

English Literature Activities



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The world of Jane Austen



Read the text about the writer's life and do the activity that follows:



Jane Austen (1775–1817) was one of England's most beloved novelists and a master of social comedy. She was born on 16 December 1775 in the village of Steventon, Hampshire, the seventh of eight children in a close and lively family. Her father, George Austen, was a clergyman who encouraged reading and education, and Jane grew up in a home full of books, conversation, and amateur theatricals. These early experiences strongly shaped her sharp observation of human behavior.

Austen began writing in her teens, producing short comic works now known as her juvenilia. In her twenties she drafted the novels that would later become *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Northanger Abbey*. Although she wrote about love and marriage, her real talent lay in her ironic wit and her realistic portrayal of middle-class life in Georgian England. Her first published novel, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), appeared anonymously, signed only "By a Lady." It was followed by *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), which quickly became popular for its lively characters and memorable romance. Austen continued to publish *Mansfield Park* (1814) and *Emma* (1815) during her lifetime.

Despite her growing reputation, she lived a relatively quiet life, mostly within the circle of her family. She never married, though themes of courtship and social expectations dominate her fiction. In 1817 her health declined, and she died on 18 July at the age of 41 in Winchester.

Today, Jane Austen is considered one of the greatest novelists in English literature. Her works remain widely read for their humor, psychological insight, and timeless exploration of love, class, and human relationships.

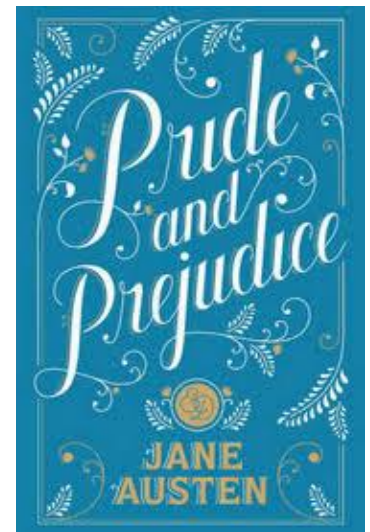
Pride and Prejudice, published in 1813, is Jane Austen's most famous novel and one of the best-loved works in English literature. The story follows Elizabeth Bennet, a witty and independent young woman, as she navigates issues of marriage, morality, and social class in early nineteenth-century England. At the heart of the novel is her complicated relationship with the proud and reserved Mr. Darcy. Through misunderstandings, personal growth, and changing first impressions, both characters learn important lessons about pride, prejudice, and self-knowledge. Combining sharp social criticism with humor and romance, Austen creates a vivid picture of provincial life and the limited choices available to women of her time. Today, the novel remains popular worldwide for its memorable characters, lively dialogue, and timeless exploration of love and human behavior.

Read the sentences below and decide if they are True (T) or False:

1. Jane Austen was born in the eighteenth century.
2. She grew up in a family that valued books and education.
3. Austen's father worked as a lawyer.
4. She started writing only after she became famous.
5. *Sense and Sensibility* was her first published novel.
6. Austen's early novels were published under her full name.
7. *Pride and Prejudice* was published in 1813.
8. Elizabeth Bennet is the proud and reserved character in the novel.
9. The novel explores themes of marriage and social class.
10. Jane Austen married and had children.
11. Austen died at the age of 41.
12. Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet misunderstand each other at first.
13. Austen mainly wrote about life in futuristic societies.
14. Today, *Pride and Prejudice* is still widely read.
15. The novel shows the limited choices available to women in Austen's time.



In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth's spring visit to Charlotte and Mr. Collins at Hunsford marks a crucial turning point in the novel. During this period, Darcy makes his first proposal to Elizabeth in Kent, initiating a major shift in her understanding of his character. While spring traditionally symbolizes renewal, Austen uses this moment less as immediate emotional harmony and more as the beginning of Elizabeth's gradual reassessment of Darcy. Below you will read two extracts with the theme of spring:



1. Hunsford in Spring (Chapter 28)

The garden sloping to the road, the house standing in it, the green pales, and the laurel hedge, every thing declared they were arriving. Mr. Collins was at the door to receive them; and Mrs. Collins's welcome was not less cordial than his. Elizabeth soon observed, that though the house was small, it was well built and convenient; and every thing was fitted up and arranged with a neatness and consistency of which Elizabeth gave Charlotte all the credit. When Mr. Collins could be forgotten, there was really an air of great comfort throughout.

2. Elizabeth's Walk & Darcy Encounters (Chapter 29)

More than once did Elizabeth, in her ramble within the park, unexpectedly meet Mr. Darcy. She felt all the perverseness of the mischance that should bring him where no one else was brought; and, to prevent its ever happening again, took care to inform him at first that it was a favourite haunt of hers. How it could occur a second time therefore was very odd! Yet it did, and even a third.



