

Exploring Junior Cycle Texts

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen is a novel included as part of the Prescribed Material for Junior Cycle English (For the student cohorts commencing Junior Cycle in 2025, 2026 and 2027 and presenting for examination in 2028, 2029 and 2030).

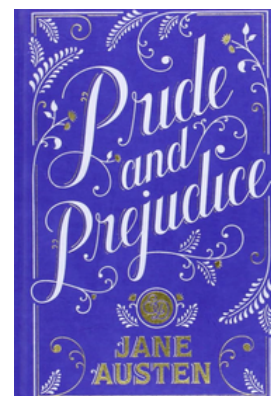


Image courtesy of BookAnnex

Please note:

- The following tasks might be completed over a series of lessons.
- You may like to adapt and adjust the tasks to suit your context.
- *Pride and Prejudice* covers themes which could be considered sensitive and controversial. You may wish to consult with our READY Framework to support you in your study.



Scan the QR code or [click here to access a Getting Started with Guide for this Text](#)

Background to the author and novel

Pride and Prejudice, written by Jane Austen, is one of the most celebrated novels in English literature. It was first published in 1813, though its origins lie several years earlier. Austen began drafting the novel, initially titled *First Impressions*, in 1796 when she was just 21 years old. The novel is set in Regency-era England (1811–1820), a period marked by strict class distinctions and a significant emphasis on marriage as a social and economic institution.

Before you read... (Teacher Guidance)

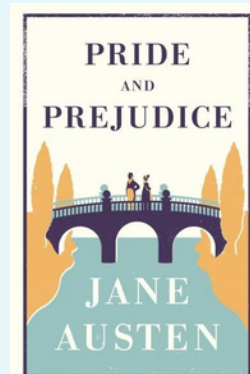
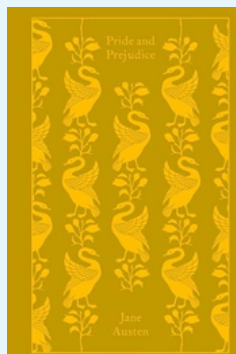
These activities help students connect with the historical and social context of the *Troubles* and distinguish between personal and political experience. Adapt as appropriate for your class.

1. Title Analysis:

- Using your thesaurus or dictionary, look up the meaning of the words 'pride' and 'prejudice'.
- Reflect on the title *Pride and Prejudice*. Discuss what the words mean and how they might relate to the story or characters introduced in the extract.
- Write short predictions about how 'pride' and 'prejudice' could influence the relationships between characters.



2. Judging a book by its cover



Analyse the five examples of book covers from various editions of *Pride and Prejudice*. Discuss your thoughts and observations in pairs or small groups, then complete the following table:

Describe what you can see on each cover, noting differences and similarities	
What do the colors on the cover make you think of? What emotions do they conjure? What is the mood or tone of the cover art? What is unique about the cover art?	
Who do you think the book's intended audience is? Ex. Gender, age range, etc.	
What predictions can you make about the novel based on this particular cover?	
Overall, what does the cover tell you about the novel?	



Read this short extract from Chapter 1 and answer the questions which follow:

Chapter I

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife. However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters. "My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?" Mr. Bennet replied that he had not. "But it is," returned she; "for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it." Mr. Bennet made no answer. "Do not you want to know who has taken it?" cried his wife impatiently. "You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it." This was invitation enough. "Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he is to take possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week." "What is his name?" "Bingley." "Is he married or single?" "Oh! single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!" "How so? how can it affect them?" "My dear Mr. Bennet," replied his wife, "how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them." "Is that his design in settling here?" "Design! nonsense, how can you talk so! But it is very likely that he may fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes." "I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go, or you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better, for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley might like you the best of the party." "My dear, you flatter me. I certainly have had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be any thing extraordinary now. When a woman has five grown up daughters, she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty." "In such cases, a woman has not often much beauty to think of."

"But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighbourhood." "It is more than I engage for, I assure you." "But consider your daughters. Only think what an establishment it would be for one of them. Sir William and Lady Lucas are determined to go, merely on that account, for in general you know they visit no new comers. Indeed you must go, for it will be impossible for us to visit him, if you do not." "You are over scrupulous surely.

I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying which ever he chooses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy." "I desire you will do no such thing. Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good humoured as Lydia. But you are always giving her the preference." "They have none of them much to recommend them," replied he; "they are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters." "Mr Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves." "You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least." "Ah! you do not know what I suffer." "But I hope you will get over it, and live to see many young men of four thousand a year come into the neighbourhood." "It will be no use to us, if twenty such should come since you will not visit them." "Depend upon it, my dear, that when there are twenty, I will visit them all."

Mr Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three and twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character. Her mind was less difficult to develop. She was a woman of mean understanding, little information and uncertain temper. When she was discontented she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news.

Read and Respond (Teacher Guidance)

The following questions may be based on the extract included or form part of your extended study of the novel. Students may like to complete the activities individually or collaboratively.

1. Mr and Mrs Bennet are presented as very different characters in this extract.

Write about the impression you get of each character. Support your ideas with reference to what they say and how they behave.

2. Humour is an important feature of this extract.

Explain how Jane Austen creates humour in the conversation between Mr and Mrs Bennet. Refer closely to the extract in your response.

3. What does this extract suggest about marriage and family life in the world of the novel?

Develop your answer using evidence from the extract.

4. “Mr Bennet has the upper hand in this conversation.”

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your view with reference to the extract.

5. Imagine you are Elizabeth Bennet and you overhear this conversation between your parents.

Write a diary entry in which you describe what you heard and give your thoughts on your parents, Mr Bingley and the possibility of one of the Bennet daughters marrying him.

6. Write the scene from Mr Bingley’s point of view.

Imagine that, after arriving at Netherfield, he learns that local families are already discussing him as a possible husband. Write his thoughts and reactions.

7. The opening of a novel should make the reader want to continue reading.

How effective do you think this extract is as an opening to *Pride and Prejudice*? Discuss at least two features that make it interesting, entertaining or memorable.

8. Create a modern version of the conversation between Mr and Mrs Bennet.

Keep the basic situation — a parent is excited about the arrival of an eligible newcomer while the other responds with humour or sarcasm — but relocate it to the present day. Try to preserve the personalities of the two characters.