Pride and Prejudice

Jane Austen

Pre-reading

2. Vocabulary. Attitudes

Find the adjectives which match the following 10 nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>acceptance</td>
<td>iniquity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civility</td>
<td>prejudice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defiance</td>
<td>pride</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disdain</td>
<td>propriety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impertinence</td>
<td>respect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning check: Student A reads out the English nouns to student B and student B, without looking at the task, has to come up with the corresponding English adjectives. Then student B reads out the English adjectives to student A and student A, without looking at the task, has to come up with the corresponding English nouns.

Post-reading

LEARNING CHECK

No study aids.

1. The definition of irony and the spelling of keywords

a. What is verbal irony? ____________________________________________

Can you remember any examples from chapter 1? _____________________
b. Spelling bee: Challenge your neighbour to spell:

arranged marriage, appearances, hypocritical, prejudiced, obstinate, reticent, melancholy, obstacle, inferiority

WIDER CONTEXTS

1. Literary context: Other excerpts from the same text:

A. Mr Darcy’s proposal to Elizabeth (chapter 34)

Pre-reading

1. Walk and talk: Take a 5 minute walk round the school with a partner and talk about the ingredients in a “romantic proposal”: time, place, objects, dialogue, etc. On your return, exchange views with another pair. Which ideas do you agree on?

2. Vocabulary: Definition game on ‘pride’, ‘prejudice’ and related concepts.

a. Match the words with the definitions in the grid.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>amaze</th>
<th>civil</th>
<th>disdain</th>
<th>gratitude</th>
<th>inferior</th>
<th>obstacle</th>
<th>prejudice</th>
<th>regret</th>
<th>remorse</th>
<th>resent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word: attention to or thought and care for somebody or something</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word: unreasonable dislike of or preference for a person, group, custom, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word: the feeling that somebody or something is not good enough to deserve your respect or attention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word: polite in a formal way but possibly not friendly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not as good as somebody/something else</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surprise somebody very much</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a situation, an event, etc. that makes it difficult for you to do or achieve something</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feel bitter or angry about something</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the feeling of being grateful and wanting to express your thanks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the feeling of being extremely sorry for something wrong or bad that you have done</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Learning check:** Student A reads out the definitions to student B and student B, without looking at the task, has to come up with the matching words. Then student B reads out the words to student A and student A, without looking at the task, has to come up with the definition of the words.

a. See if you can change the word class of the words above by adding a suffix.
b. Then try if you can negate the word by adding a prefix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The novel continues with the story of the five Bennet daughters, mainly Jane, the eldest and Elizabeth. Jane is in love with Mr Bingley who is easy-going and generally liked whereas most people find his friend Mr Darcy an arrogant and rude man. Elizabeth thinks that Mr Darcy has treated his old friend Mr Wickham unjustly and she has just learned that he has prevented Mr Bingley and Jane from meeting in London because Mr Darcy did not find Jane socially acceptable.

In chapter 34, Elizabeth is visiting her friend Charlotte (née Lucas cf chapter 1) who has married Mr Bennet’s nephew William Collins, the clergyman. He is to inherit the Bennets’ property because women could not inherit property at the time, and Elizabeth has previously rejected his proposal of marriage because she found him a ridiculous person. Staying with the newly wed couple at the parsonage (præstebolig), Elizabeth is again thrown into contact with Darcy, who is visiting his tremendously rich aunt Lady Catherine.

Pride and Prejudice, chapter 34

When they were gone, Elizabeth, as if intending to exasperate herself as much as possible against Mr. Darcy, chose for her employment the examination of all the letters which Jane had written to her since her being in Kent. They contained no actual complaint, nor was there any revival of past occurrences, or any communication of present suffering. But in all, and in almost every line of each, there was a want of that cheerfulness which had been used to characterize her style, and which, proceeding from the serenity of a mind at ease with itself and kindly disposed towards every one, had been scarcely ever clouded. Elizabeth noticed every sentence conveying the idea of uneasiness, with an attention which it had hardly received on the first perusal. Mr. Darcy’s shameful boast of what misery he had been able to inflict gave her a keener sense of her sister’s sufferings. It was some consolation to think that his visit to Rosings was to end on the day after
the next, and a still greater, that in less than a fortnight she should herself be with Jane again, and
enabled to contribute to the recovery of her spirits by all that affection could do.

