourselves compared to others. It is worth comparing Darcy with Bingley. The former distances himself from things; the latter tries too hard to fit in, to please. Likewise, Darcy's pride is different from Collins'. Collins is concerned with signs of outward status – being noticed, dropping names, talking about his home, noticing things. Darcy, much more reserved with more to boast about, is actually interior things, reflecting on character, integrity. Like Elizabeth, he is different, different from her. We can forgive him for his pride and prejudice, his dismissal of people or from his class but we can see in part of his pride a kind of independence that he attempts to determine her own world for herself. And, of course, he changes!

Part of Darcy's pride is shyness too. He is awkward in society – often silent, more so than the talkative but insincere Collins and Wickham. Austen's true heroes often find in that she plays up to a sense of Englishness and reserve in which the hero keeps others, partly to defend himself against a society that easily twists or distorts views. Darcy's opinion on Darcy shifts from his good looks and character to a general dislike within a page when he is first introduced). Moreover, some of his reservations about society are right as Lizzy comes to see herself. When he tells us that his tastes are 'certainly too little for the convenience of the world' (p. 56) it is easy to laugh at his self-absorbed tone, but we can also see an intelligence and a questioning at work in his refusal to play along with some of the expectations of her society.

Like Elizabeth, he has to overcome his own pride and prejudices, and he learns through the Gardiners that quality does not depend on class, just as he learns through his own connection with Wickham, and the odious Lady Catherine, that individuals matter more than their social group or background. At the same time, his self-respect shows him seeking to find a way to be more than we can often find in the rather trivial society that surrounds him.

As so often in novels and in life, love, feeling, provides a way through for Darcy and Elizabeth. Not only does it encourage them to rise above their backgrounds and their settled views on things, but it also enables them to realise the more meaningful side of themselves.

Darcy's initial proposal to Lizzy is not sincere and in some ways as self-absorbed as Collins'. His passion is more sincere. He needs to show her before he can love her and love her properly. His estate, Pemberley, is a reason and a place to begin, and he has to learn to do the same for her before the approval of marriage can take place. Some critics see a change of character in Darcy, but it is perhaps an acceptance of himself through coming to love her. He checks his arrogance that turns a rather awkward, distant and prejudiced man into one who can care for and sacrifice for another.

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### Extended Essay Question

How does Darcy overcome his pride and his prejudiced views? Are Elizabeth and Darcy able to love each other by the end of the novel?



## Mrs Bennet

Mrs Bennet is dismissed pretty abruptly in the opening chapter as a nervous mother hen, but she adds greatly to the book in several ways. In some way society – obsessed with status in a limited, narrow way: foolish, gossipy, full of boundless in her prejudices. At the same time, her anxiety over her daughter is sensible in that she is aware of how ruthless her world can be. Within the text to get her daughters status and money and security, so Austen's attitude to her laughable but at the same time her voice is given so much prominence as to work and treats women. In some ways her foolishness is a sign of how women work and treats women. In some ways her foolishness is a sign of how women work and treats women. In some ways her foolishness is a sign of how women work and treats women.

Mrs Bennet is a poor parent – like Mr Bennet in some ways. She favours and indulges Lydia. She attacks Lizzy simply because she will not marry – in spite of the object. Perhaps her nagging and silliness are helped by her husband's withdrawal from things, and there is a degree of practical sense in her that her husband lacks. She actually speaks a lot of material sense while being the object of ridicule, and perhaps in that we can see Jane Austen's own dilemma – that of an intelligent woman aware of the limitations of her world but having to live within it.

If we are thinking about satire, we need to consider Mrs Bennet's obsessive matchmaking, and social gaffes, and triviality – but we also have to acknowledge that there is a bit more to her world than just the ridiculous.

### Debate Point

Mrs Bennet is a



### Extended Essay Question

How does Mrs Bennet's characterisation expose some of the false values of the time?

## Lydia

Lydia is worth more attention than she often gets. Clearly foolish and headstrong, she is very much her mother's child and obviously illustrates the dangers of feeling running way ahead of reason. Despite the obvious moralising that surrounds her behaviour and the sense that her marriage with Wickham will ultimately not work out, she is happy, she is a fascinating character, more ordinary than some in the book, and one who takes a traditional storyline into new territory. Lydia is stupid and foolish, but she is credible and she refuses to repent for her actions. Her return after her marriage shows no remorse and her behaviour throughout the book somehow escapes the attempts to place it in a simple moral dimension. Perhaps a novelist can sometimes have a deliberate intention for a character and also find that that character actually escapes from that aim in some way. Critics have observed how Lydia's punishment or self-reproach that other heroines of her time often got dealt. When she is married Austen observes that 'Lydia was Lydia still: untamed, fearless' (p. 298). Elizabeth is so angry she is forced to leave the room, but some of the more extreme moralising in the book, a kind of energy that in some ways is more sympathetically perhaps.

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Lydia's animal passions cannot be wholly understood in terms of Austen's voice and her laughter and her exclamations continue to ring out even when she blasphemes, acts on impulse, almost always is described as 'crying' this running, shouting, moving – signs in Austen's world of energy uncontrolled. At the end of the novel we hear that Lydia and Wickham are constantly short of a sign of a restlessness and dissatisfaction, but still we feel that she is a real claim on our attention and one that will not be silenced by the novelist whatever her feelings towards her.

### Debate Prompt

*Is Lydia an embodiment of a new modern woman?*



### Extended Essay Question

Lydia's self-regarding politeness and simple prejudices seem clear, but are they as complex as they first appear?

## Mr Bennet

There are at least two views of this character. One has him as a kindly father, frustrated by his silly wife, and a marriage like Lydia's made for two shallow reasons. His warmth to his two eldest daughters, his quiet despair at his wife and the silliness of his other children, his ability to laugh at others and tease, and his earnest endeavours to put things right when things go wrong all gain our sympathy. On the other hand, his sarcasm and irony, his constant hiding away in the library and his failure to stand up to his younger daughter's silliness make us less sympathetic to him. Here is a man clearly capable of the right kind of discriminations – separating sense and nonsense – but he is too idle or trapped or weak to assert himself at times. In some ways we cannot blame him, but he fails his family, as Lizzy tries to tell him at one point. Perhaps he knows the limits of his power to correct, and there is wisdom in that, but he can be very cruel for example when he famously puts Mary down with his comment 'You have delighted us long enough' (p. 98). Such sarcasm may be his refuge from a near impossible situation, but it does not help.

Some critics have drawn attention to the number of weak or failing father figures in *Pride and Prejudice*. Perhaps we might see this, however, as part of a larger pattern in which power is concentrated in the traditional centre of authority, the man, to the world of the woman. It is also a pattern seen in many other novels, even those written by men, about women and their views and values.

### Debate Prompt

*Mr Gardiner acts more like a father to Elizabeth than Mr Bennet. Discuss.*

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## Wickham

If Austen did something new in characterising Lydia in such a strong way, Wickham is a more straightforward kind of character – a slippery cad, all talk and pretence, good looking but ultimately a false and rather empty person who is interested in seduction and money for all his charm. His character derives from the stage and novelistic tradition of the handsome but false suitor, a kind of test figure that Lizzy must find out before she passes on to the real lover. He talks a lot – often a sign in Austen’s works of someone who is false – and he is also smooth and polite in a way that goes against the more robust idea of the English gentleman found in so many works. The traditional English hero is blunt and awkward but sincere and passionate. In some ways Wickham’s mind and manners match Lizzy’s much more easily than Mr Darcy’s, but there is something rather effeminate about his characterisation, as he is rather vain and certainly too concerned about his image. Predictably his shaky financial and emotional past are soon found out. He does not love Lydia as much as she loves him and, as Mr Bennet shrewdly says, ‘he makes love to us all’ (p. 312) – a clear expression of his essential vanity and insincerity.

### Active Learning

Write a diary entry from Lydia’s point of view when she realises that Lydia is pregnant.



### Extended Essay Question

In what ways does Mr Bennet fail his daughters and can his humour rescue him?

Wickham is a type who appears in most of Austen’s novels (and many others) who flirts with and nearly wins the heart of the heroine. What is interesting about the others in the novels like him is how in some ways Austen nearly makes the heroine and them – it is almost as if she is playing with an imaginative outcome in the end, pushing at the edges of her sense of reason and morality. The flirtation between Elizabeth and Wickham is worth looking at in this regard.

Wickham does not quite fit into the moral patterns of the story, and is perhaps more than his conventional role, and, like Lydia, he remains more interesting than the stereotype he represents even if he is more predictable in the end than her.

### Active Learning

Write a letter from Elizabeth to Wickham.



### Debate Prompt

Does Austen convince you that a romance between Wickham and Elizabeth would have ended badly? Discuss.



### Extended Essay Question

How does Wickham fit into the themes of pride and prejudice in the novel?

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## Mr Collins

Collins has always delighted readers because his oily self-seeking, pompous and transparent. His false modesty and silly pride in all he does and says, and his snobbish Lady Catherine are laughable. A mixture of boring gravity and self-flattery, he is at once a comic character and a stock one – the unchristian C. On hearing about Lydia's behaviour is quite appalling. He is a snob and an unworships rank over everything else. In the patterns of the book, he shows vanity – someone who believes that someone is better because of where they are. He is materialistic too – obsessed with things and marriage as a way of securing his position. His faith is all misplaced – rank and titles are what he worships. His proposal to Elizabeth is so self-centred as to verge on the absurd. His quick shift from his devotion to Charlotte show that he is really interested in pleasing himself and passion for marriage.

There is perhaps something darker in his characterisation though. He hardly listens to Elizabeth when she tries to reject his advances – he assumes women are there for his pleasure just as he assumes that order and authority and rank are not to be questioned. His stilted (heavy and pompous) language and his many repetitions and empty apologies reveal a man stuck in a ludicrous system of habits of thinking which he cannot change. He appears very formal but he is form without real substance or heart. Rather like Lady Catherine, he is a necessarily two dimensional sort of character because he has lost some of his humanity. Unlike Darcy, he cannot change and conquer his pride and his prejudices but is doomed to repeat them. Of course, Austen's humour deflates and ridicules him, but in another kind of story, his fixed opinions could be the source of trouble for others where the unthinking exercise of his own and others' authority would threaten the happiness of others in a serious way.



### Extended Essay Question

What does Charlotte's marriage to Collins say about the institution of marriage? What does it teach Elizabeth?



### Extended Essay Question

What do Collins' dialogue and letters say about his character?



### Debate Prompt

*Darcy and Collins are more similar than they first appear. Discuss.*

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## Lady Catherine De Bourgh

Austen disliked the minor aristocracy (compare her portrait here with that of *Persuasion*; both are vain and controlling characters). Lady Catherine, with her sense of entitlement (and for a kind of outdated feudalism), is all that a reader could hope for in a picture of authority. Her snobbery, her belief in rank before merit, her insensitivity to the needs of others, her prejudices and arrogance are all ridiculed by Austen. She has a decided, blunt way of speaking that shows her arrogance. She expresses herself in absolute terms as if there could be no other views or values, as indeed she believes there is not. She represents the old world, rigid with people like her at the top for ever – but Austen suggests she is threatened by new values, not least the intelligence of a young woman like Lizzy. Lady Catherine is particularly bright, only full of herself and self-righteousness. Her sickly ineffectuality and her sense of decline in prospect for her class and values, and of course, Lizzy's challenge to her, make her overwhelmed or cowed by her own position or over her marriage, suggesting a transition from one class to another.

In their final confrontation, Lady Catherine talks of the 'shades of Pemberley'. She exclaims 'Heaven and earth!' as she says this, implying her belief that Lizzy's actions violate (disturb in a deep way) some natural order (p. 338). Her sense of entitlement similarly shows how she believes that Lizzy's action upsets nature – corruption exposes her own inflexibility and worn-out beliefs in rank and class over mercy and control and conserve – keep things as they always have been – and so deny nature and human passion. She uses many words like 'reasonable', 'honourable' as if they belong to her and her class – but Elizabeth redefines for her another 'gentleman' when she tells her that she is a 'gentleman's daughter' (p. 337). Lady Catherine is incapable of humour or irony (words meaning more than one thing) and that she cannot entertain other ideas or possibilities but her own; they deny her inflexibility and rigidity like Collins. Rather like him, she is not a very developed character as she is rather inhuman and has lost some of the ability to change and move on. Her suggestion is part of the way out of false pride and prejudice.



### Extended Essay Question

How does Lady Catherine represent both class pride and prejudice?



### Active Learning Task

Elizabeth and Lady Catherine clash in Chapter 55. Make a list of all the differences of opinion that are expressed by both characters. What does that say about social change in Austen's time?

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## Jane Bennet / Bingley

Austen made Elizabeth far more interesting than her older sister. Jane may be the most beautiful, but Austen avoids that prejudice and tradition of making her the most interesting, and the centre of attention too by giving the biggest and most interesting voice to her younger sister. Indeed, Jane seems to be a rather passive character, much more a traditional representation of how a female might be perceived. For much of the novel she suffers quietly, is a victim, but always remains kind and rarely given to self-pity or criticism of others. Lizzy is quick to get through and get angry over others' designs and shallowness or lack of sincerity. Jane is all forgiveness. Perhaps she is more traditionally female than Lizzy – suffering the world rather than challenging it as Lizzy does. She seems more vulnerable too and will not show her feelings so much. In another kind of way, she could easily have become the perfect victim of a man's world – abandoned after having her feelings taken away by a man who was rather shallow and self-interested.

However, Austen's work is a comedy and it forgives Jane her rather passive nature. She wins her reward through quiet or silent loyalty and sheer decency and honesty. Bingley (and Elizabeth and Lizzy) (and the other virtuous female) are nicely satisfied in the end.

Bingley is an appropriate partner in many ways. Like Jane, he seems to like everything and everyone. Like her he is perhaps uncritical and too easily goes along with things. Certainly they contrast with the more critical Darcy and Elizabeth. Bingley is more likely to approve and enjoy things, and he speaks out freely and easily but without a great deal of thought. Mrs Gardiner's question, 'how violent was Mr Bingley's love for Elizabeth?' (138) seems a just one in a sense as he seems too easily persuaded to move on with Darcy if he really cares about Jane that much. Perhaps this is his prejudice – he is too easily and quickly pleased, and to be too on the surface of things.

What does their relationship add up to? It is certainly more conventional than Elizabeth's and Darcy's. Perhaps it shows us the inequality of gender – for Bingley can move on while Elizabeth languishes for much of the novel. Their relationship is more traditionally romantic than Darcy's as it seems to consist so much of a kind of love that is undefined and emotional. Elizabeth's feelings are more of a rational journey and an inquiry and probe into gender relationships. It may be that Austen is showing us a conventional or traditional relationship compared to a more modern one. There is no denying the sweetness and vulnerability of Jane's feelings, but Lizzy's and Darcy's romance offers us something far more interesting because it changes and empowers both partners rather than consolidating their positions there from the start. If you like, Jane's and Bingley's relationship is a prejudiced marriage; Darcy's and Lizzy's more of a real one, or at least much more convincing.

### Debate Prompt

Jane and Bingley's courtship is less three-dimensional than Elizabeth and Darcy's romance. Discuss.

**Active Learning**  
How are Jane and Bingley's relationships different from the others?



### Extended Essay Question

While Jane has many strengths and qualities as a character, why in the end is Elizabeth a more engaging character than Lizzy?

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## The Gardiners

The Gardiners are hardly developed or detailed characters, but they are important. The words of the novel go to them, perhaps as they embody something of the author's views towards. 'Gentleman' is an important word in English literature, especially in the eighteenth century. Austen wrote her last novel, the word had become again the focus for a social crisis between a gentle, knight-like Christian man and one who has the label simply as a member of a certain social class. Mr Gardiner is sneered at a few times in the book because he is not a gentleman, yet he is much more of a gentleman in word and deed than many others who are. The Gardiners may be low in social status, but in terms of real value they are high. They are more true parents to Lizzy than her own, and more helpful to her and her family.

In some ways they are idealised characters – ones against whom others may be measured. They are a device in satire. They are 'normal' characters against whom the absurdities of the world may be measured or assessed. The name is close to the word garden – Gardiner. In the eighteenth century, a garden was a natural fusion of good sense, good nature, reason and feeling, rather like the grounds at Pemberley. The Gardiners are 'balanced and natural' against the prejudices and vanities of society and class. They suggest something relatively innocent and unspoilt, an opposition perhaps to the artificiality of society that Austen so often criticises.

