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Pride and Prejudice
Jane Austen



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Response Journal

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

Pride and Prejudice

Pre-reading

1. Jane Austen is considered one of the greatest English novelists of all time. *Pride and Prejudice*, though, has been criticized through the years because the female characters in the novel have two choices for their adult lives: marriage or becoming spinsters, to rely forever on the charity of male family members.

Write a letter to the National Organization for Women, a women's rights group, that explains your views about whether women should marry or whether they should rely on the charity of their families. Support your opinion with some facts.

2. Jane Austen's work was celebrated during her lifetime, particularly in the early 1800s. She has since become one of the best loved of all English authors. Think about some of our current artists: actors, singers, musicians, and writers. Write a short paragraph that explains who, among our artists today, you think will still be popular a hundred years from now. In your paragraph, include reasons why you think that person's work is so significant.

Chapters I and II

3. The very first sentence of *Pride and Prejudice* says, "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Do you think that every single person wants to be married? Write a posting for a singles' website, explaining your views about whether every person who is single wants to be in a relationship.
4. Mr. and Mrs. Bennet have been married for 23 years. Although Mrs. Bennet wants the new bachelor, Mr. Bingley, to meet her family, she still says that "at [her] time of life, it is not so pleasant...to make...a new acquaintance every day." Write a letter to Mrs. Bennet, stating the reasons why it actually is important, at any age, to make new friends.

Chapter IV

8. Elizabeth says of Jane that she is “too apt...to like people in general.” Jane, apparently, “never see[s] fault in any body.” It is clear, then, that Jane is an optimist and a “people person.” What about you; do you consider yourself a “people person,” who “never sees fault in any body” like Jane, or do you have different views? Write a short paragraph to be used on a job application, responding to the question, “Are you a people person?”

9. Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley are the best of friends, even though they have very different personality traits. Sometimes, two people who are complete opposites become friends, but other times, friends are so similar that they can complete each other’s sentences.

Write a short, two-paragraph section for a non-fiction book about the nature of friendship. In your essay, explain whether friends should be exactly alike or if differences between people enhance a relationship.

Chapters XVII and XVIII

33. Everyone is invited to the ball at Netherfield, even the minister, Mr. Collins. Even so, Mr. Wickham makes up an excuse to not come to the ball just because he doesn't want to be anywhere near Mr. Darcy.

Write a transcript for a television talk show on which Wickham and Darcy are guests. The topic of the show is "Can This Friendship be Saved?" You may begin like this

Host: We're here today with two men who grew up as close as brothers, yet now can't stand the sight of one another. Welcome Mr. Wickham and Mr. Darcy. Mr. Wickham, tell us a bout your relationship with Mr. Darcy.

Wickham: Thank you. It all began when...

34. Elizabeth and Darcy have what we would term now as "chemistry." Elizabeth has some attraction toward Darcy, yet is "determined to hate [him]."

You have probably had a moment in your life when you have thought one thing about a person, yet found out something different about him. For example, have you ever thought that a person was arrogant, but it turned out that she was just shy? Write an e-mail to a friend, describing a time when you made an assumption about someone, only to change your opinion later. Make sure to include the reasons why your opinion changed.

35. As Elizabeth and Darcy are dancing, they struggle to find something to say. Elizabeth jokes with Darcy, saying, "It's *your* turn to say something now...I talked about the dance and *you* ought to make some kind of remark..."

When a person is in an awkward social situation, as Elizabeth and Darcy are, what can they discuss to pass the time? Write a two or three paragraph posting for a dating website, offering advice on how to make small talk with someone.

Chapters XXVII and XXVIII

49. Elizabeth's aunt invites her to join her family on a vacation to the lake region of England. Elizabeth is overjoyed at this prospect and accepts immediately. For Elizabeth, this is a dream trip.

Think, for a moment, of all of the vacations you have enjoyed. Which vacation was your favorite? Write a short, chronological account of your favorite vacation, listing the things that you liked best about it.

50. After visiting with the newlyweds, Collins and Charlotte, Elizabeth wonders just how happy Charlotte really is with her new husband.

Write a dialogue between two classmates, arguing whether Charlotte can be truly happy with Mr. Collins. You may want to begin like this

Classmate #1: Charlotte seems very content in her life with Collins.

Classmate #2: Yes, but if she doesn't really love him, how content can she be?