She could not think of Darcy's leaving Kent without remembering that his cousin was to go with him; but Colonel Fitzwilliam had made it clear that he had no intentions at all, and agreeable as he was, she did not mean to be unhappy about him.

While settling this point, she was suddenly roused by the sound of the door-bell, and her spirits were a little fluttered by the idea of its being Colonel Fitzwilliam himself, who had once before called late in the evening, and might now come to inquire particularly after her. But this idea was soon banished, and her spirits were very differently affected, when, to her utter amazement, she saw Mr. Darcy walk into the room. In an hurried manner he immediately began an enquiry after her health, imputing his visit to a wish of hearing that she were better. She answered him with cold civility. He sat down for a few moments, and then getting up, walked about the room. Elizabeth was surprised, but said not a word. After a silence of several minutes, he came towards her in an agitated manner, and thus began—

"In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you."

Elizabeth's astonishment was beyond expression. She stared, coloured, doubted, and was silent. This he considered sufficient encouragement; and the avowal of all that he felt, and had long felt for her, immediately followed. He spoke well; but there were feelings besides those of the heart to be detailed, and he was not more eloquent on the subject of tenderness than of pride. His sense of her inferiority -- of its being a degradation -- of the family obstacles which judgment had always opposed to inclination, were dwelt on with a warmth which seemed due to the consequence he was wounding, but was very unlikely to recommend his suit.

In spite of her deeply rooted dislike she could not be insensible to the compliment of such a man's affection, and though her intentions did not vary for an instant, she was at first sorry for the pain he was to receive; till, roused to resentment by his subsequent language, she lost all compassion in anger. She tried, however, to compose herself to answer him with patience, when he should have done. He concluded with representing to her the strength of that attachment which, in spite of all his endeavours, he had found impossible to conquer; and with expressing his hope that it would now be rewarded by her acceptance of his hand. As he said this, she could easily see that he had no doubt of a favourable answer. He spoke of apprehension and anxiety, but his countenance expressed real
security. Such a circumstance could only exasperate farther, and, when he ceased, the colour rose into her cheeks, and she said --

"In such cases as this, it is, I believe, the established mode to express a sense of obligation for the sentiments avowed, however unequally they may be returned. It is natural that obligation should be felt, and if I could feel gratitude, I would now thank you. But I cannot -- I have never desired your good opinion, and you have certainly bestowed it most unwillingly. I am sorry to have occasioned pain to any one. It has been most unconsciously done, however, and I hope will be of short duration. The feelings which, you tell me, have long prevented the acknowledgment of your regard, can have little difficulty in overcoming it after this explanation."

Mr. Darcy, who was leaning against the mantlepiece with his eyes fixed on her face, seemed to catch her words with no less resentment than surprise. His complexion became pale with anger, and the disturbance of his mind was visible in every feature. He was struggling for the appearance of composure, and would not open his lips till he believed himself to have attained it. The pause was to Elizabeth's feelings dreadful. At length, in a voice of forced calmness, he said --

"And this is all the reply which I am to have the honour of expecting! I might, perhaps, wish to be informed why, with so little endeavour at civility, I am thus rejected. But it is of small importance."

"I might as well inquire," replied she, "why with so evident a design of offending and insulting me, you chose to tell me that you liked me against your will, against your reason, and even against your character? Was not this some excuse for incivility, if I was uncivil? But I have other provocations. You know I have. Had not my own feelings decided against you -- had they been indifferent, or had they even been favourable, do you think that any consideration would tempt me to accept the man who has been the means of ruining, perhaps for ever, the happiness of a most beloved sister?"