Elizabeth is justly proud of them:

It was consoling, that (Mr Darcy) should know that she had some friends, to whom there was no need to blush. (p. 244)

Their simple dignity and clear-sightedness contrast sharply with the play acting and blindness of so many other characters in the story – and perhaps owes something to their lack of vanity or pretension; they are not trying to be more than they are. They bring Darcy and Elizabeth back together – allowing nature, the garden, as it were, to do so. The Gardiners are truly cultivated and enable others to grow: the renewal of Darcy takes place in their presence, outside, as they talk to one of Darcy's gardeners.

Deb  
Austen  
in the



### Extended Essay Question

To what extent and in what ways can we see the Gardiners as Elizabeth's friends?

## Mary Bennet

Mary draws all her ideas from second-hand thinking – books – not real life, and perhaps that is a prejudice particularly worth thinking about. She reads too literally – straightforwardly – and has not the experience to balance her judgements against what Elizabeth has to correct her idea of love (Mr Wickham) or the reality of her discovered complex feelings for Mr Darcy. So Mary's pride in her opinions is shown up as another form of prejudice not corrected by real life. Austen was always suspicious of the imagination in a way that is curious for a writer, but she knew from her own reading and from the popularity of many sensationalist novels of her own time, just how easily people can be by ideas about reality divorced from real experience.



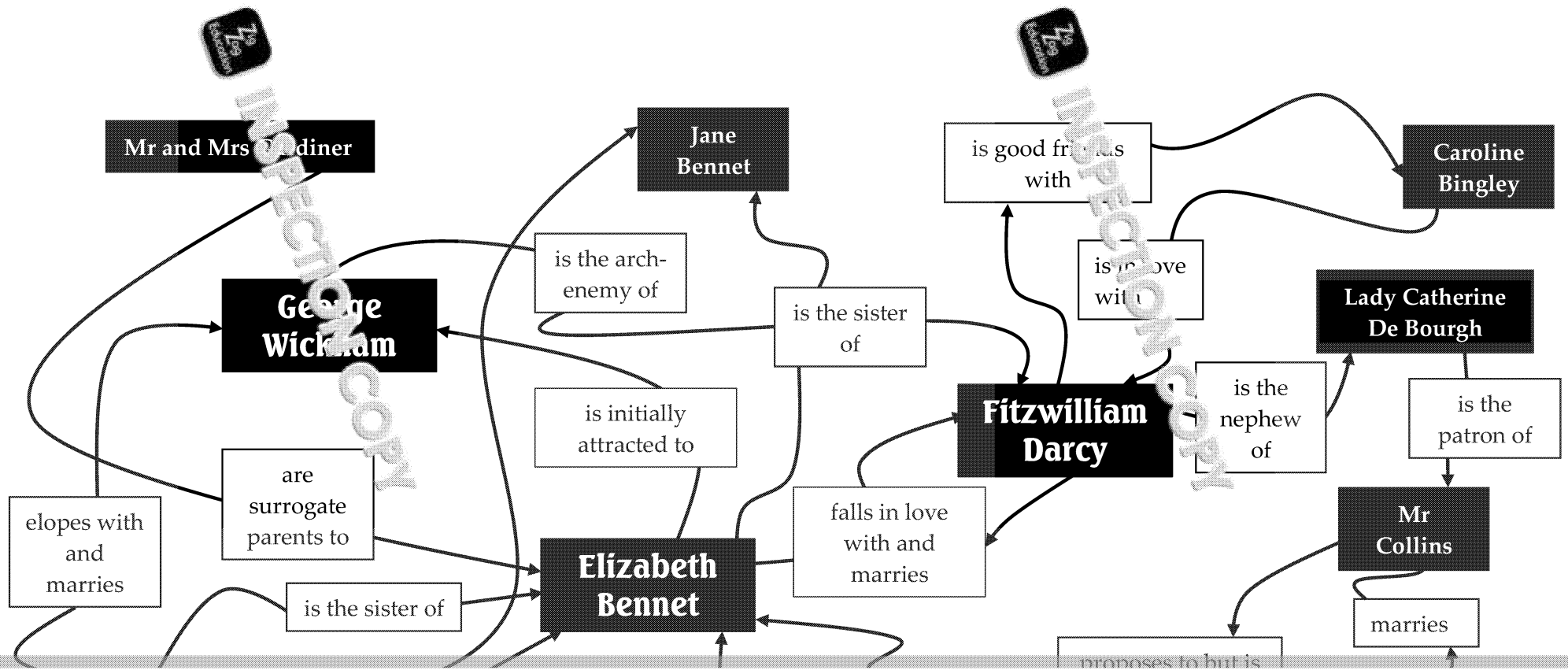
### Extended Essay Question

How do the different characters in the novel deal with their prejudices?

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# Relationships Mind Map



# Relationships

## Fitzwilliam Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet

This relationship is the key to the entire novel. Elizabeth, an independently minded woman, meets Mr Darcy at a ball and immediately presumes to understand his personality as being rude and proud. He is equally prejudiced against her due to her class and the fact that he finds himself falling in love with her. Their sharp-witted conversations and flirtations lead to a proposal of marriage in which Darcy tells Elizabeth that he has re-evaluated himself, his views, and his perception of the world. Only once they are free from their prejudices and their pride can they see each other as they really are: a man and wife.

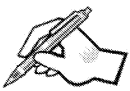


### Debate Prompt

Darcy and Elizabeth's changes of opinions about each other are believable.

## Fitzwilliam Darcy and George Wickham

When we first meet Wickham, he tells Elizabeth how terribly he has been treated by Darcy's good name and setting in motion a theme of appearances not being what they seem. When the truth is revealed, we realise how Darcy has a legitimate reason for his dislike of Wickham. However, how much he must love Elizabeth to save Lydia from ruin by financially supporting her. Both characters are also much more than their stereotypes and neither is a villain. Their animosity (dislike of each other) is made clear throughout the text.



### Extended Essay Question

To what extent is Wickham a more likeable character than Darcy?

## Jane Bennet and Charles Bingley

Inspired Jane and the affable (extremely good-natured, likeable) Mr Bingley are drawn to each other when they first meet, although Jane's shyness makes Darcy suspicious of Bingley as he is in her. Without the interference of Darcy, they are united only weeks after meeting. This is a conventional love match without the sharpness and battles of wit that we see with Darcy and Elizabeth. It is perhaps less interesting for the reader for that reason; however, the conclusion of a happy marriage is fitting for such a pair of characters that are so good and pure of heart.

**Active Learning**  
Write a diary entry from the perspective of either Jane or Bingley.



## Fitzwilliam Darcy and Charles Bingley

Darcy and Bingley are good friends. However, their relationship is dominated by Darcy very much under his control. Although Darcy claims to only want the best for Bingley, his interference in Bingley's relationship with Jane shows just how much control he has over Bingley.

**Debate Prompt**  
Darcy is a good friend.

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### Caroline Bingley and Fitzwilliam Darcy

While Darcy does not appear to encourage the attentions of Caroline, it is clear that he is not in love with her, or at least the idea of a relationship with her. Although she must have feelings for Miss De Bourgh, her jealousy of Elizabeth and her constant put-downs of Darcy show that she feels very strongly towards him. It is an indication of Darcy's changing character that he stops sneering at other characters when she talks to him and he starts standing up for Elizabeth and her family.

#### Debate Prompt

*Caroline is in love with the idea of Darcy rather than with him.*

### Mr and Mrs Bennet

Mr and Mrs Bennet are a classic example of a married couple who are not in love. They do not have respect for each other. Mr Bennet was seduced by a pretty young girl and he has never loved her. He refuses to act until his wife forces him to, he shirks his responsibilities and is openly ridiculing his wife and younger daughters. Mrs Bennet and her nerves are always perhaps questioning whether marriages based on lust, not love, always turn out well. One cannot help wondering whether Lydia and Wickham will have a happy future years.



#### Extended Essay Question

To what extent do we feel sorry for Mr Bennet in his marriage with Mrs Bennet?

### Lydia Bennet and George Wickham

Lydia is a frivolous young girl who is intent on getting a husband. Wickham is a charming young man who is a good time. It takes Darcy to persuade him to marry Lydia so that she is not ashamed or realise the upset that she caused by eloping. Their marriage is a disaster. Darcy is left wondering how long it will be before Wickham becomes bored with her.

#### Debate Prompt

*Lydia has made a match for love alone unlike her two older sisters. Darcy is wrong to interfere.*

### Mr Collins and Charlotte Lucas

Austen shows us here yet another type of marriage, one which has no love, no passion, no security, companionship and respect. Mr Collins is a self-serving old man who switches his attentions immediately from Jane to Elizabeth to Charlotte, it is clear that his wife is more important than the woman he should be. Charlotte is very level-headed and she requires romantic and financial security. This highlights how marriage was much more of a business in Austen's time; it served as an institution, protected women financially and provided an environment in which to raise children. Austen asks us to compare marriage made for convenience.



#### Active Learning Task

Imagine you are Charlotte and write a list of reasons for and against marrying Mr Collins.

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# Settings

There are many important settings in *Pride and Prejudice*. We discuss the key settings and their impact on the novel below.

## Longbourn

Longbourn represents a village in Hertfordshire. Here, Austen is showing us a slice of country life as she takes us into the private houses and balls of its inhabitants. Austen has been criticised for being too provincial and narrow in the society that she portrays but, in her depictions of Longbourn and its residents, she creates delightful portraits of a range of middle-class people carrying out daily events.

Activity  
Sketch  
Longbourn

## Meryton

Meryton is the nearest town to Longbourn and it is where the Bennet sisters buy their bonnets, and other supplies. Meryton is also where the 101st Regiment are stationed, giving Elizabeth the opportunity to meet Wickham in the first place as he is stationed there with the regiment. The impact of Wickham's presence is felt throughout the plot of the novel: on Elizabeth, Darcy, and most crucially on Lydia. Without Meryton and its regiment, the sisters would never have met Wickham in the first place.

## Netherfield Park

Netherfield is central to the first part of the novel and regains a central role later on. Without Netherfield Park, there would be no tenants moving to Hertfordshire, and the novel would not progress into the second volume. Netherfield Park is a country estate of a moderate size. It is where Jane goes to take tea with Caroline and Louisa, where she has to stay for several days when she is acquainted with Bingley. It is where Elizabeth goes to visit Jane and where she meets Darcy. It is where they share their first teasingly flirtatious conversations. When Darcy leaves Netherfield for London, leaving Jane heartbroken, it marks the end of romance for a while. When Darcy and Bingley return back for Elizabeth and Jane; their return to Netherfield is a return to the romantic possibilities first exhibited at the beginning of the novel.



### Extended Essay Question

How is Netherfield as a place so central to the novel? Which relationships are most affected by its presence?

## London

London plays several important roles in this novel; it serves to bring characters closer together and to highlight the social and class differences at play between the different groups. Elizabeth and Jane's relations, Mr and Mrs Gardiner, live in a less fashionable part of London. Anything to do with trade, or working for a living, is looked down upon by the aristocracy. Caroline Bingley. Elizabeth's low connections are highlighted by her family's position in London. London also plays several important parts in the novel's plots. It is in London that Elizabeth and Darcy are kept apart by the designs of Darcy and Caroline; they are so close yet never meet. It is in London that Wickham takes Lydia with no designs of marrying her and, in this way, the danger and vice.

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## Rosings, the gardens, and the parsonage

Rosings is the home of Lady Catherine De Bourgh, the snobbish ill-mannered sickly daughter. It is ostentatious (a vulgar, showy display of wealth) in the way it shows extreme conceit and vulgar pride in her treatment of Mr Collins and Elizabeth with her. The parsonage, where Mr and Mrs Collins live after their marriage, is a modest house. Elizabeth devised a way to be married to Mr Collins and be happy. They have essentially no garden so that they spend a lot of time apart. The house reflects their personalities. It gives Darcy and Elizabeth the chance to walk together and have more witty yet balanced conversations. It gives his cousin the opportunity of letting slip to Elizabeth, Darcy's involvement with Jane. The parsonage is also the setting for one of the most unthoughtful moments in the history of English literature. Darcy proposes to Elizabeth in spite of everything, although we feel angry on her behalf, we can't help but be moved by Darcy's sincerity.



### Extended Essay Question

How do Rosings and the parsonage reflect the characters that live in them?



## Lambton

As well as providing Mrs Gardiner the chance to relive old memories, Lambton is the setting for Elizabeth and Darcy's unfolding re-evaluation of each other. It is here at Lambton that Darcy makes his proposal by Darcy and his sister Georgiana. Darcy's attitude to the lower-class yeomen is revealed. He is keen for Elizabeth to get to know Georgiana and to find Elizabeth's connections so low or so unpleasant. He is learning how to be more open and is shown explicitly at Lambton. Lambton is also the scene of Elizabeth reading Lydia's elopement. Darcy's shocked response to seeing her look so worried shows that he cares about her. As Elizabeth despairs that Darcy will no longer want her after she has actually rushed to London to try to help her sister. The events at Lambton give Darcy the means to become the novel's true hero.

### Debate Prompt

*Lambton is the place where Darcy realises how wrong he is.*

## Pemberley

Pemberley is a large country mansion in Derbyshire which Elizabeth visits on the understanding that Darcy would not be in residence until after Christmas. Around the house and talking to the housekeeper helps Elizabeth to see the truth about her initial judgments of Darcy. Not everyone regards him as the proud man and not only pride might be responsible for his quietness in social situations. Elizabeth helps her to see the goodness in him. Cynics might say that Elizabeth only falls in love with Darcy once she sees what being mistress of Pemberley would entail. When she sees Darcy coming up to her from the stables and they meet, both embodied in a powerful image in English literature. Immortalised by Darcy coming out of the stable, the adaptation of the novel is a moment when Elizabeth realises that Darcy has changed. Specifically, she realises that he loves her. His small talk with the Gardiners reaffirms her opinion of his haughty pride. Pemberley is his home and it becomes Elizabeth's home. With its beautiful grounds, it is a place of art and beauty, nature and peacefulness. At Pemberley, the need for appearances and boastfulness is gone.



### Debate Prompt

*Elizabeth seeing Pemberley is what motivates her to love Darcy.*

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# Themes

Themes are important subjects addressed in the text which re-occur throughout the novel.

## Social Satire

Satire is criticism, usually humorous, of people and society and Austen's novel saw the shortcomings of many things in her own world, both in terms of how society's values, often wrong, shaped them. She shows us the pressure on women, to behave in certain ways. Women were especially vulnerable then as the middle and upper classes could not seek employment or have the same kind of freedom as today. Marriage was a way of gaining status, financial security and respect but a lot was severely limited (it is interesting that Austen never married but instead found fulfilment of writing and ordering her world for herself). At the same time, the society wanted more than it offered them – things like true love, self-definition and recognition were as important then as they are today. Some settled for less than some standing – but others like Lizzy, and perhaps even Lydia wanted more than the world thought good for them.

The more we look at the novel, the more we can see it as a study of how women compromise, and how some, like Lizzy, resisted the pressure to compromise. Lady Catherine, Mr Collins and many minor characters are obsessed with class and having things – perhaps that was all that society allowed them to bother about. Elizabeth is a moralist to make excuses and she allows us to see a good deal of simple stupidity as they become trapped in a world that wanted to be changed.

Critics often remark that Austen's world is a narrow world, but that provinciality (implying a narrow world) is something that the novel draws attention to. From the society he enters to Mrs Bennet's name dropping, we see a narrow, self-contained world being affectionately mocked. Even Mr Bennet's constant retreating into boredom with the way his world works and with his wife's marriage ambition is a criticism.

Women are often ridiculed in the book for a narrowness of focus or pettiness about marriage and Miss Bingley's snide comments are two sides of the same thing. In the world women were allowed. At the same time, the behaviour of many of the men is a kind of satire on more romantic ideas of love and marriage – Austen knew that true love mattered in her world. Darcy and Lizzy reach beyond the limits of the typical 'accomplished woman' expressed earlier in their encounters (p. 39) suggest that the characters in the book, sees women as objects to be traded in marriage; but beyond stereotypes for something more than the typical polished marriageable woman. He has an idea of love in his mind, and, both in his assertion of that, and in Lizzy asking for more, to be taken seriously outside the terms of typical male ideas of marriage.

