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Pride and Prejudice
BY JANE AUSTEN



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All references come from the Prestwick House Literary Touchstone Press edition of *Pride and Prejudice*, published 1995.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading**Thematic Ideas**

Objectives: Understanding thematic ideas
 Developing positions for debate
 Focusing reading

Activity

Choose one of the thematic statements from the worksheet that follows, and write a position paper on it. The paper should offer at least three specific, detailed examples that support your opinion on the issue.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter VII

Context and Motivation

Objectives: Understanding the historical and social context of the novel
 Understanding character motivation

Activity

In Chapter VII, Austen introduces the central dilemma of the novel: the Bennet estate is “entailed, in default of heirs male.” (Pg. 35) Essentially, this means that because Mr. Bennet has no sons, the ownership of his estate will go to his nearest male relative upon Bennet’s death. The effect of this on Mrs. Bennet (should she live longer than her husband) and her daughters is that their income will also go to this relative, leaving them with only the small inheritances guaranteed them through their mother’s family, but not enough to live on.

This unfortunate situation for the Bennet girls arose because an ancestor of Mr. Bennet stipulated that only men could inherit the estate. This was a common way to insure that an estate would remain intact and in the family’s line (not be joined with the estate of an in-law), thus preserving the family’s social distinction or rank which, at this time, was strongly tied to land ownership.

An entailment of this type is very similar to the process of succession to the British throne. For example, Charles Windsor, the Prince of Wales, is the oldest of Queen Elizabeth’s four children, so he is next in line to be ruler of England after the current ruler, Queen Elizabeth.

The British monarchy follows the principal of “male primogeniture” in succession to the throne. That is, men succeed to the throne before women. The eldest son is the first in line to become the king. His sons are next, followed by his daughters. If he has no children, the right goes to his brothers first, in order of age, and then to his sisters. For example, when Prince Charles succeeds to the throne, both of his sons will be in line before either Charles’ brothers or sister. If Prince Charles had had a daughter, her brothers would have been in line before she (even if she was older) and then she would be next, before Prince Charles’ brothers or sister.

The main difference between the entailment described in *Pride and Prejudice* and the succession to the British throne is that in the entailment, any man inherits before any woman. As long as there is a surviving male member of the family, the women are ineligible to inherit the estate.

1. On the following Entailment Chart of the Bennet family tree, draw an X through the names of all the female members. What does the chart with X’s now indicate?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters VIII – XII**Inferences, Cause and Effect, and Irony**

Objectives: Inferring a character's desires from actions and words
 Recognizing cause and effect
 Recognizing and explaining irony

Activity

On page 55, Caroline Bingley teases Mr. Darcy about his attentions to Elizabeth Bennet by saying that it is obvious the two will soon be married. She tells Mr. Darcy to use his influence with the family to “cure” the two younger Bennet girls of “running after the officers.” Miss Bingley’s blindness to her own shameless pursuit of Mr. Darcy is ironic in light of her disgust at the other girls’ behavior. Fill in the following Cause and Effect Chart with examples of Miss Bingley’s efforts in Chapters VIII – XII to win Mr. Darcy’s attention and affection. For each example, infer what response she desires from Mr. Darcy and record what response she actually receives from him. The first one has been done for you.

As a class, create a list of Miss Bingley’s personality traits. What positive attributes does she have that are not as apparent because of her constant comparison of herself with Elizabeth? Is this list easy or difficult to generate? Discuss.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter XXXIV**Comparing and Contrasting**

Objectives: Comparing characters' actions and words
 Analyzing outcomes

Activity

Reread Mr. Collins' and Mr. Darcy's proposals, Chapters XIX and XXXIV, respectively. Fill out the Venn diagram that follows to compare the proposals and Elizabeth's reactions to them. In the center, write aspects they have in common, and on either side, write the aspects that are unique to each situation. Consider the structure and content of the proposals and Elizabeth's reactions to her suitors. Then, answer the questions that follow. We have supplied one possibility for each area for you to see and use as an example.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters XLIV – LXI**Reading Comprehension and Summarizing**

Objectives: Identifying important plot incidents
 Writing newspaper headlines

Activity

Write headlines for an imaginary local newspaper that would garner the attention of the community. You should create headlines based on important plot incidents. Try to also feature a sub-heading. Make up headlines for at least three events from this section of the book.

For example, when Mr. Darcy brings his sister and Mr. Bingley to see Elizabeth at the inn in Lambton, the headline of the next day's paper could read as follows:

Darcy Seeks Hertfordshire Beauty at Lambton Inn

Eligible bachelor lingers nearly twenty minutes, according to a maid.