Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*  
Study Guide

**Chapter 1**
1. The first sentence of this novel is considered by critics to be one of the most revealing first lines in English literature. What does this one sentence tell the reader about the overall theme of the story?
2. Who is Mr. Bingley? Why does Mrs. Bennet want her husband to visit Mr. Bingley?
3. According to Mrs. Bennet, what qualities do Jane and Lydia possess that make them better candidates for marriage than Lizzy? Why is Lizzy Mr. Bennet’s favorite daughter?
4. Compare the personalities of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet. Why do you think they married each other?

**Chapter 2**
1. What is revealed about Kitty, Mary, and Lydia Bennet in this chapter?
2. Why do you suppose Mr. Bennet teases his wife instead of telling her directly about his visit to Mr. Bingley?

**Chapter 3**
1. What do the Bennet women learn about Mr. Bingley from Mrs. Lucas?
2. Briefly describe Mr. Darcy. What do you think makes him draw “the attention of the room”?
3. Why do the people at the assembly come to dislike Mr. Darcy?
4. What does Elizabeth do when she overhears Mr. Darcy insult her by telling Mr. Bingley that “she is tolerable but not handsome enough to tempt me”?
5. How does Jane know Mr. Bingley admires her? What does she think of him?

**Chapter 4**
1. What does Elizabeth think of Mr. Bingley’s sisters? Why does she not share her opinion with Jane?
2. Briefly describe the friendship between Darcy and Bingley.

**Chapter 5**
1. Briefly describe Charlotte Lucas.
2. What reasons does Charlotte give for her opinion that Mr. Darcy has a “‘right to be proud’”? Why does Elizabeth say, “‘... and I could easily forgive his pride, if he had not mortified mine’”?
3. How, according to Mary, can a person be “‘proud without being vain’”?

**Chapter 6**
1. What does Charlotte think about Jane’s ability to maintain her composure around Mr. Bingley, even though she is falling in love with him?
2. What is Charlotte saying about marriage in this passage: “‘it is better to know as little as possible of the defects of the person with whom you are to pass your life’”?
3. Why does Elizabeth disagree with Charlotte’s assessment of marriage?
4. Why does Mr. Darcy begin to listen to Elizabeth’s conversations with other people?
5. How does Miss Bingley try to discourage Darcy’s interest in Elizabeth?

Chapter 7
1. Why is it unfortunate for Mr. Bennet’s daughters that his estate is entailed?
2. Who is Mrs. Phillips? Why do Lydia and Catherine enjoy visiting her?
3. What is Mrs. Bennet’s plan to help Jane spend more time with Mr. Bingley?
4. Why does Elizabeth walk to Netherfield?

Chapter 8
1. What does Miss Bingley say to diminish Mr. Darcy’s opinion of Elizabeth? What does she say to flatter Mr. Darcy?
2. Support or refute the following statement by citing incidents from the story: Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley continue their admiration of the Bennet girls despite Miss Bingley’s negative comments.
3. Briefly describe Miss Darcy.
4. What is Mr. Darcy’s definition of an “‘accomplished woman’”?
5. What is ironic about the following passage from this chapter?
   “Eliza Bennet,” said Miss Bingley, when the door was closed on her, “is one of those young ladies who seek to recommend themselves to the other sex, by undervaluing their own . . .”
   “Undoubtedly,” replied Darcy . . . “there is a meanness in all the arts which ladies sometimes condescend to employ for captivation.”

Chapter 9
1. How does Mrs. Bennet embarrass Elizabeth when she comes to Netherfield to visit Jane?
2. Briefly describe Lydia. What does she boldly ask Mr. Bingley before she leaves for home?

Chapter 10
1. How does the following statement by Darcy offend his friend Bingley: “‘To yield without conviction is no compliment to the understand of either’”?
2. What danger is Darcy worrying about in the passage below?
   Darcy had never been so bewitched by any woman as he was by her. He really believed that, were it not for the inferiority of her connections, he should be in some danger.
3. How does Mrs. Hurst try to offend Elizabeth? Is she successful?