It seemed like wilful ill-nature, or a voluntary penance; for on these occasions it was not merely a few formal inquiries and an awkward pause and then away, but he actually thought it necessary to turn back and walk with her. He never said a great deal, nor did she give herself the trouble of talking or of listening much; but it struck her in the course of their third rencontre that he was asking some odd unconnected questions—about her pleasure in being at Hunsford, her love of solitary walks, and her opinion of Mr. and Mrs. Collins’s happiness.

Read the two passages again and underline any words-phrases that reveal Elizabeth’s emotional state or the atmosphere of the scene. Then answer the following questions:

- a) What is the “emotional weather” of each passage?
- b) How does Darcy’s presence disturb the calm setting?
- c) Do you enjoy solitary walks? Why or why not?
- d) Describe a time when the weather affected your mood.



Now watch a trailer from one of the film adaptations of the book and answer the questions that follow.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ur_DIHs92NM



- ## 2. How is Elizabeth presented?

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for handwriting practice or general note-taking. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.



Another famous novel by Jane Austen is "Emma" which was written in 1815 and published that same year. The plot follows Emma Woodhouse, a clever and self-confident young woman who enjoys matchmaking. Her attempts to manage other people's romances lead to misunderstandings and personal mistakes. Read the 2 extracts below with the topic of spring:

"The spring was now advancing; and the weather had been for some time sufficiently mild for the exercise of walking; and though the roads were dirty, the air was soft and genial, and the fields beginning to look green. Harriet was eager to be walking; and Emma, though very determined not to be influenced by any wish of Harriet's, could not resist the temptation of a walk."

"It was a sweet view—sweet to the eye and the mind. English verdure, English culture, English comfort, seen under a sun bright, without being oppressive. In the middle of this, Hartfield, with its lawn, its shrubberies, and its name, was complete."



Watch a trailer from one of the film adaptations of the book "Emma":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsOwjOPR5Sk>



Now based on some information you got from the literary extracts and the video, write your own short story based on Emma, the main character. Your story should be 250-300 words and it should incorporate the theme of spring. Apart from that you can be as creative as you like!



Biographical Text Answers

- 1 T
- 2 T
- 3 F
- 4 F
- 5 T
- 6 F
- 7 T
- 8 F
- 9 T
- 10 F
- 11 T
- 12 T
- 13 F
- 14 T
- 15 T

Read the two passages from *Pride and Prejudice* and underline any words-phrases that reveal Elizabeth's emotional state or the atmosphere of the scene.

perverseness of the mischance / very odd / wilful ill-nature / voluntary penance / did not give herself the trouble / astonishment

a) What is the "emotional weather" of each passage?

Passage 1 (arrival at Hunsford): generally comfortable but slightly constrained / domestic calm with mild irony / Elizabeth is observant but not fully relaxed

Passage 2 (walk encounters): clearly uneasy and irritated / growing psychological tension / social discomfort beneath polite conversation

b) How does Darcy's presence disturb the calm setting?

Darcy functions like an emotional disturbance in an otherwise quiet landscape. His repeated appearances feel intrusive. Elizabeth interprets the meetings negatively. The peaceful park becomes psychologically charged. Austen creates situational irony: the setting is tranquil, but the social atmosphere is increasingly strained.

c) If Austen had added lush spring imagery here, how would it change our expectations about Darcy?

It would prematurely romanticize the relationship and it would reduce the irony. Also, it would signal harmony too early.



Trailer from film “Pride and Prejudice”

1.What is the dominant emotional atmosphere?

hopeful, tense, romantic, socially awkward, dramatic, romantic

2.How is Elizabeth presented?

independent, spirited, observant, slightly ironic, emotional

3.What techniques create a romantic mood?

sweeping landscape shots, soft lighting, close-ups of faces, slow pacing in key moments, music, lingering eye contact





The films

[***Pride & Prejudice***](#) is a 2005 period romance film directed by [Joe Wright](#), in his feature directorial debut, based on [Jane Austen's 1813 novel of the same name](#). The film features five sisters from an English family of [landed gentry](#) as they deal with issues of marriage, morality, and misconceptions. [Keira Knightley](#) stars as [Elizabeth Bennet](#), while [Matthew Macfadyen](#) plays [Mr Darcy](#), who falls in love with her. (information from Wikipedia).

[***Emma***](#) is a 2020 period romantic comedy film directed by [Autumn de Wilde](#), from a screenplay by [Eleanor Catton](#), based on [Jane Austen's](#) 1815 novel of the same name. It stars [Anya Taylor-Joy](#) as Miss Emma Woodhouse, a wealthy and elegant young woman living with her father in Regency-era England who amuses herself with matchmaking and meddles in the romantic lives of those closest to her. The film also stars [Johnny Flynn](#), [Josh O'Connor](#), [Callum Turner](#), [Mia Goth](#), [Miranda Hart](#), and [Bill Nighy](#). (information from Wikipedia).

The images

The images used here are from the commercial posters of the two films and all rights belong to the production companies and the artists.

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