

Individual Learning Packet

**Teaching Unit**

**Pride and Prejudice**

by Jane Austen

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# Pride and Prejudice

## Notes

At the age of 21, Jane Austen wrote this novel to entertain her family and friends. It is full of humor, satire, dramatic dialogue, and intricate relationships. The plot centers around the efforts of the Bennet girls to find suitable husbands. While some may consider the novel long and wordy by today's standards, *Pride and Prejudice* was considered a very entertaining, light novel at the time of its publication in 1813. It has become a classic of English Literature.

All references come from the Prestwick House Literary Touchstone Press edition of *Pride and Prejudice*, copyright 2005.

## Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. support or refute this idea: a major theme in *Pride and Prejudice* is the importance of a young lady of this period to marry well; then cite specific incidents from the text to support your belief.
2. recognize the author's use of satire to comment on the following problems faced by women of the time:
  - financial security often depending on finding a wealthy husband;
  - the social pressures to marry a man of equal or greater social position;
  - the strict moral code women must uphold.
3. comment on the author's uses of comical characters who possess exaggerated bad social behavior and how this stresses the importance of good manners in society.
4. discuss the significance of the novel's title as it applies to the following:
  - how Darcy evolves once he recognizes the existence of his own pride and his subsequent social prejudices;
  - Elizabeth's ability to admit her own prejudice concerning Darcy
5. define irony and point out examples of it in the text.
6. cite incidents from the story which demonstrate the relationship between the position enjoyed and the responsibilities held by the upper class.
7. identify examples of happy and unhappy marriages in the story; discuss what qualities the author suggests are necessary for a happy marriage.
8. cite passages in the story that illustrate the author's use of dramatic dialogue to reveal the feelings of her characters.
9. recognize the following three sub-plots in the story and point out how they add interest:
  - Bingley and Jane's struggle to admit their love for each other;
  - Lydia's elopement with Wickham;
  - Charlotte's marriage to Mr. Collins.
10. compare and contrast Mr. Darcy and Mr. Collins, and discuss the extent to which each realizes his plans for marriage.
11. discuss which qualities in Jane Austen's novels have led critics to regard her as one of the best writers of English literature.
12. determine and discuss the reasons why some readers view this novel as an early feminist work.
13. comment on the author's style of writing, and illustrate your point with examples from the text.

### Questions for Discussion and Essay

1. Write a character sketch of Wickham. Do you think he is an immoral character? Why?
2. What evidence is there that Elizabeth dislikes Darcy because of his pride? What happens that changes her opinion of him?
3. In what ways is Mrs. Bennet responsible for Lydia's elopement?
4. Why does Mr. Collins believe Elizabeth will eventually accept his marriage proposal? Why does Darcy also assume the same thing when he proposes to Elizabeth?
5. Do you think Mr. Bennet is a good father and husband? Why does Elizabeth disapprove of her father's behavior toward his wife?
6. List the reasons Charlotte marries Mr. Collins. Why does she believe she will be happy with him?
7. Which characters in the story can be considered "comical" characters? What do they add to the story?
8. What qualities does Darcy believe are necessary for a woman to be truly accomplished? Does Elizabeth measure up to his standards?
9. In what sense can Elizabeth be called an idealist?
10. What are Darcy's responsibilities to his tenants and his sister?
11. Define irony, and discuss how Miss Bingley ironically discredits herself in the following passage.  

“ ‘Eliza Bennet,’ said Miss Bingley, when the door was closed on her, ‘is one of those young ladies who seek to recommend themselves to the other sex by undervaluing their own...’ ” (Pg. 45)
12. Discuss whether or not the following marriages are happy or unhappy, and define the qualities in the relationships that contribute to the level of happiness for:
  - Jane and Bingley
  - Elizabeth and Darcy
  - Charlotte and Mr. Collins
  - Lydia and Mr. Wickham
  - Mr. and Mrs. Bennet

**Chapter II**

VOCABULARY

**circumspection** — careful thought  
**discretion** — forethought  
**fortnight** — two weeks  
**hypocritical** — insincere

1. What is revealed about Kitty, Mary, and Lydia Bennet in this chapter?

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2. Why do you suppose Mr. Bennet teases his wife instead of telling her directly about his visit to meet Mr. Bingley?

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**Chapter XI**

VOCABULARY

**implacable** — unshakable; unable to be changed  
**pretension** — the act of putting on airs

1. What does Miss Bingley do to get Darcy’s attention?

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2. List the faults Mr. Darcy admits to having. What fault in character does he NOT admit to?

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3. Darcy says to Elizabeth, “There is, I believe, in every disposition a tendency to some particular evil, a natural defect, which not even the best education can overcome.” (Pg. 60) What natural defect does he find in Elizabeth’s character?

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**Chapter XXI**

VOCABULARY

**deliberation** — careful thought  
**disapprobation** — condemnation  
**lamenting** — being sorry; crying

1. At this point in the story, what does Austen tell the reader about the following characters to advance the story and add interest to the plot?

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2. What evidence is there that Elizabeth does not believe Miss Bingley’s assertion that her brother will not return to Netherfield for the entire winter?

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**Chapter XXXV**

VOCABULARY

acute — careful  
connivance — a planning together; complicity  
propensities — tendencies  
remonstrance — difficulty; challenge  
repugnance — strong dislike

1. How does Darcy justify his decision to interfere in Bingley’s relationship with Jane?

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2. Why does Darcy not publicly defend himself when Wickham maligns Darcy’s character to the people in Elizabeth’s hometown?

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3. What evidence is there in Darcy’s letter that shows he still respects Elizabeth, despite her refusal of his marriage proposal?

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**Chapter LIII**

VOCABULARY

**covies** — groups  
**perpetually** — continually  
**sedate** — calm  
**simpers** — makes faces; smirks

- 1. List the ways Mrs. Bennet manages to embarrass Elizabeth when Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy call on them.

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- 2. Elizabeth is very uncomfortable during this first visit from Darcy and Bingley after Lydia's marriage. What happens to give Elizabeth some relief from the tension in the room?

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