Chapter 11
1. What does Miss Bingley do to get Darcy’s attention?
2. List the faults Mr. Darcy admits to having. What fault in character does he NOT admit to?
3. Darcy says to Elizabeth, “There is, I believe, in every disposition a tendency to some particular evil, a natural defect, which not even the best education can overcome.” What natural defect does he find in Elizabeth’s character?

Chapter 12
1. Why is Mr. Darcy glad Elizabeth and Jane are going home?
2. Why is Mr. Bennet glad to see his daughters while Mrs. Bennet is sorry they have returned home?

Chapter 13
1. How do you think Mr. Collins could make amends to the Bennet daughters for the entail?
2. Briefly describe Mr. Collins. Why does Elizabeth think Mr. Collins “must be an oddity”?
3. In what sense can Mr. Collins be considered a comical character? What do you think Austen is saying about the rules of social behavior by including Mr. Collins in this story?

Chapter 14
1. Who is Lady Catherine de Bourgh, and how does Mr. Collins try to keep her happy?
2. Briefly describe Miss de Bourgh.
3. What does Mr. Bennet think of Mr. Collins?
4. How does Lydia insult Mr. Collins?

Chapter 15
1. Why does Mr. Collins decide to pursue Elizabeth for his wife, instead of Jane?
2. Briefly describe Mr. Wickham. How does Darcy react when he sees Mr. Wickham along the road?
3. What indications are there in this chapter that Elizabeth is interested in Mr. Darcy?

Chapter 16
1. Why do you think Wickham feels free to talk to Elizabeth about his problems with Darcy?
2. In what ways does Wickham think Darcy is “disgracing the memory of his father”? What reasons does Wickham give for Darcy’s refusal to honor his father’s will?
3. List the ways that Darcy’s pride is a positive character trait.
4. How does Wickham explain Darcy’s friendship with Bingley?
5. What is the connection between Darcy and Lady Catherine de Bourgh? What interesting information does Elizabeth learn about Lady Catherine’s daughter, Miss de Bourgh?
6. What does the following conversation between Elizabeth and Wickham suggest to the reader about Wickham’s true feelings on meeting Darcy again?
   “I wonder,” said he, . . . “whether he is likely to be in this country much longer.”
   “I do not at all know; but I heard nothing of his going away . . . I hope your plans . . . will not be affected by his being in the neighborhood.”
   “Oh no—it is not for me to be driven away by Mr. Darcy.”
Chapter 17

1. Why does Jane try to defend Mr. Darcy after Elizabeth tells her about Wickham’s accusations?
2. How does Elizabeth’s conversation with Mr. Collins about the Netherfield ball backfire?
3. What does Elizabeth say when her mother hints to her that Collins may be planning to ask her for her hand in marriage?

Chapter 18

1. Why is Wickham not the Netherfield ball?
2. How does Elizabeth insult Darcy while they are dancing?
3. Why do you suppose Darcy is upset by the possibility that Bingley and Jane are falling in love?
4. What is the nature of the prejudice Elizabeth accuses Darcy of in the following passage?
   “I remember hearing you once say, Mr. Darcy, that you hardly ever forgave—that your resentment, once created, was unappeasable. You are very cautious, I suppose, as to its being created.”
   “I am,” he said, with a firm voice.
   “And never allow yourself to be blinded by prejudice?”
5. Why does Elizabeth not believe Miss Bingley when she tries to defend Darcy’s actions toward Wickham?
6. How do Mrs. Bennet, Mary, and Mr. Collins all succeed in embarrassing Elizabeth at the ball?

Chapter 19

1. Why does Mr. Collins refuse to accept that Elizabeth does want to marry him?
2. List the reasons Elizabeth gives Mr. Collins for her refusal.
3. List the reasons Mr. Collins believes it is unreasonable for Elizabeth to continue to refuse his offer of marriage.
4. Support the following statement: This story is a satire (which uses humor to expose something or someone to ridicule) that ridicules the importance of marriage to a woman’s security and happiness.

