

Pride and Prejudice *Study Guide*



by Tiffany A. H. Colonna
For the novel by Jane Austen

Pride and Prejudice Study Guide

Table of Contents

Study Guide Author4
Note to Instructor5
Synopsis6
About the Novel’s Author7
Ideas for Prereading Activities8
Chapters 1–59
Chapters 6–1015
Chapters 11–1522
Chapters 16–2026
Chapters 21–2530
Chapters 26–3034
Chapters 31–3537
Chapters 36–4042
Chapters 41–4547
Chapters 46–5052
Chapters 51–5556
Chapters 56–6160
Overview64
Essays72
Additional Resources74
Answer KeySeparate File

Synopsis

At the turn of the 18th century, the accomplishment considered highest for any English gentleman's daughter was to be well married. A good match was one that provided comfort and financial security for both the young lady and her suitor. Much of the story of *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen's famous romantic comedy of manners, revolves around this theme.

Elizabeth Bennet is the second of five daughters born to a gentleman of moderate wealth and property living near the town of Meryton, in Hertfordshire, England, at the dawn of England's Regency period, sometime during the Napoleonic Wars (1792–1815). Mr. and Mrs. Bennet have failed to produce a male heir for the family's estate, Longbourn, so Longbourn has been entailed upon Mr. Bennet's cousin, the ridiculous Mr. Collins. With no estate or adequate inheritance of their own, the five Bennet girls find themselves in need of suitable matches that will ensure financial security for themselves and their family.

Elizabeth and her father share a common sense of humor; they have the fortunate ability to laugh at the follies of themselves and others, most often those of Mrs. Bennet and the three youngest Bennet girls, appropriately described by their father as "very silly." Having been given a large amount of freedom throughout their formative years, Mary, Catherine (Kitty), and Lydia have very little in the way of sensible education, class, or developed talent. Lydia, the youngest, is the most spoiled, selfish, and unrestrained of them all and her shortcomings eventually prove most painful to her family. On the contrary, Elizabeth and her elder sister, Jane, are ladylike, educated, and accomplished. They are the only two women in the Bennet family with the sense of propriety and grace of manner to meet the stringent qualifications of good society.

The theme of securing a good marriage brings to the story such characters as Mr. Bingley, Mr. Darcy, and Mr. Wickham, young men whose characters and sensibilities cause in turn both joy and despair to the Bennet family. As the story unfolds and each of the young men's characters are discovered, Elizabeth finds herself having to discern the difference between true goodness and the mere appearance of it. She begins to discern that there is much more goodness in Mr. Darcy than she had previously believed and she finds she must let go of both her unfounded prejudices and her pride if she is to ultimately choose the man who truly deserves her love.

Chapters 31–35

Vocabulary:

Read each sentence below paying close attention to the usage of the underlined word. Use a dictionary to identify its part of speech (such as noun, verb, adjective, etc.) and give its definition.

1. Mr. Darcy spoke with affectionate praise of his sister's proficiency.

Part of speech: _____

Definition:

2. Lady Catherine listened to half a song, and then talked, as before, to her other nephew; till the latter walked away from her, and making with his usual deliberation towards the pianoforte stationed himself so as to command a full view of the fair performer's countenance.

Part of speech: _____

Definition:

3. "She seems perfectly happy, however, and in a prudential light it is certainly a very good match for her."

Part of speech: _____

Definition:

4. But when Elizabeth told of his silence; it did not seem very likely, even to Charlotte's wishes, to be the case; and after various conjectures, they could at last only suppose his visit to proceed from the difficulty of finding anything to do, which was the more probable from the time of year.

Part of speech: _____

Definition:

Pride and Prejudice Study Guide

Part of speech: _____

Definition:

12. “Of what he has particularly accused me I am ignorant; but of the truth of what I shall relate, I can summon more than one witness of undoubted veracity.”

Part of speech: _____

Definition:

13. “In town I believe he chiefly lived, but his studying the law was a mere pretence, and being now free from all restraint, his life was a life of idleness and dissipation.”

Part of speech: _____

Definition:

Questions:

1. Who is Colonel Fitzwilliam? Describe his character.
2. What does Lady Catherine do in Chapter 31 as they all are talking that makes Mr. Darcy look ashamed of his aunt’s ill-breeding (poor behavior)?
3. Darcy keeps visiting Elizabeth, both at the parsonage, and showing up in the park walking, yet he says very little. What does Fitzwilliam find amusing at the end of Chapter 32?
4. What does Charlotte suppose of Mr. Darcy’s reasons for visiting Elizabeth at Hunsford, and what evidence does Elizabeth give to dissuade her?
5. What news does Elizabeth learn of Mr. Darcy during her walk with Colonel Fitzwilliam, and what effect does this news have on her?

