

*Pride and Prejudice*  
Reading Guide, Volume I, Chapters 1-5

In study of the Victorian era, we will read *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. It is a reflection of life and society during the Victorian era.

Chapter 1

1. Why is it so important to Mrs. Bennet that Netherfield Park “has been let at last...by a young man of large fortune”?

Chapter 3

2. How many unmarried daughters do the Bennets have? What are their names?
3. Describe the ball. How is it similar to today’s dances?
4. Several of the characters are described as “agreeable.” According to the text, what is agreeable? Why is it such a good thing for someone to be described that way?

Chapter 4

5. Compare Elizabeth and Jane’s reactions to Mr. Bingley and his sisters.

Chapter 5

6. Describe the Lucas Family.
7. Paraphrase the conversation between Charlotte and Elizabeth about Mr. Darcy. What do you think about Darcy’s pride?

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Chapter 6

8. Do you think Bingley's sisters' attempts at establishing a friendship with Jane and Elizabeth are genuine? Why or why not?
9. What was it that ended up attracting Darcy to Elizabeth?

Chapter 7

10. What does it mean that Mr. Bennet's property is entailed? What does that tell you about the feeling of the age toward women?
11. What does it say about Elizabeth's character that she walked three miles alone and in the mud to see her sister? Does the reaction of Bingley's sisters to her long walk surprise you? Why or why not?

Chapter 8

12. How does the tone of the Bingley sisters' conversation differ from the previous chapter?
13. Darcy and Elizabeth discuss what makes an "accomplished woman." What does this conversation show regarding Darcy's character? Elizabeth's?

Chapter 9

14. Describe the reactions of Elizabeth, Mr. Bingley and Miss Bingley's reactions to Darcy and Mrs. Bennet's conversation about country life vs. town life.
15. Darcy says, "I have been used to consider poetry as the *food* of love." What does Elizabeth's reaction say about her character?

Chapter 10

16. Respond to Darcy's statement about humility.
17. Elizabeth doesn't understand Darcy's admiration and Darcy is "bewitched" by Elizabeth, even though there is some "danger" in his admiration of her. What do you think this suggests for the future of their relationship?

Chapter 11

18. Mrs. Hurst plays with her bracelets and rings, and Miss Bingley tries to catch Darcy's attention by walking around the room. How do these behaviors help to characterize them?
19. "But pride – where there is a real superiority of mind, pride will always be under good regulation." Respond to Darcy's statement.

## Chapter 12

20. Why was Darcy glad that Elizabeth and Jane were finally leaving Netherfield?
21. What does it say about the other Bennet sisters that “the evening conversation...had lost much of its animation, and almost all its sense, by the absence of Jane and Elizabeth?”

## Chapter 13

22. How does Mr. Collins' letter characterize him?
23. What is Elizabeth's reaction to his letter and why does she have that reaction?

## Chapter 14

24. Some dictionaries define “condescend” as the action of “stooping (to what is unworthy).” Why, then, is Mr. Collins so happy to admit that Lady Catherine does so to him? What further insight does that give you into his character?
25. Describe Mr. Bennet's reaction to Mr. Collins

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Chapter 15

26. According to Austen's characterization, why is Mr. Collins the way he is?
27. Describe the meeting between Darcy and Wickham – what was your impression?

Chapter 16

28. How does Elizabeth feel about Wickham?
29. What insight do you get into Wickham's character because he spoke up first about the unpleasantness between him and Darcy?
30. "Elizabeth went away with her head full of him. She could think of nothing but of Mr. Wickham and what he had told her, all the way home." Do you think Elizabeth is really thinking about Wickham, or Darcy?

Chapter 17

31. What does Jane's opinion about the Darcy/Wickham scandal reveal about her character?
32. Describe Elizabeth's reaction to realizing Mr. Collins' attentions have been turned toward her.

Chapter 18

33. How does Elizabeth "dressing with more than usual care" contrast with her previous characterizations?
34. Were you surprised by Darcy asking Elizabeth to dance? What was Elizabeth's punishment for Darcy during the dance?
35. Why do you think Darcy was looking at Bingley and Jane "with a very curious expression"?
36. Describe when Mr. Collins introduces himself to Mr. Darcy. Did you find it humorous?
37. How is Elizabeth embarrassed by her family throughout the night?

Chapter 19

38. What are Mr. Collins' reasons for marrying?
39. Why do you think Mr. Collins is so persistent in his request?
40. What does Elizabeth think is Mr. Collins *real* motivation for asking her to marry him?
41. How does Collins end up insulting Elizabeth?

