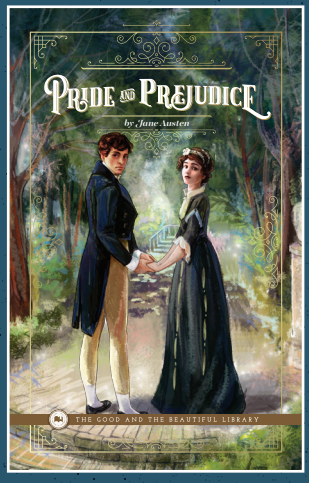
HIGH SCHOOL HONORS

Book Study

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

by Jane Austen



THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL

ABOUT THE BOOK STUDY

What are Honors Book Studies?

The Good and the Beautiful Honors Book Studies are student-directed consumable booklets that accompany select books from The Good and the Beautiful Library. Each Honors Book Study is designed to help students explore the book's themes and messages, appreciate the literary value of the book, and learn new vocabulary and writing skills that correlate with the book. To complete an Honors Book Study, the student simply reads and follows the instructions in the booklet while reading the corresponding book. The Honors Book Studies are intended to be completed independently, or they can be completed in a group, class, or book club setting.

What are the goals of the Honors Book Studies?

There are three main goals of the Honors Book Studies: to help the student learn to **analyze**, **appreciate**, and **gain inspiration** from good and beautiful literature.

How many Honors Book Studies should be completed?

Students can complete as few or as many of the Honors Book Studies as desired. Honors Book Studies are not designed to take the place of the High School Language Arts courses; they are designed to be used in addition to the courses for those students who work at a faster pace and can use more challenging work. The reading books for the Honors Book Studies are more challenging than the required reading books for the High School Language Arts courses. Honors Book Studies can be completed in any order.

What materials are needed?

To complete this book study, you will need the following items:

- This book study booklet
- *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, available through The Good and the Beautiful Library
- A computer or laptop with a basic word processing program, such as Word or Google Docs
- A pencil or pen and a journal or notebook

AT-A-GLANCE

Author Study

- Biography of Jane Austen

Vocabulary

- Challenging vocabulary words in *Pride and Prejudice* (see pages 4–6)

Literary Analysis

- Study the themes and messages in *Pride and Prejudice*
- Analyze the literary value of *Pride and Prejudice*

Writing

- Reading and analyzing a response paper
- Writing a response paper
- Reading and analyzing an analysis paper
- Writing an analysis paper
- General writing instruction and practice

by her in the various relations of life. I can indeed bear witness that there was scarcely a charm in her most delightful characters that was not a true reflection of her own sweet temper and loving heart. I was young when we lost her; but the impressions made on the young are deep, and though in the course of fifty years I have forgotten much, I have not forgotten that 'Aunt Jane' was the delight of all her nephews and nieces. We did not think of her as being clever, still less as being famous; but we valued her as one always kind, sympathizing, and amusing."

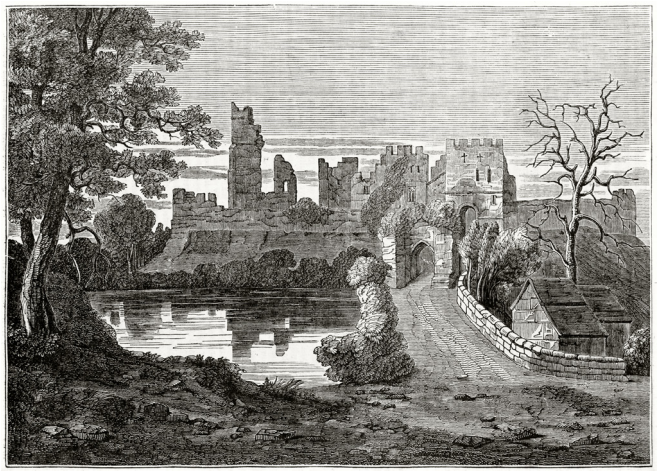
What makes Austen unique?