Pride and Prejudice Study Guide

6. What does Mr. Darcy tell Elizabeth, and what does he ask her, on his sudden evening visit to Hunsford? In what ways does he offend at the same time he is asking this?
7. After Elizabeth says no, why does Mr. Darcy write a letter to Elizabeth? What specific issues does he address?

Thinking About the Story:

8. What analogy does Elizabeth use when speaking with Mr. Darcy when he declares to her that he is “ill qualified to recommend himself to strangers”? What message is she trying to convey through this comparison?
9. The opposite of a foil in literature is *parallelism*, purposefully using similar plots, characters, or other story elements to draw attention to and reinforce specific attributes, ideas, or patterns. In what way is Darcy’s outward attitude toward Elizabeth a parallel with Jane’s outward attitude toward Bingley? What is also ironic about the parallels?
10. Were you prepared for the proposal to Elizabeth by Mr. Darcy and the contents of his letter? Looking back, can you see any foreshadowing that may have hinted at these events?
11. What new information are we given regarding Mr. Wickham from Mr. Darcy’s letter?

Pride and Prejudice Study Guide Answer Key

family is not at home. *effect*: her concern is removed, she can answer that it is fine to go see it, and they plan to visit Pemberley; c. *cause*: Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner are amazed that Darcy is visiting them to introduce his sister to Elizabeth; *effect*: they now suspect that Mr. Darcy is partial to Elizabeth and likes her. d. *cause*: Miss Bingley is jealous and believes that Darcy admires Elizabeth; *effect*: She continues verbally baiting him by criticizing Elizabeth; (or) *cause*: Miss Bingley continues verbally baiting Darcy by criticizing Elizabeth. *effect*: Darcy finally answers that Elizabeth is the prettiest woman he knows. (or) *cause*: Darcy finally answers that Elizabeth is the prettiest woman he knows; *effect*: Miss Bingley is left having only caused pain to herself.

11. Answers may vary, but may mention some of the following: Miss Bingley is ungracious, jealous, unkind to others, and critical. Elizabeth holds her tongue even when she doesn't want to, she is gracious and thoughtful. This foil between the two women shows Elizabeth's good qualities and explains some of the reasons Mr. Darcy cares for Elizabeth. Their social positions also play into the foil: Darcy would expect that the higher born lady, Miss Bingley, would have the better manners, but it is actually Elizabeth, lower born, who is most gracious and actually wittier.

Dig Deeper:

12. Elizabeth was sorry and concerned by her father's decision, but decided not to dwell on it. It was not in her nature to fret over unavoidable evils or to be anxious and worry when it wouldn't change things. The verses tell us to not be anxious, to pray, and to not worry about tomorrow, as each day has enough to take care of. Elizabeth handles this situation much like these verses suggest. Personal answers will vary.

13. Answers will vary. Elizabeth's concerns seem much wiser than her father's answer, and he does not seem to take his position as father and parent seriously. A child will naturally behave childishly, but it is up to adults, particularly parents, to demonstrate and teach wise behavior. Childishness, such as silliness and flirtatiousness, left too long can become habits and patterns of thought that are difficult to change later. The older we get, the harsher the consequences for foolish behavior.

14. Sentences will vary. Mr. Darcy seems to be very kind and generous to the people who work for him and the people and merchants in the surrounding area. Everyone Elizabeth talks with has a good report for Mr. Darcy. Lady Catherine, however, is domineering, intrusive, and dictatorial, forcing her will on even the townspeople. Mr. Darcy's actions compare favorably with these verses. he is generous toward the poor and cares for his servants. He pays not only his debts, but also those of Wickham (probably not for the sake of Wickham but to protect the merchants). His tastes seem to be simple and elegant, and he has taken good care of the grounds, improving them and making them quite beautiful. It seems that he improves, or tries to improve, everything he can.

Chapters 46–50

Vocabulary:

1. logical, 2. extreme, 3. replaced, 4. hasty, 5. mentioned, 6. disturbed, 7. looking back, 8. changing, 9. miserable, 10. insult, 11. efficiently, 12. abusive words, 13. diminish, 14. bewilderment, 15. effort, 16. embarrassed, 17. reasonably

Questions:

1. Elizabeth receives a letter telling her that Lydia has eloped with Wickham. The bad news in the second letter is that Lydia and Wickham are not married and have disappeared, perhaps to London.