Chapter 20

42. What does it mean that "Mr. Collins' regard for [Elizabeth] was quite imaginary"?
43. Mrs. Bennet calls Elizabeth "undutiful" because she won't marry. Why is Mrs. Bennet so much more concerned with Elizabeth getting married than with Elizabeth's ultimate happiness?

## Chapter 21

44. After Elizabeth's refusal, toward whom did Mr. Collins direct his attentions?
45. What effect does Miss Bingley's letter have on Elizabeth? Jane? How do their reactions reinforce the illustration of their characters?
46. What does Elizabeth say is the real reason for Miss Bingley's being so hasty to leave the country?

## Chapter 22

47. Describe your reaction to the fact that Mr. Collins proposed to Charlotte so soon after he suffered Elizabeth's rejection.
48. What do you think of Charlotte's reasons for accepting Mr. Collins?
49. React to Charlotte's belief that "marriage...was the only honourable provision for well-educated young women of small fortune."
50. Why does Charlotte think she will be so happy with Mr. Collins?

## Chapter 23

51. Describe the reactions of the members of the Bennet family to Collins and Charlotte's engagement, particularly Mrs. Bennet – what are her four "reactions" to the engagement?
52. The last two paragraphs of Volume I (ending with Mr. Bennet's response to Mrs. Bennet's complaining about the entail) help to illuminate more of Mr. Bennet's character. Given the last quote from him, do you think *he* even knows how or why his estate was entailed away from his family? How do you think that makes him appear and/or feel as the head of the household?

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Chapter 24

53. How did Jane feel as a result of receiving Miss Bingley's letter?
54. Respond to the following statement: "There are few people whom I really love, and still fewer of whom I think well. 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." Is Elizabeth right to feel that way? How does that statement contrast with her sister Jane's worldview (i.e. Jane's quote: "Let me take it in the best light, in the light in which it may be understood")?
55. How do Jane and Elizabeth differ (yet again) in their opinions of the behavior of the Bingley sisters?
56. What is Mr. Bennet's opinion of Jane's position as a "crossed" lover? What does that say about him as a father?

Chapter 25

57. Describe Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner. How are they related to the Bennet family?
58. What is Mrs. Gardiner's opinion of the "attachment" between Elizabeth and Wickham?
59. In Jane's letter, she admits to being "entirely deceived in Miss Bingley's regard for me." However, she goes on to say that the reason Miss Bingley has not visited her is "because she must feel that she has been acting wrong." How does that make you feel about/for Jane? Do you feel sorry for her? Do you envy her innocent world view?
60. What happens to Wickham and Elizabeth's relationship in this chapter?

Chapter 27

61. Who does Elizabeth go to visit and who accompanies her?
62. Respond to Elizabeth's comment that "stupid men are the only ones worth knowing, after all."

Chapter 28

63. What does Elizabeth think is Mr. Collins' goal in showing her his home?
64. Why do you think Charlotte encourages her husband to take his exercise "as much as possible"?
65. Elizabeth says of Miss de Bourgh, "She looks sickly and cross. Yes, she will do for him very well. She will make him a very proper wife." Who does she think Miss de Bourgh will be a "very proper wife" for?

Chapter 29

66. What does it tell you about Lady Catherine that "she likes to have the distinction of rank preserved"? Continue to observe Austen's comments regarding Lady Catherine throughout the chapter and write a short characterization of her. Is there anyone you could compare her to?

### Chapter 30

67. Who are the new arrivals to Lady Catherine's home?
68. What is Lady Catherine's reaction to the fact that Elizabeth and Charlotte had already seen the visitors?
69. What does Charlotte think is the reason for Mr. Darcy coming to pay an early visit to the parsonage?

### Chapter 31

70. Who pays attention to the animated conversation between Elizabeth and Colonel Fitzwilliam (two people)? For both people, why do you think that is?
71. Who seems to be the one person to bring Mr. Darcy happiness?
72. Darcy says, to Elizabeth, "We neither of us perform to strangers." What does he mean and what does that statement illustrate about the two of them?

### Chapter 32

73. What do Elizabeth and Charlotte finally decide must be the reason for Mr. Darcy's unannounced, solo visit to Elizabeth?

