

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Sense and Sensibility

by Jane Austen

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Sense and Sensibility

Objectives

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

1. discuss the author's writing style, including use of satire, irony, and character foils.
2. cite examples of verbal irony and explain why they are ironic.
3. identify the main theme of the novel and show how Austen develops this theme.
4. cite several examples of a typical eighteenth century English lifestyle as described in this novel.
5. discuss the importance of letters in this novel and explain how they contribute to the development of the plot.
6. compare the major relationships on the basis of love, communication, and amount of sense or sensibility in each.
7. discuss the importance of the visits that take place during the course of the novel, showing their contribution to the plot.
8. list several characters who might be considered either dynamic or static characters and explain why they would be labeled that way.
9. trace the development of the major male characters (Edward Ferrars, Colonel Brandon, and Willoughby) pointing out the virtue or lack of virtue that helps them to a happy ending or an unhappy ending.
10. define "comic relief" and explain how it is used in the novel.
11. explain the way inheritance laws worked during this time in England and how this affects the Dashwood family, giving the novel its underlying purpose.
12. compare and contrast Elinor and Marianne Dashwood using examples from the text.
13. choose three or four of the mother characters and use examples from the novel to compare their mothering skills.
14. discuss several of the actions between men and women in the novel and be able to pick out which were considered proper and which were not, with regard to the morals and etiquette of the time.

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Questions for Discussion and Essay

1. Describe both Elinor and Marianne and show how each grows and changes through the course of the novel. Are they static or dynamic?
2. Why do the Dashwood women leave Norland and go far away to live at Barton cottage?
3. Describe their brother, Mr. John Dashwood, and his wife Fanny with respect to how they deal with the promise John makes on his father's deathbed.
4. Name several of the minor characters that the Dashwood women become surrounded by through the novel. Choose three and show how each is important to advancing the plot and revealing the sisters' personalities.
5. How does Marianne meet Willoughby? Trace the development of their romance.
6. How does Elinor meet Edward Ferrars? Trace the development of their romance.
7. People in that era of England visited each other far more often than we visit each other today. Choose two of the most important visits in the novel, describe each briefly, and explain why they are important to the plot.
8. Why do you think Austen lets her readers see that Edward wears a ring with a strand of hair in it?
9. Cutting locks of hair is important to two other characters, as well. Who are they and why is it important to them?
10. Why is Marianne so upset after Willoughby's visit? How does she act after he leaves? How long does she act this way?
11. Describe Colonel Brandon's personality and actions when the Dashwood sisters first meet him.
12. What is the secret in Brandon's past that involves Eliza and Ms. Williams? How do we first learn of this secret? Who tells us the full story and why?
13. Lucy Steele is another person who has a secret. What is her secret and whom does she tell?
14. In contrast to Marianne's behavior, how does Elinor react to the news that hope of marrying Edward is gone?

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Study Guide Student Copy

Volume One

Chapter One

Vocabulary

moiety-a portion or share

sanguine-cheerfully confident

propriety-appropriateness

amiable-good-natured and likable

imprudence-an unwise or indiscreet act

1. This novel revolves around the Dashwood family. Who is Henry Dashwood?
2. When Henry Dashwood dies, how is his money divided among his four children?
3. Describe Mr. John Dashwood.
4. What did John promise his dying father he would do with regard to his stepmother and stepsisters?
5. What happened to that promise?

Volume Two

Chapter 1

Vocabulary

veracity-truthfulness

alacrity- eagerness

1. When Jane Austen says that Elinor weeps for Edward, more than for herself, what is she implying?

2. What are some of the reasons the Middletons use as excuses to be with other people?

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Chapter 2

Vocabulary

coxcomb-a conceited, silly man

1. In this chapter Lucy and Elinor have a chance to speak in private. What is the subject of their discussion?

Volume III

Chapter 1

Vocabulary

simpered-smiled in a silly or conceited manner

obstinacy-stubbornness

1. What terrible news does Fannie find out in the beginning of Chapter 1?
2. Explain the irony in the situation where Elinor must comfort Marianne about the news of Edward's engagement.
3. Elinor finally allows herself to be open about her own feelings in this chapter. Explain.