Austen was often critical of romance and purely romantic ideas of love because of the case of Lydia and almost in the case of Jane, women could often be the victims of the way ideas of things often replaced reality – prejudices being based on theory and real experiences. Against many stock ideas of love in the book which are mocked, Austen sets the example of Lizzy and Darcy whose love seems to be based in terms of the way it takes them out of themselves, and their own pride and ambition, and more complex kind of intimacy.

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Austen exposes, then, a society which is very limiting. People are often seen through stereotypes or prejudices or gender roles or society's noisy and pushy voice. The bound society in which many could not be what they wanted because of the constraints of the time. Austen was hardly a radical but she understood just how defining class could be. Class power turned into the extreme expressions of taste or feeling. Her title captures the sense of just how deep these feelings and behaviour go in almost every part of the world of the book. Lady Catherine, Mr Collins, Mrs Bennet, Sir William Lucas are trapped in a world of false awareness, false consciousness because of the constraints of the time. They cannot respect or really even see others because of their own pride.

Finally in Austen there is a general social satire on human nature that makes it both amusing but also so intimidating an experience. There are few characters who do not show us over and over again the way people can be vain, selfish, self-regarding (or self-righteous), blind to others' feelings or simply ignorant of what is going on around them. It is only for the sake of the story that we have to grant her a good deal of truth in her observations. So many of her characters are less than they might be because of the constraints of the time. Why on them for this is a light and entertaining book not a tragedy. At the same time, in later novels, she more clearly demonstrates just how the exercise of power or want of thought by selfish people could often create tyrannies in the domestic sphere as dramatic and powerful as those in larger landscapes.

#### Key Term

- Satire of people



#### Extended Essay Question

What are the key objects of Austen's satire (e.g. money, class, snobbery, power, etc.)?

## *Pride and Prejudice*

No account of the novel can be complete without analysis of its title. It was not 'Impressions' but the title suits the novel perfectly in so many ways. Darcy is prejudiced – but here is a society that operates on some questionable assumptions, general such as the respect given to rank rather than merit, or to money rather than qualities, or indeed in some ways to men before women. At its worst, pride is the assumption of the right of an individual or a group to dominate and control (e.g. marriage). Prejudice is shown to be the way we mostly regard others so that we are often following evidence, following impressions rather than reason founded on experience.

Pride is one of the great targets of all comedy – thinking we are right or better than others, more privileged than others. It is perhaps a part of the human condition to feel perhaps more than we like to admit that we are better or superior in some way or to be all about what we think of ourselves and what we want others to think of us. It is the danger of pride in losing both respect for ourselves and for others. It is a way of building barriers and drawing limits, and is hugely hard to overcome because it threatens ourselves. Pride and identity and respect are very closely linked and it is worth looking at exactly how they work in the novel. Darcy overcomes his family pride and his family, but Lizzy also learns to question her own family's pride and she comes to a new integrity. Pride at first is associated with arrogance and social superiority and as it progresses it comes to mean something too that is associated with individuality. There can be good pride when it means self-respect as well as bad pride.

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I have often thought that the novel could be called 'Independence and Dependent Pride and Prejudice'. Somewhere in the story amongst all the satire on false pride is a search going on for something better in which people can balance the claims of their own developing interests. Good pride is perhaps the name we could give to the balance between the claims of others and the claims of the individual without loss of respect for either.

We all tend to judge others by appearance, by what seems rather than what is. Austen perceived just how prejudiced her society could be, and, indeed, prejudice was institutionalised, that is ingrained, in the way things were. People in trades were prejudiced because of what they did. Women were thought of as inferior as a class of people representing a whole class of people – hardly have a voice in the book at all. Masters or to agree with their 'betters' or deluded by false information (the Bennets are mentioned only briefly, and Darcy's story is not just uncritical of him but presented in an unchallenging way). Austen makes us aware of prejudice all the time, just as she does of pride. As we have seen, however, some characters can themselves become prejudiced and so challenge others, sadly, flatter themselves that their view of the world is the only one, so reassure themselves they need not change, that their world view is the only one.

Just like pride, prejudice may, however, have its creative side as well as its destructive. In some ways Lizzy is more interesting and more challenging when she has her own voice in the book. This is not to say that she does not need to be corrected and challenged. Like pride expresses in the story the reality of individuality as well as the need for a common reason to work out.

Pride and prejudice are what we call abstract nouns, and the confidence with which her title suggests a rational view of things against which people can be seen to be prejudiced. Pride is a classic Christian sin, and in many ways, Austen's view of the world was a Christian one in which sin could be clearly seen and corrected. At the same time, we can see how both pride and prejudice are ways in which the individual can sometimes challenge the broader views of others and express a different sense of identity to that which typically rules in society.



### Extended Essay Question

How are Lizzy and Darcy both proud and prejudiced?

## Class

Jane Austen wrote at a time when class boundaries were being challenged. The book suggests the triumph of a relatively modest middle-class daughter. Class and indeed snobbery are ways in which we define ourselves, and although today that is changing, she wrote, many people still define themselves in part through class, or think they do. Entry to or exit from different groups remains a hard thing to do, although there are limits to Austen's desire for change, the book she writes is for a changing world. The whole novel can be seen as expressing a sense in which the world is changing. Mr Bennet is not quite the father he should be; Mrs Bennet is the mother he needs; the 'manly' parent pushing her daughters on; the Gardiners are better people than the Bennets; the Bennets suggest they should be; the eldest daughter is outdone in intelligence by the youngest; Collins is a worldly clergyman; Wickham is a charming scoundrel; marriage on his terms, and so on. All these points hardly make Austen a revolutionary, but they do make her a writer who saw through many of her society's own stereotypes.

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## Comedy, Love and Marriage

Comedy in literary terms is not just something that makes us laugh, but something that helps us see the world with characters getting what they deserve in a way that is not always true in life. Comedy can teach us something. Much comedy is designed to bring people down to earth in some way or another. So Lizzy, proud in her judgement and prejudiced by her first impressions of Wickham, needs to learn that she is wrong: you cannot trust charm and good looks. Elizabeth learning that his sexual feelings and his class prejudices do not square. He must respect if he wishes to love successfully, and respect the individual not just Elizabeth's dirty skirt after her walk to Netherfield is in pointed contrast to the cold, unfeeling Bingley clan she finds when Jane falls ill. She is often outside, close to nature, a sign of a character more in touch with what is natural and true than those who live in the artificiality of their own constructed worlds. Mr Bennet is forced to quit his estate when Lydia's sexuality emerges. Elizabeth and Darcy are humbled through finding out what they least want or expect. In all these ways, comedy brings characters down to earth with reality.

Comedy is often associated with 'realism' – a difficult term and word, but one that suggests people being brought into touch with nature, or emotions or experience or being able to sit comfortably with their imagination or ideas of these things. Comedy can be seen as it challenges people to accept and experience a wider world, a wider sense of reality (and their own natures) and often discover that they are more ordinary than they might think. The grandest or the most intelligent may be wrong, or that they are moved by things that are more common than they might think. Lady Catherine is, for example, just basically wrong in her sense of class privilege – but in the end she is just defending her own.

Realism also recognises that things rarely fit into our prejudices. Darcy's and Elizabeth's experience of love goes against their prejudices. At the same time, Austen shows that love can be quite different things and that money is a real thing as is status and social values, however much we may dislike it or wish it were sometimes otherwise. Elizabeth's marriage to Collins seems inexplicable to modern readers, but it is both a comment on the romantic illusions about relationships. It is not saying that Charlotte is right in her world, marriage was also about money, status, respectability, security, honour. Realism explores the tension between idealism, say romantic ideas of love, and the real. At the same time comedy can suggest something better as it does in the richer relationship between Elizabeth and Darcy, and bring that more ideal reality into being through a happy ending. Elizabeth is both realistic – showing what people and institutions like marriage can be like – and sometimes limiting realities – and at the same time idealising in expressing her desire for something better and deeper. For Austen, marriage could be both real and ideal.

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## *The Novel, the Individual and Society*

Austen wrote in the novel form, a form traditionally associated with the domestic world. Writing about a domestic world in novel form from a woman's point of view was a form of empowerment and emancipation – in other words, women could gain more from representing their own real interests in love and marriage. The novel was the individual at odds with their society because the individual often wants something that their world offers them. Lizzy is this kind of figure. She goes against her father's authority – hardly in any deeply radical way, but in a sense that she makes up her own mind and not just follow the prejudices of the world she lives in.

Austen writes her books drawing from a number of traditions. Critics suggest that the eighteenth-century novels of Samuel Richardson influenced her. In part, he invented the novel as a form of psychological dramas, exploring the inner life of their heroes and heroines. His reflections on so much is what gives the novel much of its appeal – we are interested in what goes on in the human mind, and it is done with such insight and complexity as to be almost as a study of human being, considering and reflecting as we do on events in the story. The story is a private one shared only apparently with the reader gives it its interest – which is why dramatic adaptations of the novel often fail to engage the reader as reading does.

Austen also shared another eighteenth-century tradition – that of the writer Daniel Defoe and Charlotte Lennox who in turn owe much to the Spanish writer Cervantes. That book, often seen as the first novel, tells the story of Don Quijote, an old man who gets his ideas of reality from reading too many chivalric stories – tales of knights and dragons. Believing that life is like the books he reads, Don Quijote sets out across the world. The novel, literature and life, or at least the books he reads, and reality, are not at all the same. In the nineteenth century, the book became a story that reminded readers of the dangers of living by the kinds of prejudices – and a warning that experience was the real teacher. Austen has always recognised within the story the idea that looking at the world as Don Quijote does, can be a creative and imaginative thing that, in itself, can change the world.

Austen was in part the product of an intellectual culture suspicious of the imagination. In a culture, that of the Romantic Movement, which worshipped the imagination, she learns that many of her initial views of things are wrong. Like Don Quijote she starts with a vision and then she finds out the truth by experience. But like him also, she retains her questions what she sees and has its own values independent of social norms. On her journey, only the social monsters of Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Her imagination is not content with what it sees and finds, but asks for and finds something richer, her prince and true love. In the end, Mr Darcy.

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# Ideas and Messages

*Ideas and messages are thoughts which the author communicates to the reader through the text.*

Austen's all-knowing narrator often makes the reader feel that Austen is speaking through the text and there are times when key ideas and messages are being communicated. One key idea is closely linked with the theme of prejudice: appearances versus reality. A person makes assumptions about someone else based on their class or the situation. This novel is full of prejudice which almost always stems from the surface appearance. Wickham, for example, appears to be a gentleman but in reality he is a scoundrel. He presents a reality of himself which is the opposite of his true self. Darcy appears to be a rude and proud man with no manners or civility. While he is certainly proud, his upbringing and his sense of duty in social situations. In reality, he is a good person who cares for his servants. A theme of appearance versus reality runs throughout the novel. Jane truly is a friend but in reality she is not. It appears that Bingley does not care for Jane but in reality he does. Even Darcy's appreciation for Elizabeth's eyes relates to this key message of appearance versus reality. Austen is communicating the importance of seeing through the surface of things to find the true reality underneath. Often, what appears to be the truth is often not what they seem to be.

Austen was writing in a time of social change. Closely related to the theme of social change is the message that society is on the brink of some true reformation. As bloody as the French Revolution, the ideas that came out of that movement were revolutionary. Rights and the advancement of the individual through their actions rather than through a cultural effect in England. This is explored in detail within the text. The fact that Elizabeth and Darcy marry shows that society is changing and Lady De Bourgh's resistance to change. Austen is showing us that the society in which she lived is changing and that even women will have rights and be able to make their own choices.

For women to be equal and have their own rights was a massive shift in the thinking of the population of England in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Women were still considered the property of men. Mary Wollstonecraft had just published her text demanding equality for women and the concept of feminism began to enter mainstream discourse. Feminism was the idea that women are equal to men in all spheres, are in control of their own lives, and can make their own choices. Both the Enlightenment and society both advocated the view that women were subordinate to men. The Enlightenment emphasized the rational thought needed to make important decisions. For a woman to be equal to men, she had to be able to make her own decisions. This was a massive social shift for a gentle-born woman (a lady) to make. Austen plays with these concepts of gender and the feminine, which is a central theme of the novel. Mrs Bennet is the stereotypical mother with her irrational worries about her children's future (she is worried), considering that the entire house and estate were threatened when her husband died, her worries of destitution for herself and her daughters were not unfounded. Lady Catherine makes her own decisions and is financially independent. She would call a feminist. She is a traditionalist in gender roles as well as in class. She is the most obvious source of feminism; she is strong-willed, spirited, intelligent, and independent. However, sceptics have argued that perhaps she might not have been willing to let her daughter marry without seeing his large country estate. Despite the love story, Austen does hint at the importance of financial security in the narrative that Elizabeth is thinking of her financial security as another example of a typical young woman with all the silliness of a child, and

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elopement with Wickham. Austen is quick to condemn such behaviour in the male characters rectify the situation; Darcy and Mr Gardiner rescue Lydia from her lover to marry her.

Elizabeth's character hints at a new type of 'modern' woman; one who is independent of herself and is not afraid to voice her opinions. She marries, if she marries, on her own terms. She has her man in the end. Despite playing with new ideas of gender roles, Austen upholds the convention and tradition by leaving her heroine alone and happy at the end. Austen does the opposite; she shows us that marriage is the only way that a woman can be always very happy. Charlotte marries for security. Elizabeth and Jane are lucky to marry for love, although Austen hints that the security they receive is very fragile. Wickham and Lydia are coerced (heavily persuaded) into marriage. Austen's message is shifting and she plays with gender roles. Marriage as an institution is how women gain financial security. Women who do not marry ended up as spinsters, lonely and

The idea of a new society is very prominent in the text. This is a society on the brink of the industrial, and the old and class are all being questioned. Although industry starts in the most part, we see flashes of it through the lives of the characters. The ribbon, the Bennet sisters, all the latest fashions worn by Caroline and Louisa; all the consumerism and a new type of industrial trade. Austen's characters are highly aware of their part, from the big industrial centres found in large towns, the huge factories and mills. They live in small rural villages, in country estates and large mansions surrounded by nature. The shifting military presence hints at a society not at rest with itself; Austen predicts that it will be possible for people to live so remotely and rurally, disconnected from the world, spreading over the country. Hers was a time of huge changes indeed.

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# The Writer's Use of Language

Austen uses language to create complex characters, stunning scenery and irony and wit to poke fun at people's pretensions of class and status. Her style is characterised by an omniscient narrative voice (all-knowing) that can be examined in this section will look at the specific ways in which language is used in this novel.

**Symbolism** (when a symbol is used to represent an idea) is not present as much in other novels of the period, perhaps because so much of the action takes place indoors ('Aspects of Austen's narrative style'). However, Pemberley is a symbol of the pride and shyness of social situations. Indeed, all the main houses in the novel represent their inhabitants' wealth and social status. At Pemberley, art and nature mix harmoniously. Nothing is vulgar or affected. It is rather simply elegant and refined. This becomes through the relationship with Elizabeth. When they meet near the end of the novel, they are coming together at last across the divide of their misunderstandings and

**Metaphors** (figures of speech that imply a comparison between things) are used throughout the novel. One of the most important is dance and its use as a metaphor for marriage. Dance is so important in Austen's time as it was the only place where respectable young people could meet their future husband. Dance often began a courtship as women had to judge each prospective partner. Darcy will not dance with Elizabeth when they first meet and yet several of the dances are parallels with marriage proposals here. When they do dance, there is a sexual undertone, perhaps implying that dance would have been a metaphor for sex in the past. When Elizabeth and Caroline walk around the room in front of the gentlemen, it is a sexual metaphor who implies that their motive could be to show off their figures, further strengthening the link between physical parading and sex and marriage.

**Motifs** (recurring structures and images that help to establish the themes) are used throughout the novel. *Prejudice*. Elizabeth's eyes reoccur from Darcy's first mention of them near the end of the novel. Although he is teased relentlessly by the jealous Caroline Bingley, his falling in love with Elizabeth is seen through his references to her eyes throughout the novel. Journeys are used as a motif for changes or revelations. The main action of the story occurs when various characters are on the move. Bingley arriving at Netherfield opens the novel. Jane's journeying to Netherfield is a turning point that ends with her and her sister marrying two of the most eligible men in the novel. Elizabeth's journey to Brighton results in her elopement which only ends well when Mr Gardiner and Elizabeth see Wickham. Elizabeth visiting Charlotte Collins results in a marriage proposal. Elizabeth's return to Pemberley ends in her realising her good opinion and love for Darcy.