Chapter 20

1. Why does Mr. Collins threaten to withdraw his offer of marriage to Elizabeth after talks to Mrs. Bennet?
2. What does Mr. Bennet do that surprises Mrs. Bennet and amuses Elizabeth?
3. Charlotte Lucas stays behind after the other ladies leave so she can listen to the conversation between Mrs. Bennet and Mr. Collins. Austen describes Charlotte as having “a little curiosity.” What other reason do you think Charlotte may have for eavesdropping on their conversation?
4. What evidence is there in this chapter that Mr. Collins has no real feelings for Elizabeth?
Chapter 21
1. At this point in the story, what does Austen tell the reader about the following characters to advance the story and add interest to the plot: Collins and Charlotte, Wickham and Elizabeth, and Jane and Bingley?
2. What evidence is there that Elizabeth does not believe Miss Bingley’s assertion that her brother will not return to Netherfield for the entire winter?

Chapter 22
1. How does Charlotte justify her decision to marry Mr. Collins?
2. How does Elizabeth respond when Charlotte tells her about her plans to marry Mr. Collins?

Chapter 23
1. What does Mr. Bennet mean when he says that “it gratified him . . . to discover that Charlotte Lucas, whom he had been used to think tolerably sensible, was as foolish as his wife, and more foolish than his daughter!”?
2. Why is Jane feeling anxious? Why is Charlotte’s presence offensive to Mrs. Bennet?

Chapter 1 / 24
1. After reading the following passage from this chapter, what do you think is Elizabeth’s opinion of Mr. Bingley?
   That he was really fond of Jane, she doubted no more than she had ever done; and much as she had always been disposed to like him, she could not think without anger, hardly without contempt, on that easiness of temper, that want of proper resolution, which now made him the slave of his designing friends . . .
2. What two examples of the “inconsistency of human character” is Elizabeth referring to in the passage below?
   The more I see of the world the more am I dissatisfied with it; and every day confirms my belief of the inconsistency of all human characters, and of the little dependence that can be placed on the appearance of either merit or sense. I have met with two instances lately . . .
3. What do you think about Mr. Wickham making his problems with Darcy public, resulting in everybody disliking Darcy?

Chapter 2 / 25
1. Briefly identify Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner. How does Mrs. Gardiner offer to help Jane?
2. What do Mrs. Gardiner and Wickham have in common?

Chapter 3 / 26
1. Why does Elizabeth see the boldness of allowing herself to fall in love with Wickham?
2. How do you think Charlotte’s marriage to Mr. Collins may be helpful to Elizabeth’s future happiness?
3. Why does Jane’s letter convince Elizabeth that “accident only could discover to Mr. Bingley her sister’s being in town”?
4. Why does Wickham turn his romantic attentions away from Elizabeth to another lady?
Chapter 4 / 27
1. Which young men is Elizabeth referring to in the following quotation?
   “Oh, if that is all, I have a very poor opinion of young men who live in Derbyshire; and their intimate friends who live in Hertfordshire are not much better. I am sick of them all. Thank heaven! I am going tomorrow where I shall find a man who has not one agreeable quality, who has neither manner nor sense to recommend him. Stupid men are the only ones worth knowing, after all.”

2. How do the Gardiner’s cheer up Elizabeth?

Chapter 5 / 28
1. What does Charlotte do when her husband says something “of which his wife might reasonably be ashamed”?

2. Why does Elizabeth say, “I like her appearance,” after seeing Miss de Bourgh for the first time?

Chapter 6 / 29
1. In what ways can the character of Lady Catherine be considered comical?

2. Briefly describe Lady Catherine. What is her opinion of entailing estates?

3. What is revealed about Elizabeth’s childhood in this chapter? How does Elizabeth defend her mother’s decision to let her younger sisters look for husbands before the older sisters are married?

Chapter 7 / 30
1. Why is Elizabeth looking forward to the prospect of Mr. Darcy visiting Rosings?

2. Briefly describe Colonel Fitzwilliam. What is his family connection to Darcy?

3. What does Elizabeth say to Darcy that leaves him a little confused?

Chapter 8 / 31
1. Support or refute the following statement by citing incidents from this chapter: Darcy is romantically interested in Elizabeth.

2. What is Darcy referring to when he says to Elizabeth, after listening to her play the piano, “‘We neither of us perform to strangers’”?

Chapter 9 / 32
1. Why does Charlotte believe Mr. Darcy must be in love with Elizabeth?

2. Why do you think Mr. Darcy continues to visit the parsonage but once there, makes no real effort to carry on a conversation?