The author Virginia Woolf famously said the following of Jane Austen: "Of all great writers, she is the most difficult to catch in the act of greatness." This is partly due to the fact that Austen's six major novels (*Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility, Emma, Mansfield Park, Persuasion*, and *Northanger Abbey*) are all about normal, everyday people and the fairly quiet, uneventful lives they lead. Her books are all set in the south of England during the end of the 1700s and beginning of the 1800s—exactly where and when Austen herself lived. They are not full of dramatic, important events or thrilling action. They're mostly composed of conversations in drawing rooms and at tea tables.

"She had a lively, playful disposition, which delighted in anything ridiculous."

—from Pride and Prejudice

But while seemingly sedate on the surface, Austen's books positively sparkle with wit, humor, and shrewd social commentary. Because she wrote about regular people—the kinds of people she saw around her every day—Austen's characters are multifaceted and complex. They each have a mixture of good and bad, of virtue and folly, which makes them come alive on the page. Creating such lifelike characters is always a difficult thing to do in writing, but it is even more astonishing in Austen's case when you place her in the context of her literary contemporaries. Popular novels at the time were full of sickly sweet heroines and dastardly evil villains, which, though sometimes fun to read about, are not very accurate portrayals of real people. For example, the gothic novels of Mrs. (Ann) Radcliffe were hugely successful. Austen herself was a fan of Radcliffe's books, many of which feature castle ruins, hidden passageways and trap doors, beautiful heroines who get kidnapped, secret marriages, murder, blackmail, and other exciting but unlikely happenings.



Ruins of Prudhoe Castle in England

In *Northanger Abbey*, which Austen wrote as a parody of those exaggerated, overwrought gothic novels, the main character has read all of Radcliffe's books and any others she can get her hands on. So when she stays with some friends in a spooky old abbey, her head is full of imagined secrets and horrors. That overactive imagination eventually gets her into trouble, which is Austen's playful way of poking fun at the genre.

Austen's simple, elegant style and her lovable but realistically flawed heroines were a breath of fresh air in contrast to most novels of the time, and people took note: people like Sir Walter Scott, a Scottish poet and novelist whose wildly popular works won him international acclaim in his lifetime. Scott published a glowing review of *Emma* in which he praised Austen's mastery of "the art of copying from nature as she really exists in the common walks of life, and presenting to the reader, instead of the splendid scenes of an imaginary world, a correct and striking representation of that which is daily taking place around him."

Though the subjects of his own works roamed far beyond the bounds of the normal and the everyday, Scott appreciated Austen's ability to infuse her novels with life and humor without resorting to sensationalism. "We, therefore, bestow no mean compliment upon the author of *Emma*, when we say that, keeping close to common incidents, and to such characters as occupy the ordinary walks of life, she has produced sketches of such spirit and originality, that we never miss the excitation which depends upon a narrative of uncommon events … In this class she stands almost alone."

duplicity [dew - PLIS - i - tee]: double-dealing; deceit

John refused to use duplicity to get ahead in school, even if his classmates all cheated.

eminent [EM - in - ent]: high; lofty; exalted in rank

Confucius was the most eminent teacher and philosopher of his time.

extravagant [ex - TRAV - uh - ghent]: exceeding necessity; unreasonably wasteful

Jay Gatsby was famous for his expensive and extravagant parties.

filial [FIL - ee - ul]: of or relating to a son or daughter

I consider it my filial duty to take care of my parents in their old age.

frivolous [FRIV - uh - lus]: of little weight, worth, or importance; trivial

Mary wanted to discuss her favorite authors, but everyone else was chatting about frivolous topics like fashion and the weather.

impertinent [im - PER - tuh - nent]: rude; intrusive; meddling

I don't mean to be impertinent, but do you mind telling me where you bought your hat?

imprudent [im - PRU - dent]: lacking wisdom or discretion; rash; heedless

Alice was being imprudent when she stuck her head down that rabbit hole.

impudent [IM - pyoo - dent]: bold, with a contempt for others; shameless

Jack is an impudent class clown—he's always strolling in late to class, balancing textbooks on his head for everyone to laugh at.

impute [im - PYOOT]: to lay the responsibility for something, often unjustly

Jane was guilty of plagiarism when she imputed Joan's work to herself.

incredulous [in - KRED - you - lus]: refusing or withholding belief

Elinor was incredulous when she saw the grocery bill and didn't know how she would afford it.