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# Aspects of Austen's Narration

With so subtle a writer as Austen, it is hard and sometimes misleading to try to follow a following list may help readers identify some of her practices and craft. Much is used by other writers but the voice at once so distinctive and so secure remains grace, clarity, humour and insight.

1. **Epigrammatic style and summative comment** – one of the distinctive features of Austen's occasional limitation – is Austen's often beautifully turned, funny, but sometimes harsh comments on a situation and character; the end of the first chapter is a good example of her put-downs or her sharp comments often defining human limitation; with her judgment and sense a secure and uncompromising clarity in such direct writing is harsh, even cruel, but it reinforces a sense of moral conviction and human limitation. Her flaws and lapses are swift, explained and understood.
2. **Irony** – saying the reverse or opposite of what one literally means. Austen engages the reader in all sorts of ways, making them more involved in the story where her assurances and words themselves are false, slippery. Irony sometimes contrasts with the ideal, the imagined with the actual and can enact on a stylistic level. Austen engages in about illusion and reality. Irony is a natural vehicle for comedy, pointing out how what is said or done actually is not what should be or what is. It is usually a harsher kind of criticism of things as they are compared to what they should be. Savage irony is itself a satirical technique.
3. **Abstract nouns** – words like 'pride' and 'prejudice' and 'understanding' are used. Austen sometimes seems to present these actually rather hard to pin down ideas as if they were giving her satire an apparent objectivity and the sense in her work of an unchanging standard against which error can be measured. As we have seen, some of these apparent certainties shift under pressure in the story, and the use of 'pride' is particularly evident. Other key terms like 'gentleman'. In the use of some of these terms, we can see the ideas in Austen's society taking place.
4. **Hyperbole** – this means exaggeration and is particularly evident in the character of Lydia. Her constant 'cries' about things, her exclamations, her 'Lordings' show a mind that is irrational, uncontrolled. It is used by Austen as part of her comedy to have a distorted or disproportionate sense of things or themselves.
5. **Caricature** – this means simplifying characters, or defining them by one or two traits or behaviours to capture the essence of a usually comical individuality. In her interesting characterisations, but, as in this novel, the caricature can sometimes be used in society in an easy to understand and mocking way – Mrs Bennet's neurotic oiliness and false politeness for example expose her as a rather shallow reality.
6. **Dialogue** – conversations between characters that alternate between narrative and provide variety and entertainment. This engages the reader in active participation with the individuals in the story. Of this, Austen is an absolute master; with a few exceptions, her moral sense of a character. Often characters' speech betrays their self-regarding attitudes towards themselves and others. Those who are blunt, less talkative, more direct and more rational in sentence construction are those who are usually most reasonable. Austen herself rarely indulges in purple prose (overly extravagant) and for her the connection between rational speech and thought. That which cannot be said is mysterious, the irrational and the passionate aspects of life, sometimes seen in the verbal universe, as of less worth. Everything in Austen that is worthwhile is controlled by her irony is to define and control not to suggest something beyond language. Her words promote a sense of certainty that, if the characters cannot see their limitations, they are out there, and confusion and fantasy (and prejudices) can be sorted out.

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# Form

Form is the type of writing and the way in which the author presents the text.

Austen's book is a novel, a type of writing that was developing when she wrote it. The novel is the most popular literary form there has ever been. Genre, that is the kind of writing, can shape the way the book looks at reality or the way it represents things it talks about. The novel is often associated with ordinary experiences of everyday life, not supernatural things or superhuman people. To us, Austen's world seems 'ordinary', but they represent part of the novel's form. It attempts to deal with things that were considered relatively new or 'novel' then. For a start, women's positions were more important in novels than in other forms of literature, and, indeed, many early novels were written by women who were finding a voice in literature almost for the first time. Novels of domestic reality with women were mainly forced to live and be (at least in the domestic sphere), a voice that could exert a power and influence usually denied to her in other forms of literature.

Austen uses an omniscient narrative voice within the novel. This means an all-knowing narrator who switches effortlessly into the thoughts of other characters and events. Often, as at the start of the last chapter, Austen presents indirectly the point of view of the narrative, seeming to share their perspective but actually creating a distance that the readers can see through. The first person 'I' is rarely used. This stresses the omniscience (all-knowing). Sometimes the narrator's viewpoint and that of the characters, which inclines us to share her views and accept her authority as if it were the truth.

Due to Austen's omniscient narrative voice, and the closeness of this voice to the characters, it is difficult for the reader to see into the minds and true thoughts of other key characters. A hurdle, Austen cleverly employs another traditional form in her novel to reveal the thoughts and motives of other characters: the letter. Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (a novel made up entirely of letters) popular in the previous century, allowed Austen to see inside the minds of her characters and to reveal more about their personalities to the reader. Mr Collins' letters to Mr Bennet show his oily character and self-serving nature. Bingley's letter to Jane makes it clear that her party will not be returning to Netherfield. Darcy's letter to Elizabeth shows her so much about his true personality and the nature of his relationship with Wickham. It is only through reading this letter that Elizabeth begins to realise that she may have misread Darcy. Without the use of letters, the plot and character development would have been severely limited within the constraints of the novel form.



## Extended Essay Question

What are the strengths and limitations of the novel form?



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## Structure

Structure is the way in which the parts of the text are arranged and manipulated to show the relationship between these parts.

The novel is structured into three volumes, each volume telling a part of the story. The first two volumes are significant to the structure of the novel because they each deal with a different narrative. Volume one's action takes place in and around the village in which the story is set. There are balls at the assembly rooms and Netherfield Park, the general post office, and Mr Collins visits Longbourn to find a suitable wife. Volume two is all about other characters coming into the private world of Longbourn. Caroline, Wickham and Collins all come into the small country domestic space of the novel – and gives their version of their identities.

Volume two begins with travel, specifically travel away from Longbourn. Caroline and Mr Collins inform her that their party have returned to London. Elizabeth visits Charlotte and Mr Collins. She also meets Darcy. It is significant that the first proposal and the subsequent rejection take place at Longbourn; Austen only reveals Darcy and Wickham's true past away from the village. Volume three is set. She needs Elizabeth to travel away from there in order to open up the story with two other journeys: the regiment move away from Meryton and Mrs Gardiner's visit to Pemberley, both precursors to what happens in the final volume.

Volume three is all about resolution (things coming to a conclusion and being resolved). Elizabeth, at Pemberley, realises how wrong she really has been about Darcy, and they are reconciled. Wickham but things are put right to an extent. Jane and Bingley are also married.

Beginning each volume with a new chapter numbering sequence highlights the importance of the beginning between the actions and events of each part. In the reader's mind, it gives the impression of beginning again in the narrative. The narrative itself, however, is fairly chronological (in the order that events have happened in time) with a lack of flashbacks or flash-forwards. This is used as a device through which to explain past events. As in the case of Darcy's first proposal, not only does this technique reveal the information, it also allows Elizabeth to reflect on her feelings many times as she wants, each time rereading Darcy's character as well and realising she might have misjudged him.

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## Context

Context refers to the events and literary movements that happened around *Pride and Prejudice* was written. It is important to know about significant events in A and literary movements because these affect our understanding and interpretation of the novel. By setting *Pride and Prejudice* within its historical context, we can further understand the themes and messages of the novel overall.

Jane Austen lived through tumultuous times and it is a cliché, and not a wh that you would not always know this from reading her novels, with their qu seemingly stable feudal worlds. For most of her life, England was at war with France (who figure innocently, and not so innocently in *Pride and Prejudice*). From 1793 onwards, France and Britain had been fighting over who would have the m culminating in the Seven Years' War between 1756 and 1763. By the time A American of Independence had broken out and French soldiers were s fighters. The impact of the almost constant war with France is felt in the no to say that it is not the focus of things. Austen wrote about domestic life; sh worlds of families and individuals. However, if we take a step back, we can in and out of her narrative give a constant presence of war looming in the b cling to their daily routines against an ever-present but not often mentioned people's unwillingness to focus on a war that was happening mostly out of was still felt economically and by families with sons in the militia.

The French Revolution started in 1789. This was a key historical process th ways of thinking and ways of being 'modern' as focus shifted from the com desires of the individual. This is clearly reflected in the novel; the plot is cor and thoughts of individual characters. The French Revolution's leaders calle of a country, despite their birth or rank, and they went about achieving this Members of the aristocracy were beheaded as crowds of citizens looked on classes were considered equal to everyone else. For the aristocracy in Brita world was being turned on its head. The peasants, far greater in number, n such as William Blake, initially in favour of the French Revolution with its fo equality, became appalled at the violent bloodbath that it became as time of fear that Britain would follow suit and a great violent revolution would b reflected in characters such as Lady De Bourgh. Although she is very disdain considers to be lower than her, and very rude to them, one could argue th secure her own place in the world against the fear of being removed from that she understands about the world is based on a social class structure, w the top; this is how she makes sense of the world. Although such a large-s violent revolution never happened in Britain, the ideas of the French Revol stability of the old social system. Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship is relationship could possibly never have been sanctioned decades before. D thinking th could possibly never have been sanctioned decades before. D thinking th kind of thinking, one where a person's actions and values count for more th bloodline. This is a very different way of thinking and it is arguable that, w of the French Revolution, this 'modern' type of relationship would have be least, the people involved in such a union would have been outcast from so

In many ways linked to the changing ideas of social classes, the concept of rights of their own was emerging. The French Revolution's doctrine stated that one man was as worthwhile as any other despite class or wealth. In 17

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published *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, a text that examined the rights of women and transferred from a father to a husband upon marriage. While Austen's novel shows the status of women, there are flickers of the changes happening to the status of women. The novel tells us that finding a husband was still essential for most women and financial support. However, Elizabeth shows us that things were changing anything but love, she defies social conventions as to how ladies should be (for example) and she strives to find a kind of equality in her relationship with

First drafted in 1795, six years after the start of the French Revolution, the novel was set in 1813 when Austen was 38. Austen was born in a rectory in Hampshire in 1775, the country she knew well so it made sense, therefore, to set this novel there. Mr. Bennet was a gentleman, descended from people who worked in trade, showing a class divide. She had six brothers and a sister, like the sisters in the novel. Her relationship with her sister Cassandra was extremely close, paralleling Elizabeth and Jane's relationship in the novel. Although she went to school with her sister, she was called home because her parents could not afford it. Elizabeth, Jane spent the remainder of her education being guided by her father at home. Like the sisters in the novel, Jane spent her days practising those skills she accomplished: playing the piano, singing, and embroidery. In 1801, the family moved to Bath. In 1802 Jane received a marriage proposal which she rejected despite the economic match would have provided. Unlike Charlotte Lucas in the novel, Jane did not seek security; she remained, like Elizabeth, convinced that nothing but love would lead to a permanent partnership with another. Jane hardly wrote at all in Bath and only a few letters, preferring the country life. In the novel, big cities are not portrayed as a country life.

Just four years later, the family moved again, this time to Southampton. At this time, Austen's financial life with her mother and sister was not looking very secure. They could not afford to stay in Bath and so moved to share a house on the coast. Like Mrs. Bennet in the novel, Jane and her female relatives were wholly reliant on the financial support of her father. Finally, in 1809, Austen's brother offered the women a more settled life in London. Once more became a productive writer in this more secure and tranquil setting.

The end of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century saw the Romantic Movement, a pan-European cultural phenomenon that changed the way we view things such as the individual, nature, feelings and reason. William Blake published a collection of poems with a focus on the individual, in 1789 and Wordsworth's *Ballads* appeared in 1800. The idea of the sublime, meaning here a sense of awe and the world as it is, also gained importance during this period. The sublime at Pemberley, where art meets nature, is specifically in its grounds. Unlike the sublime found in this period, Pemberley's grounds are rugged and wild, as nature is therefore, truly awe-inspiring.

The novel as a popular form of literature gained popularity in England during the late eighteenth century. *Flanders* and Richardson's *Pamela* were both incredibly popular novels and popularised as a result. Without knowing about the popularity of this genre, Austen's novels were as popular as they became during the early eighteenth century, the age of the French Revolution, the Romantic Movement, American Independence, Trafalgar and Waterloo, of riots at home and abroad, and of the Industrial Revolution changing in terms of social and gender revolutions. Birth and blood matter in the trade. This focus on the individual, of actions speaking louder than ancestry, is the novel form.

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# Jane Austen in Context – A

- 1605–1615** Cervantes, the Spanish novelist, publishes *Don Quijote* often re
- 1700s** The rise of the novel in England
- 1722** Defoe publishes the novel *Moll Flanders*
- 1740** Richardson (the influential novelist) publishes *Pamela*
- 1753–1755** Publication of Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*
- 1756–1763** Seven Years' War
- 1775** Jane Austen born in a rectory in Steventon, Hampshire
- 1776** American Independence from British Empire
- 1789** French Revolution begins; William Blake, one of the key poets of the period, emphasises the individual, feeling, nature and radicalism published
- 1791** American Bill of Rights – individual rights become key in constitution
- 1792** Mary Wollstonecraft publishes *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* exploring shifts in the power, status and role of women
- 1795–1797** *Pride and Prejudice* as *First Impressions* drafted and rejected for publication
- 1795** Rise of Napoleon
- 1800** Wordsworth publishes first edition of *Lyrical Ballads*
- 1801** Act of Union between Britain and Ireland; Austen family move to Bath
- 1802** Peace of Amiens temporarily ends war with France. *Pride and Prejudice* (first drafted in 1799 as well) Jane Austen receives a marriage proposal
- 1804** Napoleon made Emperor
- 1805** Battle of Trafalgar; Nelson defeats Franco–Spanish Alliance
- 1806** The Austens move to Southampton
- 1807** Slave trade abolished in British Empire
- 1809** The Austens move to Chawton
- 1811** Regency begins. *Sense and Sensibility* published; revisions of *Pride and Prejudice*
- 1812** Napoleon invades Russia; America declares war on Britain
- 1813** *Pride and Prejudice* published
- 1814** *Sense and Sensibility* published
- 1815** Battle of Waterloo
- 1816** *Emma* published
- 1817** Austen dies in Winchester
- 1818** *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey* published posthumously
- 1819** Peterloo Massacre in Manchester – key event in class, working class and the tensions and unrest in sections of society in the period

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# Critical Reception: Discussion Points

Generally speaking, examiners do not expect students at GCSE to have read in examinations. Much criticism is difficult or can confuse or stop readers from views or even enjoying the book at all. However, some reading of criticism and discussion on the following topics may help add to the appreciation of Austen and surround it. Always remember that you are being asked for an *appreciative* personal response – not a lot of simple opinions about whether or not you have prejudices! Critics and discussion can help here.

1. Jane Austen has become an iconic part of our literary heritage, and has become more widely read today than in her own time. Some say she writes about an England that seems perhaps more attractive and more – than our own age. Do you agree with this view and can you see that it really does her work justice?

2. Some see Jane Austen as being a rather narrow writer in that she ignores injustices of her time and only writes about a narrow segment of society and relationships, perhaps naïvely. How is it possible to argue against this view?

3. Some disagree with Austen's morality saying that she is intolerant. Other works as moral ones is a misleading approach. What are your responses?

4. Critics tend to look at literature very seriously and claim for it all sorts of guidance in a confusing world, or a form of conscience. Relevance is always a question – do you think are the reasons that Jane Austen continues not only to be read but as a great writer who has much to offer us today?

5. Watch the famous BBC television adaptation and the recent 2005 film. How do you interpret the characters and story, especially how the more recent film seems more ordinary and down to earth than many more traditional versions? Which version do you prefer and why? And is it possible to translate Austen for today?