3. In the following passage, Mrs. Collins suggests that Elizabeth’s opinion about Mr. Darcy might change if she knows he is interested in her. Do you agree or disagree with Mrs. Collins’s assessment of Elizabeth’s character?

She had once or twice suggested to Elizabeth the possibility of his being partial to her . . . Mrs. Collins did not think it right to press the subject, from the danger of raising expectations which might only end in disappointment; for in her opinion it admitted not of a doubt, that all her friend’s dislike would vanish is she could suppose him to be in power.
Chapter 10 / 33
1. Why can Fitzwilliam not pursue Elizabeth as a prospective bride?
2. What is Elizabeth’s reaction when she learns Darcy has recently saved Bingley from “the inconveniences of a most imprudent marriage . . .”?

Chapter 11 / 34
1. Many critics believe this chapter is the most dramatic in the book. Do you agree? How does Austen’s style of writing serve to heighten the drama in this scene?
2. Why does Elizabeth feel compassion for Darcy when he proposes marriage to her? What does he say to change that feeling into anger?
3. What two reasons does Elizabeth give Darcy for her rejection of his proposal?

Chapter 12 / 35
1. How does Darcy justify his decision to interfere in Bingley’s relationship with Jane?
2. Why does Darcy not publicly defend himself when Wickham maligns Darcy’s character to the people in Elizabeth’s hometown?
3. What evidence is there in Darcy’s letter that shows he still respects Elizabeth, despite her refusal of his marriage proposal?

Chapter 13 / 36
1. Cite incidents from the story to support the assertion from Elizabeth below concerning her behavior toward Mr. Darcy. In what ways has she been “blind, partial, prejudiced” toward Mr. Darcy?
   She grew absolutely ashamed of herself. Of neither Darcy nor Wickham could she think without feeling that she had been blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd.
2. In what ways does Elizabeth think “Jane’s disappointment had, in fact, been the work of her nearest relations”?
3. Why does Elizabeth not feel the need to confirm the contents of Darcy’s letter by talking to Fitzwilliam?

Chapter 14 / 37
1. Support or refute the following statement by citing incidents from the story: Elizabeth makes her decisions and evaluations based on logic rather than emotion.
2. Elizabeth admits to herself that her family has some flaws. What does she see as her father’s character flaw?
3. By reading the passage below, decide what, according to Elizabeth, is Bingley’s character flaw?
   Mr. Darcy’s explanation, by restoring Bingley to all her former good opinion, heightened the sense of what Jane had lost. His affection was proved to have been sincere, and his conduct cleared of all blame, unless any could attach to the implicitness of his confidence in his friend.
Chapter 15 / 38

1. It is clear from the following quotation that Elizabeth does not understand how Charlotte can be happy married to Mr. Collins. Assume Charlotte knows about Elizabeth’s objections. How do you think Charlotte might explain to Elizabeth why she is content in her life with Mr. Collins?
   “Poor Charlotte! It was melancholy to leave her to such society! But she had chosen it with her eyes open; and though evidently regretting that her visitors were to go, she did not seem to ask for compassion.”

2. Why does Elizabeth decide to wait until they reach Longbourn to tell Jane about Darcy’s proposal and his involvement in Bingley’s decision to leave Netherfield?

Chapter 16 / 39

1. What does the following passage reveal about Lydia’s views of marriage? How do you think that Lydia feels about Wickham? Lydia is talking to Elizabeth about Wickham and the young heiress he is courting. She says,
   “There is no danger of Wickham’s marrying Mary King . . . She is gone down to her uncle at Liverpool; gone to stay . . . She is a great fool for going away, if she likes him.”

Chapter 17 / 40

1. What is Jane’s reaction when Elizabeth tells her about her proposal from Darcy and his letter discrediting Wickham?

2. Why do the sisters decide to keep the information about Wickham’s true character to themselves?

Chapter 18 / 41

1. Who is Mrs. Forster, and how does she make Lydia happy?

2. Why does Elizabeth secretly advise her father to stop Lydia from going to Brighton? What is his reply?

3. Support or refute the following statement by citing incidents from the story: The conversation between Wickham and Elizabeth in this chapter is an example of Austen’s ability to use dramatic dialogue to add interest to the story.