### Chapter 33

74. Why do you suppose Mr. Darcy kept frequenting the same park as Elizabeth, even after her "warning" him that it was one of her favorite places to walk?
75. Who keeps delaying Colonel Fitzwilliam and Mr. Darcy's departure from Kent?
76. What disturbing information does Elizabeth discover about why Mr. Bingley left Netherfield? What was her reaction?

### Chapter 34

77. What are Mr. Darcy's objections to own his proposal to Elizabeth?
78. Elizabeth goes through a flurry of thought and emotion when Darcy is proposing to her. Describe Elizabeth's varied reactions to Darcy's suit. What is her final response?
79. After all of her emotion, Elizabeth allows herself a self-gratifying thought. What is it?

### Chapter 35

80. The morning after the proposal fallout, Darcy encounters Elizabeth, and "with a look of haughty composure," hands her a letter. Based on his "haughty composure," do you believe Darcy could be characterized as the "strong, silent type?" Do you think that could be a valid explanation for him being unable to "convers[e] easily with those [he had] never seen before"?
81. Summarize the main points of Darcy's letter to Elizabeth. Does this letter change your opinion of Mr. Darcy? How or why?

## Chapter 36

82. What is Elizabeth's initial reaction to Darcy's letter? How does this change?
83. After reading Darcy's letter, Elizabeth comes to understand Mr. Wickham's character in a different light. Describe the thought process she goes through as her opinion changes.
84. How does Elizabeth ultimately come to feel about the way she has treated Darcy?
85. Mr. Darcy pays Elizabeth's family no compliments in his letter; what is Elizabeth's reaction to the way Darcy characterizes her family? Have you ever had a moment where you felt the same way Elizabeth does about her family?

## Chapter 37

86. When Elizabeth sees Lady Catherine the next day, what is her first thought? How does she think Lady Catherine would have reacted to her amended introduction? Does this thought satisfy her?
87. What does Elizabeth finally decide is the real reason Jane was deprived of her happiness with Mr. Bingley?

## Chapter 38

88. As Elizabeth is leaving Hunsford, Mr. Collins reprimands her for not leaving any "message for the ladies of Rosings." How does this add to your impression of his character?
89. Elizabeth wants to tell her sister about what happened while she was away, partly because it would "so highly gratify whatever of her own vanity she had not yet been able to reason away." Does it surprise you that Elizabeth has again admitted to her own vanity? How does her vanity change your perception of her character?

## Chapter 39

90. This chapter focuses a lot on Lydia – her character, her behavior, her priorities. Sum up her character up in a single descriptive word.
91. Do you think the attention to Lydia's character in this chapter could be foreshadowing something? What do you think it could be?

## Chapter 40

92. Respond to Jane's reaction to Mr. Darcy's proposal and letter, including the fact that "more was she grieved for the unhappiness which her sister's refusal must have given him."
93. Using their conversation in this chapter for examples, explain how Elizabeth and Jane act as balances for each other.
94. Why is it that the sisters decide not to "out" Mr. Wickham's true nature? Do you think they made a good decision? Why or why not?



## Chapter 41

95. Upon spending time home with her family, Elizabeth “felt anew the justice of Mr. Darcy’s objections” to them. Do you think this is just a case of Elizabeth being so infatuated with Darcy that she is taking on his view of things? Why or why not?
96. Where and with whom is Lydia invited to go? Do *you* think she should go? Why or why not?
97. Elizabeth repeatedly uses the words “vain, ignorant” and “idle” to describe her younger sisters. Do you feel as though those three words are fair descriptors of Lydia, Kitty, and Mary? Why or why not?
98. How does Lydia picture herself in Brighton?
99. On his final day in Meryton, Elizabeth engages Mr. Wickham in conversation about Mr. Darcy. What is Mr. Wickham’s reaction to the conversation? Do you find his behavior consistent with Darcy’s characterization and Elizabeth’s changed opinion of him?

## Chapter 42

100. Austen says that Mr. Bennet “had married a woman whose weak understanding and illiberal mind had very early in their marriage put an end to all real affection for her.” What insight does this give you into marriages of that time period?
101. Elizabeth finds the fact that Mr. Bennet has exposed “his wife to the contempt of her own children...reprehensible.” Why do you think Elizabeth pays this sudden attention to the improper behavior of her father, who bestows the majority of his good graces on her? Is it because of Mr. Darcy’s objection to her family that she is paying more attention to their flaws?
102. Where is Elizabeth to visit while “in pursuit of novelty and amusement”? What is the real reason she tries to discourage the Gardiners from visiting the proposed location?