

Teacher Guide

Grades 9–12

# Pride and Prejudice

Jane Austen

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# PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

by  
Jane Austen

## Teacher Guide

Written by  
Gloria Levine

### Note

The text used to prepare this guide was the Signet Classic softcover with an afterword by Joann Morse. If other editions are used, page references may vary slightly.

**Please note:** Please assess the appropriateness of this book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with your class.

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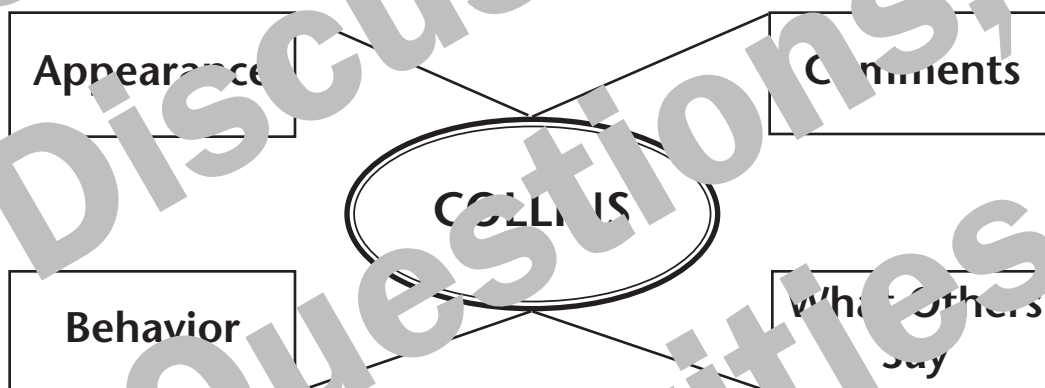
### Vocabulary

piquet 41	odious 41	disdain 42	humility 42
panegyric 43	laudable 43	celebrity 43	rashness 43
obstinacy 43	deference 44	postulation 44	alacrity 45
reprehensible 45	compass 45	affront 46	picturesque 47
studious 49	novelty 49	follies 50	pretension 50
implacable 51	propensity 51	propitious 51	incivil 52
laconic 52	entail 54	rail 54	iniquitous 54
filial 54	beneficence 55	servile 55	destitute 57
asperity 57	affability 58	quadrant 58	parish 58
inmate 59	importune 60	subjection 60	reverence 61
obsequiousness 61	incumbent 61	tenor 62	scruples 65
depressions 65	creditable 66	whist 66	engrossing 66
inducement 68	precluded 68	bequeathed 69	bequest 69
degenerate 71	affable 71	dictatorial 73	veracity 74
alienated 74	discrimination 75	proxy 75	

### Discussion Questions

1. What sort of argument arises while Mr. Darcy is writing a letter to his sister? (Mr. Darcy accuses Bingley of false humility.) What does Elizabeth hear when she asks, "In common and ordinary cases between friends and friends, where one of them is desirous by the other to change a resolution, or on a very great moment, should you think ill of that person for complying with the desire, without waiting to be argued into it?" (p. 44) (Sometimes one friend should bend and do what the other friend wants without questioning, just to be a good friend. Do you agree with her? Can you think of an example involving a friend and you?)
2. Elizabeth notices that Mr. Darcy is watching her. What does Elizabeth make of that? (She is puzzled; she thinks maybe he finds her curiously reprehensible.) What does Miss Bingley make of it? (that Darcy is impressed with Elizabeth) How can you tell? (Miss Bingley acts catty and jealous.) What do you think Elizabeth would say if Jane remarked that Mr. Darcy seemed quite bewitched by Jane?
3. Why does Miss Bingley ask Elizabeth to walk around the room with her? (to get Darcy's attention) Today, what might she do to accomplish the same purpose? What do you think Miss Bingley calls herself each time Mr. Darcy ignores her or gives her a verbal put-down?

4. According to Mr. Darcy, what are his own good and bad points? Does he think he is too proud? (He thinks he is proud when he should be, has a temper that is too rigid, doesn't forget wrongs easily, but also isn't easily manipulated.) What do you think Elizabeth would say if asked to list her strengths and faults? What are yours?
5. How does everyone feel about Jane's departure from the Bingleys', after she recuperates? (Bingley—and Jane's mother—are probably the only ones sorry to see her go.) Why is Mr. Darcy happy to see her go? (He is more interested in Elizabeth than he wants to be.) How well do you suppose he knows his own feelings?
6. Who is Mr. Collins, and why does he write to Mr. Bennet? (Collins, Mr. Bennet's cousin, plans to visit.) What are your impressions of him, based on his appearance, behavior, comments, and what others say about him? (His humility and facade seem pompous and self-righteous.)



7. Why does Mr. Collins want to offer an "olive branch"? (He wants to smooth over bad feelings about the fact that he will one day inherit Mr. Bennet's estate.) How does he plan to make amends to the Bennets? (by marrying one of their daughters) He is described as being "a mixture of pride and obsequiousness" (p. 61). Have you ever known such a person? What did he or she do that is similar to Mr. Collins' behavior?
8. Jane Austen and the rest of her family enjoyed reading novels, at a time when novel-reading was still considered suspect by many people. How is this true detail from her family life reflected in Chapter 14? (p. 59—Mr. Bennet invites Mr. Collins to read to the ladies.)

9. Why does Mrs. Bennet's opinion of Mr. Collins change? (She had disliked him because of the inheritance; now she thinks he would make a good catch for one of her daughters.) Does she think that Elizabeth could be happy with Mr. Collins? (She probably doesn't think much about that; her motives are financial ones.) What would you have advised Elizabeth to say to her mother about Mr. Collins, if she were your friend? Why is Mrs. Bennet so eager to marry off her daughters? Do you think this is still a major concern of parents today?
10. Who is Mr. Wickham? (charming, new member of the corps) What does Elizabeth think of him? (She finds him handsome, easy to converse with.) How can she tell that there is tension between Mr. Darcy and Mr. Wickham? (Darcy didn't return Wickham's greeting.) According to Mr. Wickham, what is the source of the tension? Wickham claims that Darcy failed to honor his own late father's wishes that Wickham, his godson, be provided for. Does Elizabeth believe him? Why? Do you?
11. What is Mr. Wickham's opinion of Mr. Darcy's sister? (that she is very proud) How does Elizabeth find out about the connection between Lady Catherine and Mr. Darcy? (When Mr. Collins mentions his patroness, Lady Catherine, Wickham mentions that Lady Catherine is Darcy's aunt, the sister of his mother.) As a reader, do you find this coincidence credible?
12. **Prediction** Do you think Mr. Darcy will marry Elizabeth De Bourgh?

### Writing Activity

You are Mr. Darcy. Write a letter to your sister (as described on pages 41–42).

### The Author's Craft: Satire

Explain that **satire** is the use of ridicule, sarcasm, wit, or irony to expose a folly or social evil. Reread the section where the narrator describes the evening conversation upon Elizabeth and Jane's return (p. 53). How is the author poking fun at the three younger sisters' values? ("Mary...deemed the study of thorough bass and her own attainments" Mary takes herself—and her pessimistic view of human nature—very seriously. "Several of the officers had dined lately with their uncle, a private had been engaged, and it had actually been hinted that Colonel Forster was going to be married." Lydia and Catherine are superficial sorts, who find the whipping of a man just one more item of entertaining news.)

### Research

Find out what a "loo table" (p. 11) is.