Chapter 19 / 42

1. Why is Mr. Bennet disappointed in his marriage? What does he do to find comfort for his disappointment?

2. Why does Elizabeth go to Derbyshire with the Gardiners? Why does Elizabeth agree to visit Pemberley, Darcy’s estate?

Chapter 1 / 43

1. What is the “lucky recollection” Elizabeth has while touring Pemberley that saves her from regretting her decision not to marry Darcy?

2. How does Mrs. Reynolds, the housekeeper at Pemberley, surprise Elizabeth?

3. Is there evidence in this chapter that Elizabeth’s feelings toward Darcy are softening?
4. Why is Elizabeth “overpowered by shame and vexation” when Darcy appears unexpectedly at his home?

5. What surprises Darcy about Elizabeth’s aunt and uncle?

6. What do you think about Darcy’s desire to introduce Elizabeth to his sister? What does this say about Darcy’s feelings toward Elizabeth?

7. Why do you think Elizabeth decides to confide some of the details about Wickham’s connection with Darcy to her aunt and uncle?

Chapter 2 / 44

1. Why do the Gardiners begin to suspect Darcy is in love with Elizabeth?

2. Briefly describe Miss Darcy.

3. How does Bingley behave toward Miss Darcy? What evidence is there that Bingley is still in love with Jane?

4. In this chapter Elizabeth examines her feelings toward Darcy. Why does she feel good will and gratitude toward Darcy?

5. What is the following passage saying about Elizabeth’s intentions concerning a possible future with Darcy?

   She respected, she esteemed, she was grateful to him; she felt a real interest in his welfare; and she only wanted to know how far she wished that welfare to depend upon herself, and how far it would be for the happiness of both that she should employ the power, which her fancy told her she still possessed, of bringing on the renewal of his addresses.

Chapter 3 / 45

1. What two mistakes in conversation does Miss Bingley make in her unsuccessful attempt to make Elizabeth look bad to Darcy?

Chapter 4 / 46

1. What bad news is in Jane’s first letter to Elizabeth? How does the second letter make the situation worse?

2. What “power” is Elizabeth referencing to in the following passage? “Her power was sinking; everything must sink under such a proof of family weakness, such an assurance of the deepest disgrace.”

3. Find a passage in this chapter showing that Mrs. Gardiner knows for sure that Darcy and Elizabeth are in love.

Chapter 5 / 47

1. Mary whispers the following opinion on the importance of a woman’s reputation. Do you think Mary is serving as a mouthpiece for the author on the importance of a woman’s virtue, or is Mary’s opinion another example of Austen’s satirical style?

   “Unhappy as the event must be for Lydia, we may draw from it this useful lesson—that loss of virtue in a female is irretrievable—that one false step involves her in endless ruin; that her reputation is no less brittle than it is beautiful; and that she cannot be too much guarded in her behavior toward the undeserving of the other sex.”
2. Support or refute the following statement by citing incidents from the story: Lydia is an imprudent, selfish young woman and certainly not innocently led astray by Wickham.

Chapter 6 / 48
1. What advice does Collins give Mr. Bennet in his letter? How does Mr. Collins feel about the Bennet family problems?
2. Mr. Bennet acknowledges to Elizabeth his responsibility in Lydia’s disgrace by not preventing her from following after the military officers. He vows to keep Kitty under tighter controls. What indicates that Mr. Bennet is exaggerating when he tells Kitty she will feel the effects of his stricter attitude?

Chapter 7 / 49
1. Why does Mr. Bennet believe Mr. Gardiner gave Wickham money to marry Lydia?
2. Support or refute the following statement by citing incidents from the story: Mrs. Bennet’s silly behavior, after learning of Lydia’s marriage to Wickham, is an example of Austen’s satirical style of writing.
3. What is Elizabeth’s opinion of Lydia’s chances of happiness in her marriage to Wickham?

Chapter 8 / 50
1. Why does Elizabeth that Darcy will never want to marry her even after Lydia is legally married?
2. Why does Mr. Bennet agree to admit Lydia and her husband into his house before the newlyweds move to the North?

Chapter 9 / 51
1. Why does Elizabeth think Wickham marries Lydia, and what are Lydia’s reasons for getting married so young?
2. What secret does Lydia inadvertently reveal to Jane and Elizabeth? Why is this secret particularly interesting to Elizabeth?