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# Key Term Glossary

<b>Abstract nouns</b>	Nouns that refer to intangible things (e.g. 'pride' or 'love')
<b>Affable</b>	Extremely good-natured, likeable
<b>Affectation</b>	Pretence / putting on an act
<b>Animosity</b>	Intense dislike
<b>Caricature</b>	Simplifying a character down to one or two characteristics
<b>Characterisation</b>	the way in which the author creates characters and presents them to the reader or audience
<b>Dialogue</b>	Conversation between characters
<b>The Enlightenment</b>	A way of thinking about the world in the eighteenth century, based on reason and evidence gained from experiments rather than from religious or philosophical dogma
<b>Epigrammatic style</b>	The short and humorous summing up of a character or situation
<b>Epistolary</b>	A novel composed entirely of letters (e.g. <i>Persuasion</i> by Jane Austen)
<b>Form</b>	A type of writing, the way the author presents the text
<b>Genre</b>	A form or type of literature
<b>Hyperbole</b>	Exaggeration
<b>Irony</b>	A linguistic device by which writers express something that is the opposite of what is said or expected
<b>Metaphor</b>	A figure of speech that implies a connection between two things
<b>Materialism</b>	Valuing money and possessions over people and happiness
<b>Motif</b>	A recurring structure or image that helps to establish a theme
<b>Omniscient narrator</b>	A narrative voice that seems to know everything about the story, from reported conversation to psychological insights with characters
<b>Ostentatious</b>	A vulgar display of wealth
<b>Narrative voice</b>	The way in which the story is told (e.g. in the first person, the omniscient narrator, etc.)
<b>Prejudice</b>	Making your mind up about something (making assumptions) without knowing the full facts
<b>Psychology</b>	The study of the mind
<b>Satire</b>	A usually humorous criticism of people and/or society
<b>Stock characters</b>	Stereotypical characters that conform to certain 'types' (e.g. the sycophant or the rake) who would have been easily recognisable to Austen's audiences
<b>Structure</b>	The way in which the parts of the text are arranged and presented by the author
<b>Sycophant</b>	Someone who excessively flatters people to gain their favour
<b>Symbolism</b>	Using symbols to represent ideas or concepts
<b>Themes</b>	Important subjects addressed in the text which recur throughout

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## Further Reading

A list of suggested books or websites that will enhance the student's study

Austen, J., Le Faye, D. (ed.) *Jane Austen's letters* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Oxford: OUP, 1995)

Austen, J., Jones, V. (ed.) *Pride and Prejudice* rev. ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1993)

Butler, M. *Jane Austen and the war of ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975)

Carson, S. (ed.) *A truth universally acknowledged: 30 great writers on why we read* (New York: Random House, 2009)

Clark, R. (ed.) *Sense and Sensibility and Pride and Prejudice* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991)

Fergus, J. *Jane Austen: a literary life* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991)

Fitzpatrick, W. *Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice* (New York: Monarch, 1964)

Galperin, W. *The historical Austen* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990)

Jones, H. *Jane Austen and marriage* (London: Continuum, 2009)

Jones, V. *How to study a Jane Austen novel* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997)

Monaghan, D. (ed.) *Jane Austen in a social context* (London: Macmillan, 1991)

Morrison, R. (ed.) *Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice: a sourcebook* (London: Macmillan, 1991)

Newton, J. *Women, power and subversion: social strategies in British fiction* (London: Routledge, 1981)

Tanner, T. *Jane Austen* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986)

Todd, J. *The Cambridge companion to Pride and Prejudice* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003)

Todd, J. *The Cambridge introduction to Jane Austen* (Cambridge: CUP, 2015)

Todd, J. *The Connell guide to Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice* (London: Corgi, 1991)

Tomalin, C. *Jane Austen: a life* (Harmondsworth: Viking, 1997)

Tuite, C. *Romantic Austen: sexual politics and the literary canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

### Websites

The Cambridge history of English and American literature <http://www.bartleby.com/100/engam.html>

Molland's <http://www.mollands.net/>

The Republic of Pemberley <http://pemberley.com/>

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# Suggested Answers

## Chapter Summaries and Analysis

### Chapter 1

#### Debate prompt

- Mr and Mrs Bennet do have a fairly happy marriage. They have their own interests and although they do not really love each other.
- No, they do not have a happy marriage because Mr Bennet has lost all respect for his wife of action or ambition.
- What is a happy marriage anyway? What constitutes this? They do not have respect for each other, they do not like one another enough to marry.

### Chapter 2

#### Extended essay question

- Mr Bennet likes to surprise people, it amuses him. He says one thing and does another.
- This could be because he is bored with his own life, unable to hold any real power or responsibility in society or the world, and so plays with the emotions of his wife and feels more powerful than he really is.

#### Debate prompt

- Lydia's first words do tell us a lot about her character; they tell us that she is stupid, immature and speaks without thinking.
- Lydia's first words only tell us part of her character. That she is immature and speaks without thinking there is more to her characterisation that is revealed as the novel progresses.

### Chapter 3

#### Active learning task

- Bingley: good-natured, likeable, easily manipulated by others, friendly, naïve.
- Darcy: proud, haughty, ill-mannered, rude, stand-offish, nasty.

#### Extended essay question

- Darcy is prejudiced against the people of Longbourn because of their social class and provincial world where people are pompous with no reason to be. He sees social climbing wannabe stars. The society in which he usually mingles is much higher than this and although we as the readers feel outraged on their behalf, Darcy's prejudice against the behaviour of characters such as Mrs Bennet.
- Darcy's behaviour and his lack of dancing are rude and do not go unnoticed. Mrs Bennet is prejudiced against him. Indeed, this is when Elizabeth forms her opinion of him as a rude and proud man. Meryton is tarnished before he even had the chance to speak to most people there.

#### Debate prompt

- Darcy's first words towards Elizabeth do not make it clear that they will be a good match. His hostility and prejudice against her and the society in which she moves.
- Yet they do at least hint that they will be a good match. His words show that he has followed the conventions of the novel, set the scene in which he will come to love her.

### Chapter 4

#### Active learning task

- Lizzy's reactions show us that she is the sceptical rational sister while Jane is the naïve one. It is clear that Elizabeth can see through the Bingley sisters although her judgement is always shown to be right.

#### Extended essay question

- Elizabeth and Jane are very close as sisters but they are very different as people. Jane is the good in everyone and everything. Elizabeth is more judgmental, forming prejudices.
- Although Jane is the more traditional heroine figure, Elizabeth's sharp wit and fiery independence make her an interesting character in the novel. Jane is nice but rather dull. She is more two-dimensional with her changing opinions and interesting conversations, feels more real to us as a character.

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## Chapter 5

### Debate prompt

- Jane is right about Darcy's shyness being mistaken for pride; much of his stand-offish shyness and not from pride or thinking that people are beneath him.
- No, Jane is not right. Darcy admits that he is proud of his birthright and does not see prejudiced against people below him in status and class.
- The real truth probably lies somewhere between these two viewpoints. Yes, he is proud on their merit as well as their status as the novel progresses. We also later learn that his apparent haughtiness could well stem from such anxiety.

### Extended essay question

- The Lucases are a family that live near Meryton. Their daughter Charlotte is good friend of Elizabeth and have since been elevated.
- William Lucas, the father, was made a knight and is intended to be awkward in social status and class. He fits into the theme of class and society. Lady Lucas is a good friend of Elizabeth and provides information to both other characters in the book and to the reader.
- While he had money and power, William Lucas cannot give Charlotte a large dowry. This fits in with the theme of marriage, women, money and class.

## Chapter 6

### Active learning task

Darcy appears to be: proud, shy, playful, flirtatious, charming, intense.

### Extended essay question

- Elizabeth is intent on marrying only for love; she will not marry for any other reason. In order for a marriage to be happy and to last. If she does not fall in love, she is determined not to marry.
- Charlotte is much more practical when it comes to marriage. She sees that her family she must marry a man in order to gain financial status, comfort and social security. She wants to find a decent man who will take care of her and any subsequent children about the heart and much more about the head.

## Chapter 7

### Debate prompt

- Mrs Bennet is a responsible parent because she will do anything to secure husbands for her daughters. If a husband dies, his entire estate will go to someone else, and her daughters will be dependent on their husbands. Therefore, she is responsible as she is ensuring their future financial security.
- No, she is not responsible. She sends her eldest daughter out in the rain knowing that it will ensure some more contact between Jane and a potential husband.

### Active learning task

Elizabeth cares deeply for Jane. When they first meet Bingley, she is excited for her. As a friend, she shows affection for Jane. They chat intimately and we can see a true warmth between them.

## Chapter 8

### Extended essay question

Elizabeth is independent, thinks in her own way, does things against convention, and is witty. Bingley is snobbish, rude, haughty, desperate to be noticed, slavishly follows societal conventions, and is a nice person.

### Debate prompt

- Darcy is snobbish towards the Bennet family at this point in the novel but it is his social status and class.
- Caroline Bingley delights in ridiculing the Bennet family (aside from Jane, who she is a friend of) and she is very happy when Darcy joins in. She feels like it's her chance to shine and desperately wants him to notice her and is becoming jealous of Elizabeth. It is this jealousy that leads her to comment about Elizabeth's family. Darcy is driven only by his social upbringing; Caroline and her wish to discredit Elizabeth in the eyes of Darcy.

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## Chapter 9

### Extended essay question

- When Darcy comments that society is not as varied in the country as in the town, she is dealing with it, or even just ignoring it, she decides to take him to task about it in front of her friends. When she comments that she often dines with lots of families, Mrs Bennet is making it sound like she regularly eats with lots of families in her large social circle. Instead, she is making it sound like she regularly eats with lots of families in her large social circle. Instead, she is making it sound like she regularly eats with lots of families in her large social circle.
- Her mistakes tell us a lot about the judgmental society in which she lived, where marriage was the strong class system in place and the embarrassment that social mistakes could cause.

### Active learning task

The language of the diary entry should match the style of Mrs Bennet's language. She might describe the weather, the surroundings, and the ball in general.

## Chapter 10

### Active learning task

Elizabeth walks to Netherfield on her own, through the fields. She is independent of her sisters and has enough to make her own opinion of the people.

### Extended essay question

- Elizabeth and Darcy's exchanges tell us that they are more alike than they first appear. They both hold dear, they both think that good manners are crucial, and most importantly they are trying to be what they are not. Despite this, they both make mistakes, Elizabeth when she views her good nature as indifference towards Bingley.
- Their exchanges also show us that they are both looking for something more than the ordinary. They are looking for someone special and something amazing. They both do not like gossip and they both improve the mind. It is classic Austen that Elizabeth misunderstands Darcy's asking her to get her to admit to liking music that he finds beneath him. Despite their misunderstandings, they are similar here in values and character than either of them realise.

## Chapter 11

### Debate prompt

- Elizabeth represents one type of woman in the book but by no means all types. She is the more modern woman, that was being explored in Austen's time. She is independent but she still knows when to be a proper lady.
- Darcy represents the best type of man in the novel although at first he appears as the worst. It is the length of the novel to truly understand what a gentleman should be. He is fair, just, and good to those around him.

### Extended essay question

- Elizabeth and Darcy quarrel precisely because they care about what the other thinks. They wouldn't bother if they didn't.
- There is an emerging connection between them as they spend more time together. The reader can see that something is happening between them. Although Elizabeth does not tell the reader the delicious feeling that they are falling in love through their sharp-witted conversations, they are learning about each other and questioning themselves.
- It becomes clearer to the reader in this chapter that Darcy is falling in love with Elizabeth. They are chatting with each other both have flirty undertones. She wants him to think of her as being in her class. There is a growing emotion or chemistry between them.

## Chapter 12

### Active learning task

Darcy is conflicted because he can feel himself falling in love with Elizabeth but everything tells him that he is socially superior to her and, by marrying her, he will disgrace himself and his family.

### Debate prompt

- Mr and Mrs Bennet do have very different parenting styles. Mr Bennet prefers to leave his daughters to their fate while Mrs Bennet risks the health of her daughters to get them noticed by potential suitors.
- Both styles are equally as bad as each other. Mr Bennet, by being completely uninterested in his daughters, is leaving them open to financial ruin after his death. Mrs Bennet, although sometimes overbearing, is enough about her daughters' futures to want to help them to find husbands (and, therefore, security) at any cost.

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## Chapter 13

### Debate prompt

Mr Collins is purely a comic character. His over the top way of writing and his verbose use of both ways that Austen makes him into a character of amusement to the reader. However, Austen provides ways for the plot to progress: his proposal to Elizabeth, and his marriage to Charlotte, both of which allow Elizabeth to visit there and see Darcy again. He is also a symbol of all that is false and pomposity in the novel; he is supposedly a Christian but is more interested in appearances than when Lydia elopes.

### Extended essay question

- Mr Collins writes like he talks; he is very oily, sycophantic and full of false praise for the Bennets but he cares more about appearances than how things really are.
- His letter is ridiculed by the Bennets because of its pomposity and self-serving nature.

## Chapter 14

### Active learning task

- Mr Collins' diary entry shows he is full of over the top praise for the Bennets but every time he mentions the magnificence of their estate, for example, 'The Bennets have done what they can with the estate. However, nothing could compare to the splendour of Lady Catherine's abode.'
- Despite Mr Collins' diary being about the Bennets, try to work in as many references to Lady Catherine as you can.
- Perhaps include something slightly derogatory about the upbringing and behaviour of the Bennets.

## Chapter 15

### Debate prompt

- The fact that Wickham is in the military does add to his charm. He is an exotic stranger with war wounds.
- On the other hand, Wickham is a charmer without his military background and it can be argued that he adds nothing to his already extremely charismatic personality.

### Extended essay question

- At this point in the novel, Wickham is portrayed as a very affable, charming, charismatic man with a sharp streak and a lively mind. In these ways, he has a strikingly similar personality to Elizabeth, sharp, and yet not very rich.
- Darcy on the other hand is portrayed as cold, proud, haughty and ill-mannered; all of which are the opposite of Wickham.
- This is partly how Austen sets up the misunderstandings that Elizabeth experiences at the first part of the novel. Elizabeth, proud of her ability to judge people accurately, speculates that Wickham is a good person, and she mistakes appearance for reality. She mistakes appearance for reality as the novel progresses.

## Chapter 16

### Active learning task

Darcy being a proud man, family pride, brotherly pride, pride as being a just point of view, and Jane's pride in Lady Catherine De Bourgh.

### Extended essay question

- Wickham's conversation with Lizzy suggests that he is not all he seems because he is willing to share personal information about Darcy and his connection to that family. This willingness to share is at his true character.
- So far in the novel, Darcy and Wickham have been perceived by Elizabeth and Meryton. Elizabeth has been perceived by Darcy to be indifferent to Bingley. Elizabeth's perception of Darcy is very similar to how she truly is.

## Chapter 17

### Debate prompt

Elizabeth is keener to form opinions of people based on first impressions than Jane; she makes her own mind up despite priding herself on her good judgment. However, Jane perhaps makes her opinion of people based on how they tend to always see the good in people where Elizabeth sees the bad.

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## Chapter 18

### Debate prompt

Mr and Mrs Bennet are good role models for their daughters; they are married, they run a household, they show a deep fondness for each other. On the other hand, they are terrible role models. Mr Bennet neglects his daughters' futures and he openly ridicules his wife to his family. Mrs Bennet is hysterical and she shows up her daughters in public.

### Extended essay question

- Elizabeth is embarrassed about her mother's behaviour in public; her openly gossiping, her engagement before it takes place, her loud rudeness and her coarseness. She is embarrassed by Lydia and Kitty who flirt outrageously and run around after the attentions of soldiers. What does her behaviour when he publicly humiliates Mary by dismissing her while she is singing.
- Elizabeth can see the reactions of others, notably Darcy, even when he is a member of her family. That this upsets her shows that she cares what Darcy thinks of her and is perhaps even thinking of a marriage union with him.
- The embarrassment is important because it highlights to Darcy how seemingly impossible it would be despite his growing feelings for her. The fact that he manages to get over the embarrassment later in the novel is a key factor in his transformation into a true gentleman.

## Chapters 19-20

### Extended essay question

- Collins' proposal shows us that women in the novel mostly have the status of proper women. A woman agrees to be his wife; his change of attentions from Jane to Elizabeth shows that he is a helpmeet, and a woman he does find. There is a real fear that if a woman does not marry, she is destitute. That is why women such as Mrs Bennet become obsessed with securing her daughter's marriage is the only way for women of their class to gain financial and social security.
- Mrs Bennet is distressed by Elizabeth's rejection of the proposal partly because she is not married before those of her friend, Lady Lucas. This one-upmanship is typical of this period. One reason for her distress is that she is fearful for Elizabeth's future without a husband and she does not know if she would ever receive another proposal. Her fears are grounded and, although they are not for them, they show the dependence of women on men during this period.