As she pronounced these words Mr. Darcy changed colour; but the emotion was short, and he listened without attempting to interrupt her while she continued --

"I have every reason in the world to think ill of you. No motive can excuse the unjust and ungenerous part you acted there. You dare not, you cannot deny that you have been the principal, if not the only means of dividing them from each other -- of exposing one to the censure of the world for caprice and instability, the other to its derision for disappointed hopes, and involving them both in misery of the acutest kind."
She paused, and saw with no slight indignation that he was listening with an air which proved him wholly unmoved by any feeling of remorse. He even looked at her with a smile of affected incredulity.

"Can you deny that you have done it?" she repeated.

With assumed tranquillity he then replied, "I have no wish of denying that I did everything in my power to separate my friend from your sister, or that I rejoice in my success. Towards him I have been kinder than towards myself."

Elizabeth disdained the appearance of noticing this civil reflection, but its meaning did not escape, nor was it likely to conciliate her.

"But it is not merely this affair," she continued, "on which my dislike is founded. Long before it had taken place my opinion of you was decided. Your character was unfolded in the recital which I received many months ago from Mr. Wickham. On this subject, what can you have to say? In what imaginary act of friendship can you here defend yourself? or under what misrepresentation can you here impose upon others?"

"You take an eager interest in that gentleman's concerns," said Darcy, in a less tranquil tone, and with a heightened colour.

"Who that knows what his misfortunes have been, can help feeling an interest in him?"

"His misfortunes!" repeated Darcy contemptuously; "yes, his misfortunes have been great indeed."

"And of your infliction," cried Elizabeth with energy. "You have reduced him to his present state of poverty -- comparative poverty. You have withheld the advantages, which you must know to have been designed for him. You have deprived the best years of his life, of that independence which was no less his due than his desert. You have done all this! and yet you can treat the mention of his misfortunes with contempt and ridicule."

"And this," cried Darcy, as he walked with quick steps across the room, "is your opinion of me! This is the estimation in which you hold me! I thank you for explaining it so fully. My faults, according to this calculation, are heavy indeed! But perhaps," added he, stopping in his walk, and turning towards her, "these offences might have been overlooked, had not your pride been hurt by my honest confession of the scruples that had long prevented my forming any serious design. These bitter accusations might have been suppressed, had I, with greater policy, concealed my struggles, and flattered you into the belief of my being impelled by unqualified, unalloyed inclination; by reason, by reflection, by everything. But disguise of every sort is my abhorrence. Nor am I ashamed..."
of the feelings I related. They were natural and just. Could you expect me to rejoice in the inferiority of your connexions? -- to congratulate myself on the hope of relations, whose condition in life is so decidedly beneath my own?"

Elizabeth felt herself growing more angry every moment; yet she tried to the utmost to speak with composure when she said --

"You are mistaken, Mr. Darcy, if you suppose that the mode of your declaration affected me in any other way, than as it spared me the concern which I might have felt in refusing you, had you behaved in a more gentlemanlike manner."

She saw him start at this, but he said nothing, and she continued --

"You could not have made me the offer of your hand in any possible way that would have tempted me to accept it."

Again his astonishment was obvious; and he looked at her with an expression of mingled incredulity and mortification. She went on --

"From the very beginning -- from the first moment, I may almost say -- of my acquaintance with you, your manners, impressing me with the fullest belief of your arrogance, your conceit, and your selfish disdain of the feelings of others, were such as to form that groundwork of disapprobation on which succeeding events have built so immoveable a dislike; and I had not known you a month before I felt that you were the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed on to marry."

"You have said quite enough, madam. I perfectly comprehend your feelings, and have now only to be ashamed of what my own have been. Forgive me for having taken up so much of your time, and accept my best wishes for your health and happiness."

And with these words he hastily left the room, and Elizabeth heard him the next moment open the front door and quit the house.