indolent [IN - duh - lent]: inactive; idle; lazy

I like to be indolent, but only when I'm on vacation—in a hammock on the beach.

laudable [LAW - duh - bul]: worthy of praise; admirable

The firefighters received a key to the city for their laudable acts of heroism.

mercenary (adj.) [MER - sen - AIR - ee]: motivated by the promise of money or a reward; greedy

Scarlett may seem charming, but her motives are mercenary. She wants a rich husband.

mien [MEEN]: external appearance; manner

People admired the president for his calm and dignified mien.

obliged [uh - BLYJD]: bound in duty or in law; compelled; constrained

Catherine felt obliged to share her great wealth by caring for the poor.

ostentation [AW - sten - TAY - shun]: an outwardly showy or vain display; flashiness

Henry could not stand the ostentation of his parents' eight-course dinner parties.

partiality [PAR - shee - AL - uh - tee]: an inclination to favor one party or one side of a question more than the other

My grandmother loves all her grandchildren, but she's always had a partiality for me, since we share a name and a birthday.

Word Bank

AMIABLE	**EMINENT**	**MIEN**
CONDESCEND	**FILIAL**	**PEDANTIC**
CONJECTURE	**IMPERTINENT**	**REVERIE**
COUNTENANCE	**INDOLENT**	**SUPERCILIOUS**
DEIGN	**LAUDABLE**	**TUMULT**

Short Answer Questions

Answer the following questions. Use a short quote from the book to support each answer.

1. In the first two chapters, what does Mrs. Bennet want her husband to do and why?
2. What reason does Mr. Darcy give for not wanting to dance at the ball in chapter 3? What reason does he give for not wanting to dance with Elizabeth in particular?
3. Describe Jane Bennet's personality. How is she different from her sister Elizabeth?
4. How do Kitty and Lydia, the two youngest Bennet sisters, spend most of their days? In contrast, what does Mary spend her time doing?
5. "*Vanity and pride are different things, though the words are often used synonymously. A person may be proud without being vain.*"
   "Yes, vanity is a weakness indeed. But pride—where there is a real superiority of mind, pride will be always under good regulation."
   Identify the speaker of each quote. What do you think the speakers mean by the difference between vanity and pride?

in such a way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion for my poor nerves."

We learn so much about who Mr. and Mrs. Bennet are from this brief conversation and get a feel for their personalities and motivations, far more than if Austen had spent time describing what they looked like and how they were dressed. What impressions do you get about Mr. and Mrs. Bennet's marriage from this first conversation?

Page 71:

[T]he agreeable manner in which he immediately fell into conversation, though it was only on its being a wet night, made her feel that the commonest, dullest, most threadbare topic might be rendered interesting by the skill of the speaker.

What do we learn about Mr. Wickham from this first encounter? What do we learn about Elizabeth's feelings toward him? Austen could have written, "Mr. Wickham was an interesting speaker, and Elizabeth enjoyed listening to him," telling us instead of showing. Why is it better to "show" like Austen does, instead of just "tell"?

Page 92:

She concluded with many good wishes that Lady Lucas might soon be equally fortunate, though evidently and triumphantly believing there was no chance of it.

What do we learn about Mrs. Bennet's character from this quote? How could Austen have written a similar line, but in a way that was "telling" instead of "showing"?

Wordy, redundant, or overly flowery writing is not good, but using a variety of sentence lengths and a variety of the following sentence structures helps avoid choppiness and predictability. However, using more complex sentence structures exercises your brain, giving reading the benefits of increased memory, focus, and attention span.

- ***Simple Sentence***: consists of only one clause
- ***Compound Sentence***: consists of two or more independent clauses
- ***Complex Sentence***: has at least one independent clause, plus at least one dependent clause
- ***Compound-Complex Sentence***: contains more than one independent clause and at least one dependent clause

From the chapters you just read, write down one of the sections you highlighted that has high literary value:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Circle the following items that the section contains: **"show, don't tell"**; **a variety of sentence lengths and structures**; **personification**, **simile**, or **metaphor**; **sensory language**.

As you continue to read *Pride and Prejudice*, try to recognize the entertainment, educational, moral, and literary value.