## Chapter 21

### Active learning task

Wickham's diary entry could be written in two ways: like he really is the person he is pretending to be. The second option would be more authentic to the novel. Give his reasons for missing Elizabeth, Darcy, etc.

### Extended essay question

- Letters are used several times in the novel to develop the plot and develop our ideas about the characters.
- The problem with using an all-knowing narrative voice is that it can be hard to get into the minds of all the characters. Letters solve this problem for Austen. Letters tell us that Caroline is returning to Netherfield. They also reveal Collins' plans to come and stay (and a lot about his character). Crucially, later in the novel they tell us more about Darcy's true character and his feelings for Elizabeth and Wickham. They also let the reader know at the same time as Elizabeth what is going on.

### Debate prompt

Jane and Elizabeth are closer to each other than to their other sisters. The narrative shows the affection of their talks and letters. However, we are not shown whether the other sisters are close to Elizabeth. Just because the narrative does not include something, that does not mean that it does not exist. So, how close are the other sisters to Elizabeth within the world of the novel.

## Chapter 22

### Debate prompt

- Elizabeth does judge Charlotte for what she does. Elizabeth, for all her rational scepticism, refuses to marry unless she is truly in love. She cannot believe that Charlotte has sold herself to a man as Collins in order to find security. We might think that she misjudges Charlotte, but they are her opinions and ultimately Elizabeth will decide whether she is right or wrong.
- However, we could look more closely at Elizabeth's reactions to Charlotte's marriage. Perhaps she herself is marrying only for love than she realises; she conveniently only falls fully in love with Darcy after she has seen him in a different light.

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**Extended essay question**

- Austen portrays marriage in several different ways. Marriage is an institution that gives women and companionship to women and men. Many unions seem to work well with Charlotte; however, when she visits her, Charlotte and Collins seem happy enough in their marriage.
- Marriage treats women as property but it does give them security.
- Mr and Mrs Bennet married for lust when they were young and, once the fire went out, they are now trapped in what appears to be a loveless marriage without even respect. Austen shows that marriage happens when people marry for lust rather than for true love and respect, or even justice. The reader is led to believe that Lydia and Wickham might well end up in this type of marriage.
- Elizabeth and Jane are lucky enough to marry well (i.e. to rich men) while also marrying for love. They believe that their marriages, based on love and respect, are happy ones in the end.
- Mr and Mrs Gardiner are the one example of an existing happy marriage throughout the novel, based on love and respect for one another.

**Debate prompt**

Mrs Bennet is justified in complaining because Mr Collins will inherit her property after her husband's death. She is making her aware of that and treating Mr Collins with her hospitality. On the other hand, she has a relation and is entitled to his hospitality.

**Chapter 24****Debate prompt**

Jane is naïve in her reactions to the point of being annoying. She tries to see the good in Mr Bingley as bland, indifferent and insipid. However, one could argue that she is just being nice and polite.

**Active learning task**

Elizabeth has judged Caroline Bingley, Louisa Hurst, Lady Catherine, Collins and Bingley as foolish. Which of these characters do you agree with Wickham and Georgiana?

**Chapter 25****Extended essay question**

- Mr and Mrs Bennet are two people who married for lust when they were young and without respect for each other. Mr and Mrs Gardiner's marriage is the opposite of theirs, based on love and respect.
- Mr Bennet is guilty of hiding away from his responsibilities in the world as a father and as a way of not facing things which then makes situations even worse. He hasn't the courage to do so. He lets Lydia go to Brighton even though Elizabeth warns him but it is Mr Gardiner who rectifies that situation. Mr Gardiner takes the lead in that situation because he is a true man of the world.
- Mrs Bennet is weak-willed, prone to gossip and to complaining about her ailments and panics over things. Mrs Gardiner is the voice of reason and rationalism. She goes well beyond becoming obsessed with balls and marriage. Mrs Gardiner is more like Elizabeth in that she is a true woman of the world.

**Chapter 26****Extended essay question**

- Marriage is about money as well as love in the novel. Some marriages are more about love but ultimately money and marriage were closely linked in the period.
- For women of the Bennets' class and upwards, to marry well would have been a terrible success from your society. So in order to have money, women either had to be left it to them or marry. Then financial security would follow.
- Some marriages are explicitly about security (financial and social), e.g. Collins and Charlotte.
- Some marriages are about lust with no concern for money, e.g. Mr and Mrs Bennet.
- The conversation between Elizabeth and Wickham about money is telling; she at that point releases him from any kind of promise to her. She knows that they could not be really in love; they would not be able to financially survive. One of them must marry well.
- Jane and Bingley's marriage is a conventional love match. However, it worked out well for them.
- Elizabeth and Darcy's story is one of the greatest love stories in all of English literature. It changes her mind about Darcy and realises she is in love with him when she sees Pemberley. The confrontation with such wealth is what convinces her to be in love with him.

**Debate prompt**

Mrs Gardiner's comments to Elizabeth about marrying Wickham don't annoy her; it is taken as a given that who already knows that they cannot marry, as one of them must marry someone rich. How does she show that Elizabeth is annoyed by Mrs Gardiner's input. The scene is subtle and could be interpreted in many ways.

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## Chapter 27

### Active learning task

Elizabeth learns that Jane is down, depressed and generally feeling upset about what happens. She tries to hide it and get on with life but Elizabeth can see how affected she is.

## Chapter 28

### Debate prompt

Elizabeth's visit does confirm her opinion that her friend made a mistake in that she cannot be happy with Collins for a husband and Lady Catherine as a neighbour. However, the more she thinks about it, she realises that there are many different types of marriage and the decision that Charlotte

## Chapter 29

### Active learning task

Austen makes Lady Catherine an amusing character by portraying everything about her as so large and large with strong features; immediately she is being larger than the other characters. She goes into the detail of Charlotte's domestic life with a great deal of detail just so she can criticise it. It shows her self-obsessed side. It is also a bit of a shock to Lady Catherine by Elizabeth's not being as shocked as she is. It is also another indication of Mr and Mrs Bennet's marriage.

### Debate prompt

- Elizabeth does stand up for herself against Lady Catherine. She considers herself equal to her when they meet, unlike the other characters in the scene. She realises how rude and demanding her questions to her about her family are and yet she answers them with her head held high and wit. She will not bend to Lady Catherine; she does not show subservience and she is not embarrassed. In this way, she does stand up to Lady Catherine.
- However, it could be argued that she does not, not really. She explains her situation to her sisters being out at once without embarrassment but on some level we wonder if she is not at least a little bit ashamed of her parents' choices in regard to bringing up her daughters. She does not fully stand up to Lady Catherine because it is Lady Catherine's house in which she is.

### Extended essay question

- It can be argued that Mr Bennet is a loving and kind parent to his daughters, at least as a father. He is a companion for Elizabeth and there is a sense of 'us against them' in terms of the two of them in the household. They are both intelligent with sharp wit, both like reading and he misses her when she is away.
- Although he is a friend to several of his daughters, it can be argued that he is totally ineffective. His behaviour deeply impacts his daughters' futures. It is revealed in this chapter that he has never employed one for his daughters. For a man trying to bring up ladies, ladies who need a governess, not employing a governess is thoughtless and negatively impacts the way they are seen by their suitors. One cannot help wondering whether he simply could not be bothered, like Mr Bingley at the start of the novel until pushed and he cannot be bothered to try to stop it.
- He actively negatively affects his daughters' futures when he embarrasses Mary at the dinner party. In embarrassing Mary, he also jeopardises the futures of Jane and Bingley as Darcy starts to see him publicly criticise his daughter.

## Chapter 30

### Debate prompt

- Colonel Fitzwilliam is a very two-dimensional character; he is a device with which to move the plot. We can tell this because he is given very many characteristics of his own besides his role. His role is certainly to highlight Darcy's apparent rudeness by being the picture of perfect gentleness.
- However, he also has two other main functions. He tells Elizabeth about Darcy's past with Wickham and also is given as a good name to corroborate Darcy's story about his past with Wickham.

## Chapter 31

### Extended essay question

- Pride and vanity are explored throughout the novel. While pride can be a good and a bad thing, it is condemned by the narrative.
- The reader starts to realise that Darcy's apparently proud demeanour in social situations is due to his shyness. He finds it hard to take to strangers and his shyness often comes across as pride.
- Vanity is pride without reason; it is purely self-conceit and should be avoided at all costs.

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## Chapter 32

### Extended essay question

- Darcy enters the room and sits down in silence. It is up to Elizabeth to think of something to flail for some topic of conversation. This is comical; we can imagine the brooding Darcy fidgeting with a dry mouth. Even more so when we know what he is about to say so ungentlemanly behaviour at this point in the novel that he lets Elizabeth flail for conversation the lead.
- As the conversation goes on, Austen plays with silence to build tension and lead them to come to see Elizabeth. He continues to shy away from making conversation until he has something to say. His silence is possibly due to his astonishment at being alone with her. He enters into conversation and moves his chair closer to her. He talks to her with such familiarity that she is shocked. He sees her shock and it breaks the spell of dialogue between them. They have a short dialogue.
- Silence then is used in these ways to provide some tension and to build the sexual tension between Elizabeth and Darcy, although Darcy is more explicitly aware of his feelings. The air crackles between them before being said.

## Chapter 33

### Extended essay question

- Darcy and Elizabeth's prejudices deeply affect other characters in the novel.
- Darcy is prejudiced towards Jane; he believes her to be insipid and indifferent to his money perhaps but not in love with him. He therefore thinks he is doing his friend a favour by convincing her that she does not care for him, and for keeping them apart in the end as she is very depressed and upset about Bingley's sudden departure. It also affects Elizabeth but she thinks that perhaps he is a bit too easily convinced of things by his friends. It also affects her towards Darcy when she finds out what he has done.
- Elizabeth's prejudices affect many other characters in the novel. She is prejudiced in favour of Darcy. This affects how Darcy is perceived by all the people of Meryton and it also affects her for who he is. She also fails to realise that she is in love with him.
- Her prejudices towards Wickham in the first part of the novel, and her subsequent fall for him, allow him to court Lydia. The good opinion of him in the neighbourhood of Meryton which lays the ground for their disgraceful elopement.

## Chapter 34

### Active learning task

Elizabeth rejects Darcy's proposal mostly because of the way that it is made. He tells her everything that she is; her family, her connections, her birth. He means this to be in some way extremely insulting. She also does not realise what type of man Darcy is at this point and is not in love with him. To make matters worse, she has only just found out about his involvement in separating Jane and Bingley.

### Extended essay question

- Darcy shows his pride by dwelling on Elizabeth's inferiority to him in terms of her birth. He is also conceited as he fully expects her to accept his proposal; never does it enter into his mind that she might reject him. When she does reject him, he is wounded and shows his true feelings. His prejudices against her are not admitted that he separated Bingley and Jane to be in the end Bingley than himself; Bingley is a woman lower than himself is the implicit message. Darcy explains that he is not ashamed of her connections; he loves her in spite of these and refuses to lie to her and disown her. To lie is a good quality and he cannot see that at this point.
- Elizabeth's prejudice towards Darcy for his part in separating Bingley and Jane and her subsequent fall for Wickham. The proposal he makes to her is not as romantic as it could be; however, his feelings and connections are understandable given the social gulf between them. Her family connections were less prejudiced towards Darcy, she would perhaps have been more aware of the things he says if she were strong enough to overcome the divide between them, then he must really love her.
- However, her pride is hurt by his treatment of her and the things he says about her family. She is angry and she says things to him that, in turn, upset him and make him say some hurtful things. Her prejudices do not let them see at this point in the novel how much they are both in love with each other metaphorically blinded.

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**Debate prompt**

Darcy is justified. He is socially superior and Elizabeth's family behave terribly in public. His fact that he still wants to marry her is testament to how much he must love and care for her in ways not justified. He should not judge Elizabeth by her family's behaviour and her class. So people were starting to judge each other on actions and merit rather than birth and family. These changes before he can be the man that Elizabeth needs him to be.

**Chapter 35****Active learning task**

Elizabeth misjudges Wickham when she first meets him. She partially misjudges Darcy; in fact, she calls him proud but she also calls him ill-mannered when he is arguably just shy. She misjudges even met her.

**Chapter 36****Extended essay question**

- Vanity has been Elizabeth's downfall, pride and prejudice. She begins the letter with Darcy could say to defend himself. If not, as she reads and recognises the likely truth, she is astonished and humbled.
- Shame creeps over her head as she realises how wrongly she has perceived the two of them. It is only at this point that Darcy's account of Wickham's character appears to be. It is only at this point that she realises why Wickham would have been so open about such a personal matter to a stranger. It is a version of his life story when they first met several months ago. His being so keen to please and pretence.
- Elizabeth is upset mostly at herself. She who prided herself on her accurate judgment is checked as she realises how wrongly she has judged everyone and everything. She has the true ability to judge people's characters accurately. The novel's message here is that we seem and we cannot judge people on appearance alone without really getting to know them. Elizabeth even realises that Darcy is justified in misreading Jane's affections; she is not as indifferent by someone who does not know her. Indeed, Charlotte Lucas warned her for all the world like she did not much care for Bingley at all.

**Chapter 37****Active learning task**

- Elizabeth speaks to Lady Catherine fairly and tries to answer her civilly while being accused of being proud.
- Elizabeth is also very anxious for Jane and wants to make sure that she is feeling alright. She did care for Jane and is starting to blame her family, rather than Darcy, for the fact that she was taken from her.

**Chapter 38****Extended essay question**

- For the first time, Elizabeth is humbled as what she thought was a just opinion of Darcy is based on her hurt pride.
- She is realising that she has misjudged people and that things are more complex than she thought. She cannot judge people as well as she thought.
- She starts to wonder what else she has been wrong about and reassesses her views on her mistake. She understands now that there is more than one way to live your life and that she does not make it wrong.
- She sees with great clarity how her family, aside from herself and Jane, are viewed by the social circles. She sees how shameful the behaviour of her mother and sisters truly is for the future. She realises that she refuses to intervene.
- She starts her journey towards being a more balanced individual with more understanding. Instead of making rash judgments, she starts to understand that you need to take time to know someone before you can truly say that you know them.

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## Chapter 39

### Extended essay question

- Lydia never stops talking. Often in Austen's novels it is the silent characters that are the chatty ones either have something to hide or do not have the sense to ever stop talking. Lydia displays Lydia's immaturity.
- Lydia's speech is vacuous (empty). She needs more money and expects others to just give her a bonnet that she doesn't really like just for something to buy. This is pointless and a waste of money. She only cares about having fun.
- Lydia is careless when she talks in front of servants that they do not know and she talks about her father's care. She does not realise that this would be a massive social mistake; she has not taken the time to think for gossip.
- Austen uses hyperbole (over the top language) in Lydia's speech to highlight her immaturity. She goes home but she actually talks about very little. She uses lots of exclamation marks to show she is excited about anything and nothing. She thinks marriage is just a game and it is fun to play with about their ages.
- Her 'games' with Wickham also show that she takes nothing seriously and has no fear of consequences. This warns us, and should have warned her family, of the events that unfold when she marries him.

## Chapter 40

### Active learning

- The sisters conceal Wickham's true character, what he did in his past and who he really is, to make making his true character known. Elizabeth worries that Darcy has not given her permission to even part of it. She fears that she is not up to the task of convincing every one of Wickham's true character and, besides, they believe that Wickham will leave soon and it will all be done with him.
- Jane does not want to ruin Wickham's reputation as she thinks he is perhaps by now a good man. The sisters do not realise is that, by concealing the truth, they at least in part allow him to keep his reputation is still in tatters with the people of Meryton, which is hardly fair.

### Extended essay question

- Characters are often judged for their appearance in the novel. Elizabeth is judged by Darcy and the Bingley sisters are judged by Elizabeth. The Bennet family are judged by Collins and Darcy.
- Lady Catherine and her daughter are judged by Collins and Elizabeth.