The tumult of her mind was now painfully great. She knew not how to support herself, and from actual weakness sat down and cried for half an hour. Her astonishment, as she reflected on what had passed, was increased by every review of it. That she should receive an offer of marriage from Mr. Darcy! that he should have been in love with her for so many months! -- so much in love as to wish to marry her in spite of all the objections which had made him prevent his friend's marrying her sister, and which must appear at least with equal force in his own case -- was almost incredible! -- it was gratifying to have inspired unconsciously so strong an affection. But his pride, his abominable pride -- his shameless avowal of what he had done with respect to Jane -- his unpardonable assurance in acknowledging, though he could not justify it, and the unfeeling manner in which he had mentioned Mr. Wickham, his cruelty towards whom he had not attempted to deny, soon overcame the pity which the consideration of his attachment had for a moment excited. She continued in very agitating reflections till the sound of Lady Catherine's carriage made her feel how unequal she was to encounter Charlotte's observation, and hurried her away to her room.
While-reading

COMPREHENSION AND ANALYSIS

Take turns to ask and answer these questions:

1. What is the effect of rereading Jane’s letters on Elizabeth’s feelings for Darcy?
2. What are Elizabeth’s feelings for Colonel Fitzwilliam?
3. In what way does Elizabeth answer Darcy’s first question?
4. What has Darcy come to say to Elizabeth?
5. How deep are his feelings for her? Find textual evidence.
6. What noun is used to describe Elizabeth’s immediate reaction to Darcy’s declaration?
7. Try to illustrate the development of their reactions with a graph.
8. What does Elizabeth give as her reasons for not accepting his offer?
9. How does Darcy justify having spoken in a snobbish and prejudiced way?
10. Why doesn’t Elizabeth accept this excuse?
11. Why is Darcy the last man in the world that Elizabeth could ever think of marrying?
12. What is the last reply made by Darcy before he leaves the room?
13. What is the chief emotion which overpowers Elizabeth after Darcy has left?

Overall questions

1. Which adjective best describes this proposal:
   
   long, awkward, illogical, unromantic, egoistic?

2. Which adjective best describes how Elizabeth feels when she turns down Darcy’s proposal?
   
   livid, passionate, indifferent, romantic, humiliated, ambivalent, flattered, stunned?

3. Find the three adjectives which best describe Elizabeth and Darcy respectively and best explain their relationship. Look up any word you do not already know:
   
   chilly, clever, depressed, easy-going, humiliated, hypocritical, impulsive, manic, melancholy, middle-class, obstinate, playful, polite, prejudiced, proud, reserved, reticent, rude, sulky

4. From whose point of view is the chapter told?

5. What is the effect of using stream of consciousness (see toolbox) at the end of the chapter from "That she should receive an offer … " to the end of the paragraph? What state of mind is Jane Austen describing here?

6. Jane Austen’s novels are generally characterized as novels of manners, i.e. as stories which deal with people’s behaviour in their dealings with each other.

© Gyldendal, 2012
a) Find two or three examples in the text which show how the characters try to speak in a civil way.
b) Find another two or three places in the text where the narrator describes the behaviour of the characters.
c) Find at least one example where they actually discuss behaviour.
d) What is the connection between what they say and the way in which they express it? What effect does this create?

8. In the speech by Darcy p. 7, last paragraph, beginning “‘And this,’ cried Darcy, as he walked”, which is the most important single word (a preposition)? In what way does this preposition sum up Darcy’s attitude to Elizabeth’s social background?

9. Would you agree that Darcy miscalculates the effect of his proposal and of his behaviour in general?

10. If we take chapter 1 and chapter 34 as representative of the novel, what would you say the novel is really about:

- appearances vs. reality
- moral negotiation of human relations
- arranged marriages
- love and romance
- pride
- rationality vs. emotion
- class distinctions
- love as pursuit?
B. Mr Collins’ proposal to Elizabeth (chapter 19)

1. Compare Mr Darcy’s proposal (chapter 34) with Mr Collins’ proposal (chapter 19). Look for differences as well as similarities. Do the two men basically share the same assumptions?

Mr. Collins has decided to propose to Elizabeth. He has asked for a private audience with Elizabeth, who desperately wants her family to stay, as she finds Mr Collins ridiculous.