Example Response Paper

A response paper discusses your reaction to a text. A response paper is not a summary of the text; it is your own personal analysis and impressions of what you read. Response papers are written from the first person point of view, which means you may have phrases such as "I believe" or "I feel."

Writing a response is a wonderful exercise for subjective thinking, organization, and writing. One of the best ways to learn to write well is to read model writing. Read and analyze the following short response paper, making a checklist in your notebook of items needed for a successful response paper.

***Pride and Prejudice* Response Paper**

by Breckyn Wood

Start with an attention-grabbing opening, such as a question, quote, short personal experience, or—as in this case—an interesting statement.

People say you shouldn't judge a book by its cover. However, you can judge something about a person based on whether or not he or she likes books. At least, Jane Austen seems to thinks so, and I agree with her. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen often uses a love of books and reading as an indication of good character and a lack of it as an indication of bad or deficient character. Since Austen was herself a voracious reader and a writer of novels, it makes sense that she would be preferential to people who like to read and give that valuable trait to her best characters.

List the title and author of the book in the opening paragraph.

Thesis statement

Use transitions.

Let's look at the evidence. On page 10, we learn the following about Mr. Bennet: "With a book he was regardless of time." What a lovely way of telling us he likes to read! All bibliophiles (fancy word for book-lovers) have had the experience of getting so caught up in a good book that they don't realize how much time has passed. When I read that about Mr. Bennet, I immediately felt a connection to him and knew he must be an interesting, thoughtful person.

Use specific examples from the text, paraphrased or quoted.

Themes and Messages

Consider what Elizabeth says to her sister Jane on page 329: "If you were to give me forty such men, I never could be so happy as you. Till I have your disposition, your goodness, I never can have your happiness."

It should be clear, now that you have finished *Pride and Prejudice*, that Austen cares a lot about character, about our inner qualities. In the above quote and throughout the book, she teaches us that true happiness comes from being a good person and doing what is right. As we finish this book study, something must be said of the unhappy fate of Lydia and Mr. Wickham.

You learned in Section 2 about why marriage is such a prominent theme in Austen's books: marriage affected every aspect of a woman's life in Austen's time. It is also true of Austen's time that families were much more closely connected in their fates—if one member was dishonored, the whole family would feel the effects of the shame. By running away with Wickham and living with him before their marriage, Lydia throws shame on her whole family and significantly decreases her sisters' chances of marrying well and achieving financial security later in life.



Ponder the following questions and, if possible, discuss them with a parent, teacher, or group.

1. On page 291, Elizabeth reflects on "how little of permanent happiness could belong to a couple who were only brought together because their passions were stronger than their virtue." Do Lydia and Wickham get "punished" for their wrong behavior? In what way?
2. What does Lydia's elopement reveal about Mr. and Mrs. Bennet? Do you think either of them are permanently changed by the event?
3. "He owed a good deal in town, but his debts of honour were still more formidable." What do we learn about Regency-Era society from this quote? What else does the book have to say on the subject of "honour"?

Writing an Analysis Paper

Now that you have read and analyzed an analysis paper on *Pride and Prejudice*, it's your turn to write one.

Choose one of the following topics for your paper, or choose your own topic:

- Jane Austen originally titled this book *First Impressions*. What are some of the "first impressions" that happen in the book, and how do those impressions change over the course of the novel?
- What does *Pride and Prejudice* teach us about marriage in the Regency Era specifically and in general? Do you think Austen had a positive or a negative view of marriage?
- Evaluate the literary or moral value of *Pride and Prejudice*. Use examples that you have highlighted throughout the book.

Use the example analysis paper and the following checklist to make sure your paper contains all of the necessary elements of an analysis paper:



- ☐ There is an attention-grabbing opening.
- ☐ Title and author are listed in the opening paragraph.
- ☐ Your thesis statement is in the opening paragraph.
- ☐ There are at least three body paragraphs.
- ☐ Each body paragraph has a topic sentence and sticks to the main idea of the topic sentence.
- ☐ Transitions are used between paragraphs and topics.
- ☐ The concluding paragraph wraps up the text without repeating exactly what has already been stated.
- ☐ The final word count is at least 750 words.