## Chapter 41

### Debate prompt

- Mr Bennet does sabotage the future of his daughters. He does not hire a governess for them to get them out in society at once and he does not curb the wildness of the younger ones. Their lives and Elizabeth open to judgment and ridicule; it damages their prospects. However, the older ones are abominably and openly gossips in public. Mrs Bennet must take her fair share of the blame for the sisters themselves who damage their own prospects. Kitty and Lydia are licentious, but Elizabeth is full of pride and prejudice.

## Chapter 42

### Debate prompt

- Knowing more about Mr Bennet's marriage does make you more sympathetic towards him because he is trapped in a loveless marriage where he does not respect his wife. He cares not for her and wants to hide in his library, which is a very reasonable thing to do.
- However, it does not make you more sympathetic towards him because he chose his life and his children's instead of sabotaging the futures of his children. He knows that his estate will pass to his son and he is already very interested in securing husbands for his daughters. He openly ridicules Mary for showing that that type of bad behaviour is acceptable. He does not discipline her and she openly embarrasses Mary.

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## Chapter 43

### Extended essay question

- Elizabeth's feelings towards Darcy begin to change when she receives his letter and her perceptions of him and Wickham. Once she realises the truth about that, she starts to change her feelings towards everyone else, including Darcy.
- This is developed in this chapter when she visits Pemberley. The Darcy that she sees is a very different man to the one she thought she knew; proud, yes, but also kind and humble.
- It is when she goes to the portrait gallery and sees his portrait that she finally sees through the mask that he portrays to the world. Learning that he is a good loving brother also helps her to change her feelings towards him.
- When she sees him walk towards her, they are both embarrassed, but the fact that he is in lower-class relations the Gardiners convinces her of changes in him. Gone is the haughty Darcy; at this point how much her words about him not being a gentleman affected him; Darcy's re-evaluation of his character just as she has been doing about him. Her feelings towards him change at this chapter.
- Sceptics do argue that, although both characters have gone through a re-evaluation of each other as they truly are before falling in love, it is convenient that Elizabeth only fully re-evaluates him at Pemberley and his house and grounds. Perhaps she is unconsciously this financial security, as well as so close to him, in order to let herself fall in love with him.

### Debate prompt

Darcy's character change is convincing. Elizabeth's words about him not being a gentleman completely rethought how he viewed people and how he behaved himself. However, it is the narrative voice gives us no insight into his head at this point. Although we know what he knows when or how this occurred.

## Chapter 44

### Active learning task

Georgiana is important because she is the means through which Elizabeth can see Darcy's form. Whatever else he is, he loves his sister and wants to see her happy. The fact that he brings her to an inn to visit Elizabeth both show how much Darcy wants them to go to the inn that unless he were thinking of marrying Elizabeth?

## Chapter 45

### Extended essay question

- The Bingley sisters remain hostile to Elizabeth because she embodies many things that they are not: witty but also unfashionable and lower-class.
- They have built their world on social class and status, rather like Lady Catherine, and people such as Elizabeth making a match with people such as Darcy threatens the social comfort zone that they have created.
- They see Elizabeth and her family as social climbers who have no place in their social world.
- Caroline Bingley is potentially also still jealous.

## Chapter 46

### Debate prompt

Lydia is foolish and immature. She thinks it all a game when she runs off with Wickham without a reputation or the reputation of her family. She is not challenging society; she is just being reckless. It is argued that she knowingly has had enough with societal conventions and decides to challenge them.

## Chapter 47

### Extended essay question

- Lydia's language is very flippant and light. She thinks everything is a game, a joke, and nothing is taken seriously.
- This lack of thought and foolishness is shown through her hyperbole and flippant writing.

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## Chapter 48

### Active learning task

- Letters are really important in the novel as they develop characters and plots. We see Mr Collins write his letter to Elizabeth. Lydia's letter shows us what she has done with Wickham.
- Mr Collins' letter to Mr Bennet when he learns of Lydia's elopement shows us what a supposedly a Christian man, he states that it would be better for Lydia to be dead than alive. His pronouncement does not sit well with his Christian faith which surely should espouse forgiveness. Mr Bennet's letter back to him advising him to side with Darcy over Lady Catherine gives us a glimpse into the shrewd workings of Mr Bennet's inner mind.

### Extended essay question.

- Mr Bennet's views of Lydia have been prejudiced as he still sees her as a silly girl. He is too quick to jump up and could get herself into serious danger through her actions.
- It does not occur to him that she would do something so rash as running away with Wickham. He should warn him.

## Chapter 49

### Extended essay question

- Marriage is linked to money in the novel because, during this period, women had no income and financial security. Women were viewed as a type of property to be traded between families. Women were generally viewed to have the abilities to look after themselves and make their own decisions.
- Elizabeth comments to Wickham early on in the novel that one of them must marry for financial security in order to secure herself economically. Mrs Bennet is so desperate for her daughter to marry that she will be left penniless after the death of her husband otherwise.
- Lydia must be married to Wickham in order to avoid the complete and utter social disgrace of a single person living together without being married in Austen's age. Although it is fine for a woman to be unmarried, it is a complete social mistake, likening a woman more to a prostitute than a respectable lady. A marriage would also leave Lydia open to ruin if Wickham decided to leave her for some other woman. She has no legal claim to him or any money. In order to avoid social and financial ruin, she needs to marry.

## Chapter 50

### Extended essay question

- Mr Bennet reacts to news of the elopement and subsequent events by locking himself in his study. He goes on ventures to London but is little help to either Mr Gardiner or his daughter. He feels sorry for himself. He misjudged his daughter and the danger that she was putting herself in, not to mention her sisters. He is ashamed and disgraced at both himself and Lydia which shows us that he has failed as a father. He lacked the impulse to curb her behaviour. He feels his lack of good parenting strongly towards himself.
- Mrs Bennet reacts badly to the news of Lydia going off to marry; however, she is quick to find a match with someone. She is more concerned with how and when Lydia will buy her new dress than criticising her daughter for eloping in the first place. This shows us that Mrs Bennet is more concerned with superficial things such as fashion and does not have any sense of social propriety. Mrs Bennet knows only too well that once her husband dies she and her daughters will be left penniless. Because of this fear, a very real material fear, that she is happy for her daughter to be married. In any way she has gone about it. She values marriage and money. We also learn that she is not as stupid as she seems. It occurs to her that Wickham's intentions towards Lydia are anything but honourable.

## Chapter 51

### Debate prompt

- Lydia is a more interesting character. She appears to be silly and vapid, constantly chasing after Wickham. However, she could be seen to be challenging such rules through her actions. Whether Wickham marries her or not, showing that she is the 'new woman' character – an interesting character – and rebel – than her sister Elizabeth.
- Alternatively, Lydia is a stupid, silly, over the top, superficial idiot who cares for no one but herself and her desires at any particular point in time. Elizabeth is a much more interesting character. She is witty and multi-layered. She also has a revelation about her prejudices as the novel progresses. She is a better person as a result; unlike Lydia, who remains as stupid and selfish as she ever was.

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### Extended essay question

- Lydia's language tells us that she is unashamed of her actions and does not see anything as proud of how rashly she acted running off with Wickham as it was for love and adventure. She would marry him and was happy to live with him despite the great damage that would be done to her reputation.
- She is conceited and shows no remorse. Her language is as chatty, as happy and as energetic as ever. She really has no idea how close she and her family came to complete and utter ruin.

## Chapter 52

### Extended essay question

- When Elizabeth and Wickham meet for the last time, they meet as brother and sister. Elizabeth's evaluation of Wickham and Darcy based on her knowledge of what really happened. Elizabeth introduces the topic of her visit to Pemberley and tries once more to draw him in to her. Wickham does not know that she is aware of the truth.
- Elizabeth tests how far he will go to keep his previous love. He is moved as she skirts around the conversation with him. She hints that she knows the truth from Mrs Reynolds the housekeeper. She stands up for Georgiana. Wickham tries again to win Elizabeth over to the living that she should have had in the church but Elizabeth is not impressed; she is making sermons. The point for the reader is that we know very well that he refused his good advice and that they Darcy gave him on a lifestyle of gambling, drink and women. The subtext is clear; she is letting him know that she knows the truth and that the time of his character is long past.
- She offers him her hand as his sister when they arrive at the house and he cannot look at her. He has been rumpled. It is not clear what he was trying to achieve by continuing to try to make her his. He wanted to keep her good opinion as a sister or as another potential lover once he had the chance. For this reason, it did not work. Elizabeth knows the truth and makes sure that he knows that she knows the truth.

## Chapter 53

### Extended essay question

- Mrs Bennet continues to act foolishly: she is over the top about Lydia departing, she is treating Wickham badly which embarrasses Elizabeth because she knows the truth, and she is treating her two older sisters with her lack of social skills.
- This is thematically important because it shows that, despite Mrs Bennet and her rudeness, she is still with Elizabeth and wants to marry her.

## Chapter 54

### Debate prompt

Darcy is still silent because he is still assessing the situation with Bingley and Jane; he wants to be sure of his true love for his friend before he recommends her to Bingley. He is perhaps also embarrassed by his mistakes and his overwhelming feelings for Elizabeth.

## Chapter 55

### Extended essay question

- Mrs Bennet becomes a mouthpiece for society's materialism and judgment of things.
- She tells Jane that she could not be so pretty for nothing. Her beauty is seen to be all that matters to provide her with money and goods.
- She is more concerned with how much money Bingley has than with his personality and how it affects Jane. Love barely comes into things as far as Mrs Bennet is concerned.
- She also gossips about the Bennets and spreads it around the village. She is proud of her position and up being so successful rather than truly happy.

## Chapter 56

### Debate prompt

- This chapter completely embodies the debates that the main characters in the novel have about social prejudice and whether it is possible to be happy with a spouse from a different social class. If Elizabeth cared at all for Darcy she would leave him alone. This chapter shows how social climbing becomes more acceptable to a lot of people; merit and actions start to matter. This chapter is crucial because it allows Elizabeth to stand up to Lady Catherine. She does something that gives Darcy hope that she loves him.
- No, it is not the most important chapter in the novel; there are lots of more important chapters. Elizabeth and Darcy meet at Pemberley or when she reads his letter.

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### Extended essay question

- Lady Catherine's family pride is undermined in this chapter by her shockingly bad and
- Despite her thinking that she is better than Elizabeth, how she treats her and speaks to her is so rude despite her birth. She criticises Elizabeth and her family to her face, tells that if they
- She pushes and pushes Elizabeth for an answer as to whether she would definitely re-
- Elizabeth, despite her lower birth, is the one who behaves more like a lady during this time

## Chapter 57

### Active learning task

- Austen delays the climax of the novel in order to build tension and suspension for the reader. We know how things will work out and we are often being teased by Austen in our expectations.
- It is in this teasing spirit that Austen allows Mr Bennet to tease Elizabeth about Darcy's true feelings towards her. No other but the reader does. It is, therefore, comical for the reader while Mr Bennet argues over a marriage proposal that he considers ridiculous as, until now, this is clear and it also serves to make the reader feel closer to Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship in preparation for the novel's ending.

## Chapter 58

### Active learning task

In this chapter, Elizabeth tells Darcy that she is aware of his help over persuading Wickham. She thanks him but tells her that he only did it to make her happy; this tells her that he still loves her. Darcy denies her to Lady Catherine ironically taught him to hope that she might want to marry him. He proposed the first time and for the first part of his letter which he also asks her to burn. He explains how she has humbled him. They clear up any misunderstandings about why she left. He explains how he confessed to Bingley that he meddled in his relationship with Jane. Elizabeth thinks that maybe he is not ready to be laughed at. This shows that she is learning to moderate her feelings.

## Chapter 59

### Active learning task

'I love him', 'he has no improper pride', 'perfectly amiable'.

### Extended essay question

- Mr Bennet proves his real affection for Elizabeth because he cares about the choices she would have as a result. He worries that she is only accepting Darcy because she wants a good match: the clothes, the carriages and the finery.
- He knows too well what it is like to not be in love with one's spouse and he does not because Elizabeth has done nothing for months except criticise Darcy and now seems to accept his proposal. He does not know of the gradual relationship that has been developing between them; this also serves to bring the reader into their relationship and show that others are outside it.
- Once he is convinced that she really loves Darcy, he is much happier and makes an effort to support her. However, it is worth noting that he does give Darcy permission to marry Elizabeth even if he does not like him. The extent to which this shows his affection for her is debatable.

## Chapter 60

### Debate prompt

- This chapter shows that their relationship is strong because they can tease each other and still be falling out.
- It shows us that they are in this marriage as partners and helpmates to each other in

## Chapter 61

### Active learning task

In the final chapter, Austen's narrative voice sums up what happens to various characters. We feel that we are allied closely to Elizabeth and we are seeing things from her point of view as a helicopter, hovering over various settings and people as things are fully concluded.

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**Extended essay question**

- The conclusion of the novel is very satisfactory in the way that it sums up what happens in a very traditional; everyone's story has an ending, a place in the final narrative, and the marriages.
- Austen's world is one of manners and morality. Despite stretching the limits of moral codes, she ensures that the good characters get their happy ending and the not so good ones get their just deserts. This is cathartic and satisfactory for the reader because this is how we are programmed to want a neat ending that leaves everything resolved. So while Austen's ending is not revolutionary, it is very satisfying.

**Whole-text Analysis****Characterisation****Elizabeth Bennet****Active learning task**

- Positive: witty, independent, spirited, strong-willed, clever, secure in herself, moral.
- Negative: very judgmental, makes judgments based on first impressions, prejudiced, can be defensive, proud.

**Debate prompt**

Darcy and Elizabeth could not be more different. They are from different social classes, different backgrounds. For most of the time, he is shy while she is gregarious, she is happy to mix in different circles. On the other hand, they are in some ways very alike. They are both clever, strong-willed, witty. Importantly they can both see through affectation. They are both looking for something more than what they should be happy attaining.

**Debate prompt**

Elizabeth is not an outsider in her family; her father loves her and Jane is her best friend. However, she has a strong independent spirit and lots of original thoughts. She does not care much for the conventions of society, is sceptical and only wants to marry for love. She is looking for something more than living in the shadow of her family.

**Extended essay question**

- Elizabeth's characterisation is very well done; she is one of English literature's most compelling heroines.
- She is arguably most interesting in the first half of the novel before she mellows in her marriage to Darcy.
- Her sharp wit and intelligence coupled with her warmth of personality make her instantly likable. However, her character although perhaps her transformation after reading Darcy's letter is a little bit abrupt because the narrative has kept us inside Elizabeth's mind throughout the novel up until the end. It is a pity that she undertakes her journey with her.

**Mr Darcy****Debate prompt**

- Darcy begins the novel as the anti-hero and Wickham is set up as a hero-type figure. However, the contrast between appearance versus reality that this is not true; in fact, the character who appears to be the rake while the anti-hero becomes the true hero. Darcy is a true hero because through his actions and improvement, he rescues Lydia and he becomes the person Elizabeth needs him to be.
- However, it can be argued that he's not really a hero as he only uses his power and influence to bribe Wickham with money.

**Active learning task**

- Hey, I'm Mr Darcy. Let's see, well, I'm hugely rich and say what I think (which is what I should do) and I like a girl who I think hates me but it's fine because she's vastly unsuitable. I've made a huge mistake but I'm sorting it out. I like horses, reading and looking moody at parties.

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**Extended essay question**

- Darcy goes on a metaphorical journey throughout this novel. He thinks he is a gentleman but actually his pride makes him so prejudiced towards her and the type of society in which he lives. He is rudely and not like a gentleman at all. It is actually Elizabeth who helps Darcy to shed his pride and means to be a true gentleman. When she rejects his first proposal, he is completely shocked. She tells him that he has not behaved like a gentleman and it is these reflections that end with him understanding how he should really behave. He is still a bit of a positive pride, pride in his family and his place in the world, not haughty pride. Mr and Mrs Gardiners show how much his prejudices about class have gone.
- Elizabeth goes through a similar journey as she realises how wrongly she has judged Darcy and her prejudices. Once they have both come to realise how wrong they have been, they are married at the end of the novel.

**Mrs Bennet****Debate prompt**

Mrs Bennet is a purely comic character. She is a mother over the top gossip who never has anything to say but purely to show how embarrassing her family can be and she is comical. However, she has some initial hopes of marriages for her daughters so badly in society. She is there to show the reader that she is not curbed by her own authority. She does have some valid points as well; her fears about her daughters' future are not unfounded though they are mocked by Mr Bennet. She worries about them because they will all be penniless without husbands. It is typical Austen irony that although she is the chief means by which their chances of good marriages are being ruined.