Chapter 10 / 52
1. What do you think is Darcy’s reason for paying Wickham’s debts and arranging for his marriage to Lydia?
2. What is implied about Darcy’s relationship with Elizabeth in the following passage from Mrs. Gardiner’s letter?

I thought him very sly; he hardly ever mentioned your name; but slyness seems the fashion. Pray forgive me if I have been very presuming, or at least do not punish me so far as to exclude me from P. I shall never be quite happy till I have been all round the park.

3. What evidence is there that Wickham realizes Elizabeth knows all about his true relationship with Darcy?
Chapter 11 / 53
1. List the ways Mrs. Bennet manages to embarrass Elizabeth when Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy call on them.

2. Elizabeth is very uncomfortable during the first visit from Darcy and Bingley after Lydia’s marriage. What happens to give Elizabeth some relief from the tension in the room?

Chapter 12 / 54
1. Why is Elizabeth frustrated when Darcy and Bingley come to dinner?

2. In the last sentence of the chapter, Elizabeth tells Jane to “not make me your confidante.” Why do you think Elizabeth does not want to listen to Jane’s description of her evening with Bingley?

Chapter 13 / 55
1. After Bingley proposes marriage to Jane, her whole family is thrilled. Mr. Bennet, a man who usually pokes fun at his family, says to Jane, “Jane, I congratulate you. You will be a very happy woman.” Why do you think Mr. Bennet believes Jane will find happiness with Bingley?

2. What does the following passage suggest to the reader about Elizabeth’s hopes for finding a good husband?

“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. No, no, let me shift for myself; and, perhaps, if I have very good luck, I may meet with another Mr. Collins in time.”

Chapter 14 / 56
1. List two ways Lady Catherine insults Elizabeth and her family.

2. Why do you suppose Elizabeth refuses to promise Lady Catherine that she will never accept a proposal of marriage from Darcy?

3. Support or refute the following statement by citing incidents from the story: Elizabeth is encouraged rather than discouraged about her future with Darcy after Lady Catherine’s visit.

Chapter 15 / 57
1. Under what circumstances does Elizabeth vow to give up all hope of Darcy repeating his proposal of marriage?

2. Why does Mr. Bennet want to continue his correspondence with Mr. Collins even though he considers Collins to be a ridiculous man?

3. In what way does Mr. Bennet hurt and disappoint Elizabeth in this chapter?

Chapter 16 / 58
1. How does Lady Catherine, ironically, help Elizabeth’s chances with Darcy?

2. Why do you suppose this chapter is so interesting and easy to read?
Chapter 17 / 59
1. Briefly describe the reactions of Mr. Bennet, Mrs. Bennet, and Jane to the news of Elizabeth’s engagement to Darcy.
2. Why is it important to Elizabeth that her father respects Darcy?

Chapter 18 / 60
1. Support or refute the following statement with incidents from the story: Although the author makes fun of social manners with the exaggerated behavior of Mr. Collins, she does believe that proper manners are a necessary skill for a proper young lady.

Chapter 19 / 61
1. What do you think Jane Austen believes are the most important qualities in a husband?
2. Support or refute the following statement with incidents from the story: Family ties are more important than good manners and social position.

Essay Topics

For each of these, remember to go beyond mere plot summary and argue a point.

1. Austen uses satire to comment on the following problems faced by women of the time:
   • financial security often depending on finding a wealthy husband
   • the social pressures to marry a man of equal or greater social position
   • the strict moral code women must uphold

2. Discuss the significance of the novel’s title as it applies to the following:
   • how Darcy evolves once he recognizes the existence of his own pride and his subsequent social prejudices
   • Elizabeth’s ability to admit her own prejudice concerning Darcy

3. Identify examples of happy and unhappy marriages in the story; discuss what qualities the author suggests are necessary for a happy marriage.

4. Discuss the importance of social class in the novel, especially as it impacts the relationship between Elizabeth and Darcy.

5. Discuss how Austen uses minor characters like Miss Bingley, Mr. Collins, and Lady Catherine de Bourgh to bring Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy together.

6. Discuss in what sense this novel can be seen as an early feminist work.