**Active learning task**

- Mrs Bennet is prejudiced about many things and many people (Darcy, Bingley, the Lucases). Her prejudices change depending on how things suit her at the time. This shows us that people are not as they truly are and to sensibly evaluate things.
- She fails as a parent because she behaves so badly in society; she is ruining her daughters' lives without even realising it. She is ignorant and encourages bad behaviour in her young daughters improperly, gossiping and making loud comments about people. It is funny for the reader because of her eldest daughters.

**Extended essay question**

- Mrs Bennet's characterisation exposes many false values in society, but chiefly that of marriage.
- Her opinions about people change depending on the way things look on the surface.

**Lydia****Debate prompt**

Lydia could be seen as the embodiment of a new modern woman; she falls in love and elopes with no thought for societal rules and conventions. However, she does not make any rational decisions about these things; she simply runs headlong into hedonistic actions with no thought, showing that she is a foolish girl.

**Extended essay question**

- Lydia is a silly and foolish girl who runs after soldiers and is only for bonnets and money.
- Her characterisation is set up to be silly and fooling from her first words. The letters of her elopement reveal that she does not really care for Wickham but she has behaved and the shame of her family had Wickham not been interested to marry her. The fact that she does not care for him apart from her own hedonistic pleasures shows her to be a very selfish and self-centred character with a high opinion of herself.

**Mr Bennet****Debate prompt**

Mr Bennet is more like a father to Elizabeth because he cares more for her, they share jokes together; she is his favourite and they are very close. However, it is Mr Gardiner who acts as a father figure. In this way, while Mr Bennet is more like her friend, it is actually Mr Gardiner who is her father.

**Active learning task**

Try to write in the style of Mr Bennet (to the point, witty, resigned) as he realises the great mistake of stepping in to correct Lydia's behaviour earlier. Elizabeth tried to warn him but he did not listen. Write in to such a situation.

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### Extended essay question

- Mr Bennet fails his daughters throughout the novel. They are supposed to be being educated but did not have governesses. They are all out at once, which looks very vulgar to outside observers.
- He does not stop his wife from gossiping and behaving badly in public nor does he control his younger daughters. In this way he is injuring the reputations of his elder daughter.
- He refuses to act until pushed; he would rather hide away in his study despite knowing he is penniless when he dies unless they marry.
- His humour does not rescue him; he hides behind his humour like he hides in his study.

### Wickham

#### Debate prompt

Austen does convince the reader that a romance between Elizabeth and Wickham would be a relatively poor for a start. Once she knows what he truly is, she sees through his affectation and could remain convinced of a spark between them.

### Extended essay question

- Wickham deliberately manipulates Elizabeth in the first half of the novel in order to get a good impression of the people of Meryton. He lies to her in order to play on her prejudices (she is already prejudiced against him by refusing to dance with her).
- Elizabeth judges Wickham based on her prejudice towards Darcy.
- Wickham is Darcy's enemy and yet Darcy swallows his pride to ask Wickham to consider her for the reader and Elizabeth just how much Darcy truly loves her.

### Active learning task

Hey guys, Wicky Wickham here. I'm a good guy, pretty misunderstood you know? Did I tell you I inherited? Some posh toff took it off me anyway. So I'm a bit down on my luck right now. I'm a bit of a gambler, do you? I enjoy beautiful women, fine wines and looking pretty charming, am I right?

### Mr Collins

#### Extended essay question

- Charlotte's marriage to Collins shows us that marriage in Austen's time was as much about practicality as it was for love. Different characters have different attitudes to marriage, but whereas Charlotte is much more practical.
- However, we have to wonder whether Elizabeth really would have remained single if it was not for Darcy. It is interesting that she only fully realises that she loves Darcy after she has been to Pemberley.
- Charlotte's happy marriage to Collins teaches Elizabeth that there are other valid options. Even if something would not have worked for her, it does not make it entirely wrong. This teaches Elizabeth to be more open about other people's views.

### Debate prompt

Darcy and Collins are not similar; they are extremely different. Collins is self-serving and over-the-top, while Darcy is judgmental and narrow-minded. Darcy is well read with his own sense of morality; he does not have the affectation of Collins. However, they are similar in that they are both prejudiced in different ways and were both at some point rejected).

### Extended essay question

- Collins' dialogue and letters show that he is a very pompous self-serving man who overestimates his position in society and overly flattering those who have put him there.
- Everything he mentions is back at some point to Lady Catherine, his patron. Not only does he flatter her, but he also takes it upon himself to write to Mr Bennet to warn him of the potential danger to Darcy.
- He has no Christian values despite being a clergyman. He is a hypocrite and an odious person.

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## Lady Catherine De Bourgh

### Extended essay question

- Lady Catherine represents class pride in that she is proud of her birthright and her aristocratic status.
- She represents prejudice in that she is prejudiced against anyone who tries to climb the social ladder. Elizabeth daring to climb up to the position of mistress of Pemberley is an affront to her.

### Active learning task

- Elizabeth and Lady Catherine clash because Lady Catherine has heard the rumours of her elopement and demands that Elizabeth tells her that she would not dare to marry Darcy.
- There are many differences of opinion here. Elizabeth believes people should be judged by their merits, while Lady Catherine believes rank and birth are more important. Elizabeth thinks that she is good enough for Darcy, while Lady Catherine disagrees. No matter what Elizabeth does, she will never be good enough for her nephew.
- Lady Catherine is used to other people bending to her will, so she is angry and shocked that Elizabeth should know her place in society but Elizabeth refuses to be categorised by her rank and their parents.
- The main point comes when Lady Catherine tells her outright that she is not good enough to marry a gentleman and she is a commoner's daughter; therefore, she is perfectly suitable. This shows the attitudes of Austen's time. Lady Catherine represents the old order, the ones who have power and influence upon their wealth and power. Lady Catherine reminds Elizabeth that she is related to trade, something that is abhorrent to her, representing as she is that to consider marrying her nephew is against the natural order of things that would ruin the Darcy bloodline. Elizabeth, and eventually Darcy, is not concerned with wealth; she is ironically more embarrassed by her mother and younger sisters than by her status. She considers herself, based on who she is regardless of her bloodline, as good enough when it comes to marry Darcy. Her feelings are more important than her ancestry. Austen is showing the class structure that was happening in Regency England.

## Jane Bennet and Bingley

### Debate prompt

Jane and Bingley's courtship appears to be less three-dimensional than that of Elizabeth and Darcy. It is more traditional novelistic romance. They like each other, they are separated by misunderstanding, and it all comes good in the end when they marry. However, the fact that the narrative voice is so close to Jane's thoughts means that we rarely see into Jane's mind in the same way. Perhaps if we could, the narrative gave more time and attention to her romance with Bingley, then it might feel more like a love story.

### Active learning task

Jane is naïve, nice, affable, wants to see the good in everyone and is so laid back that she doesn't really care about things. Elizabeth is witty, sharp, intelligent, warm-hearted, caring, loving, independent.

### Extended essay question

- Jane has many strengths as a character; she is nice and always gives people the benefit of the doubt. She sees the good in people and gives them a chance to explain themselves before making assumptions about them. She is a good counterbalance to the prejudice and assumptions often shown by Elizabeth in the novel.
- However, she is less developed as a character than Elizabeth. The reader can feel at times that Jane is a bit flat. We never feel like that about Elizabeth because the narrative voice is so much closer to her.
- Elizabeth is a more engaging character precisely because she is not as perfect as Jane. She wants independence and challenges the beliefs of society. She has the nerve to stand up for her beliefs, even if it means those of a higher class. She also has a complete epiphany that she is prejudiced against Darcy and Wickham. This change in her way of seeing things, which Jane lacks, makes her character more complex and deep than Jane's.

## The Gardiners

### Debate prompt

The Gardiners are not realistic; no one is that happy in their marriage and their lives all the time. They are realistic and the reader has been conditioned to expect tension and argument within the novel. Due to this conditioning, the Gardiners appear to be unrealistic, but in fact they are not.

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**Extended essay question**

- The Gardiners can be viewed as Elizabeth's real parents in the novel.
- Although they are obviously not her biological parents, she goes to stay with them often and they are very close together.
- Mrs Gardiner acts as a tactful confidant; Elizabeth trusts her with her thoughts and feelings and she can trust her own gossiping mother.
- When Mr Gardiner meets Darcy, Darcy is extremely courteous to him because he is a friend of the family. His views about social classes have changed. However, we could read the situation as Darcy is trying to win over Mr Gardiner with a view to marrying his 'daughter'.
- It is Mr Gardiner, and not Mr Bennet, to whom Elizabeth turns when she finds out about Mr Collins. He goes straight to London and undertakes the bulk of the work to sort out the situation. Mr Bennet is ineffectual and soon returns to hide in his study at Longbourn.

**Mary Bennet****Extended essay question**

- The different characters in the novel deal with their prejudices in different ways.
- Elizabeth starts to realise how prejudiced she is when she reads Darcy's letter and re-evaluates herself. She goes through a process of self-reflection and as she does she re-evaluates herself. She goes through a process of self-reflection in order to become a less prejudiced and more balanced individual at the end of the novel.
- Darcy realises how prejudiced he is when Elizabeth rejects his first proposal and tells him that he is ungentlemanly. This word sticks with him as he believed himself to be a gentleman and proud of being a gentleman in his manner. He realises how badly behaved he has been and does a self-evaluation in order to deal with his prejudices. We see in his treatment of the Gardiners in the novel that he has become a much less prejudiced individual.
- Several characters do not change. Mrs Bennet's prejudices still change as quickly as her thoughts at all and she does not change. She is stuck in her life and does not evaluate herself because she does not see her prejudices. Mr Collins remains as hypocritical as at the start of the novel. Miss Bingley swallows her pride about Elizabeth marrying Darcy but she remains prejudiced against her.
- Lady Catherine deals with her prejudices by slowly coming to terms with her nephew Darcy and Pemberley. Her prejudice stems from her fear of social change and, as she comes to realise that this necessarily mean a diminishing of her power, she slowly deals with her prejudices against the new class system.

**Relationships****Fitzwilliam Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet****Debate prompt**

Elizabeth and Darcy's changes of opinion about each other appear to be rash and fast; they are viewed like that. This is why Mr Bennet doesn't believe Elizabeth's love for Darcy at first. But their courtship blossom even though Elizabeth and Darcy didn't fully realise that they were people with which we have a spark that we share sexual chemistry with too. When we look at Darcy and Elizabeth have gone through in order to deal with their prejudices and realise that the change of opinions is believable.

**Fitzwilliam Darcy and George Wickham****Extended essay question**

- Wickham can be seen as a more likeable character than Darcy. In the first part of the novel he is the wronged character with Darcy portrayed as the snobbish villain.
- Wickham is a charming scoundrel with a good sense of humour and an attractive figure. On the surface he is a good person but underneath it he is a ruthless character who preys on women for money.
- In typical 18th-century fashion, appearances are indeed deceptive. When we realise, at the end of the novel, that Wickham is a true character, then he becomes much less attractive. We realise how self-serving he is when he elope with Georgiana, knowing how it would have destroyed her reputation forever. He demanded more. He is a gambler and most likely a drunk, a womaniser with little to recommend him. He seems less likeable.
- As the novel progresses, we like Wickham less and we start to like Darcy more. The way Darcy speaks shows us his true self through his pride and his shyness. When he sees Elizabeth she is so polite and charming. While Wickham is the more obvious choice, Darcy wins in the end of the novel.

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**Jane Bennet and Charles Bingley****Active learning task**

In the diary entries, try to write in the same style of the characters (i.e. both are nice, insipid). Heighten the tension by having each character question why they have not heard from the other. Jane has not visited her and Bingley could be depressed about Jane not really liking him.

**Fitzwilliam Darcy and Charles Bingley****Debate prompt**

Darcy is a good friend to Bingley; he genuinely cares about his happiness and this care motivates him to help Jane. However, he is not a very good friend precisely because he stands in Bingley's way to marry her. He does not realise that she truly loves his friend. His motives are pure. He rectifies his mistakes, but is however, rather controlling; Elizabeth makes it clear that she knows Bingley would not have married her if he had said he thought it was a good idea. That is perhaps too much influence for one man to have.

**Caroline Bingley and Fitzwilliam Darcy****Debate prompt**

Caroline is in love with the idea of Darcy: his money, the prestige, the houses, the society. She knows Darcy the man for a long time, and so could be in love with him for his personality as well as a very superficial attraction. Although the narrative voice does not tell us enough about her to make a judgement on her true feelings.

**Mr and Mrs Bennet****Extended essay question**

- We feel sorry for Mr Bennet in his marriage to Mrs Bennet because she is a vapid, annoying woman who would get on anyone's nerves. He has no love or respect for her and is just a puppet.
- However, he did choose to marry her, albeit in the throes of youthful passion. It is not his fault. In front of their children and to be such a terrible husband to her. In this way, he is annoyed and not feel sorry for him.

**Lydia Bennet and George Wickham****Debate prompt**

Lydia has married for lust rather than love; we are left wondering whether either character loved the other or just irresponsible passion. Elizabeth and Jane marry for love although the material wealth is a consideration in their decisions.

**Mr Collins and Charlotte Lucas****Active learning task**

Reasons for could include financial and social security, a house, a place in the world, escape from the shelf. Reasons against could be his manner, his being such a hypocrite and being an embarrassment to his parents.

**Settings****Longbourn****Active learning task**

The sketch could include some houses, some families, some carriages, etc.

**Meryton****Active learning task**

The blurb could say what sort of place Meryton is, where in the country, whether it is rural or urban, how many people live there, whether there is a military presence, what type of shops are available, etc.

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## Netherfield Park

### Extended essay question

- Netherfield is a central location especially in the first part of the novel. Netherfield becomes the entire plot of the novel; without Netherfield, Bingley and his party would never have met the Bennet sisters in the first place.
- It is at Netherfield that Jane gets ill, forcing Elizabeth to go to her, and while there Elizabeth learns a bit more.
- The Netherfield ball allows Bingley and Jane to realise how much they care about each other and to show different sides of himself and for him to share witty sexually charged conversation with Elizabeth.
- When Netherfield closes, the reader is left thinking that the two budding relationships (Elizabeth and Darcy) have also closed.

## London

### Extended essay question

- London is portrayed as a place of excitement and luxury. It is also a place of danger and corruption.
- London highlights the different social classes within the novel. Darcy and the Gardines are from different geographical terms; however, socially they are worlds apart depending on their address.

## Rosings, the parsonage, and the parsonage

### Extended essay question

- Rosings reflects the ostentation and pretentiousness of Lady Catherine.
- The parsonage reflects the segregation of Charlotte and Collins' lives within their marriage.

## Lambton

### Debate prompt

- Lambton is the place where Darcy realises how much he loves Elizabeth. His bringing her to Lambton shows how much he cares for her. However, he was already desirous of her meeting his sister before Lambton; this shows that he was already in love with her before this point.

## Pemberley

### Debate prompt

- Elizabeth, the reader is led to believe, gradually comes to understand Darcy for the man he really is. Her love has become by the end of the novel. Her love is not based on money or goods. However, her concerns are on her mind, at least subconsciously, because it is only once she sees Pemberley that she realises how much she loves Darcy.

## Themes

### Social satire

#### Extended essay question

There are several key objects of Austen's satires: hypocritical people, people who value money over love, the abuse of power.

## Pride and Prejudice

### Active learning task

Characters that are not prejudiced in the novel are, to some extent, Mary, Kitty, Bingley and Elizabeth.

### Extended essay question

- Lizzy is proud and prejudiced. She is prejudiced in that she makes assumptions about people based on first impressions and she is proud of who she is. Her pride is hurt tremendously when Darcy rejects her.
- Darcy has a lot of pride and he comes across as very proud, a lot of which could be seen as justified. Elizabeth and her family at the start of the novel; however, he works through this to realise his feelings for Elizabeth.

## Form

### Extended essay question

- The benefits of the novel form are that we can see into a small slice of domestic life and into the minds of different characters.
- The negative is that, as the narrative voice is so closely allied to Elizabeth's thoughts, we only see the minds and motivations of other characters through her eyes.

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