Pride and Prejudice, chapter 19

"Believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth, that your modesty, so far from doing you any disservice, rather adds to your other perfections. You would have been less amiable in my eyes had there not been this little unwillingness; but allow me to assure you, that I have your respected mother's permission for this address. You can hardly doubt the purport of my discourse, however your natural delicacy may lead you to dissemble; my attentions have been too marked to be mistaken. Almost as soon as I entered the house, I singled you out as the companion of my future life. But before I am run away with by my feelings on this subject, perhaps it will be advisable for me to state my reasons for marrying -- and, moreover, for coming into Hertfordshire with the design of selecting a wife, as I certainly did."

The idea of Mr. Collins, with all his solemn composure, being run away with by his feelings, made Elizabeth so near laughing that she could not use the short pause he allowed in any attempt to stop him farther, and he continued –

"My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of marriage in his parish; secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly -- which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness. Twice has she condescended to give me her opinion (unasked too!) on this subject; and it was but the very Saturday night before I left Hunsford -- between our pools at quadrille, while Mrs. Jenkinson was arranging Miss de Bourgh's
footstool -- that she said, 'Mr. Collins, you must marry. A clergyman like you must marry. -- Chuse properly, chuse a gentlewoman for my sake; and for your own, let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way. This is my advice. Find such a woman as soon as you can, bring her to Hunsford, and I will visit her.' Allow me, by the way, to observe, my fair cousin, that I do not reckon the notice and kindness of Lady Catherine de Bourgh as among the least of the advantages in my power to offer. You will find her manners beyond anything I can describe; and your wit and vivacity, I think, must be acceptable to her, especially when tempered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite. Thus much for my general intention in favour of matrimony; it remains to be told why my views were directed to Longbourn instead of my own neighbourhood, where, I assure you, there are many amiable young women. But the fact is, that being, as I am, to inherit this estate after the death of your honoured father (who, however, may live many years longer), I could not satisfy myself without resolving to chuse a wife from among his daughters, that the loss to them might be as little as possible, when the melancholy event takes place -- which, however, as I have already said, may not be for several years. This has been my motive, my fair cousin, and I flatter myself it will not sink me in your esteem. And now nothing remains for me but to assure you in the most animated language of the violence of my affection. To fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with; and that one thousand pounds in the four per cents, which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to. On that head, therefore, I shall be uniformly silent; and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married."

It was absolutely necessary to interrupt him now.

"You are too hasty, sir," she cried. "You forget that I have made no answer. Let me do it without farther loss of time. Accept my thanks for the compliment you are paying me. I am very sensible of the honour of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than decline them."

"I am not now to learn," replied Mr. Collins, with a formal wave of the hand, "that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept, when he first applies for their favour; and that sometimes the refusal is repeated a second or even a third
time. I am therefore by no means discouraged by what you have just said, and shall hope to lead you to the altar ere long."

"Upon my word, sir," cried Elizabeth, "your hope is rather an extraordinary one after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal. You could not make me happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make you so. Nay, were your friend Lady Catherine to know me, I am persuaded she would find me in every respect ill qualified for the situation."

"Were it certain that Lady Catherine would think so," said Mr. Collins very gravely -- "but I cannot imagine that her ladyship would at all disapprove of you. And you may be certain that when I have the honour of seeing her again, I shall speak in the highest terms of your modesty, economy, and other amiable qualifications."

"Indeed, Mr. Collins, all praise of me will be unnecessary. You must give me leave to judge for myself, and pay me the compliment of believing what I say. I wish you very happy and very rich, and by refusing your hand, do all in my power to prevent your being otherwise. In making me the offer, you must have satisfied the delicacy of your feelings with regard to my family, and may take possession of Longbourn estate whenever it falls, without any self-reproach. This matter may be considered, therefore, as finally settled." And rising as she thus spoke, she would have quitted the room, had not Mr. Collins thus addressed her --

"When I do myself the honour of speaking to you next on this subject, I shall hope to receive a more favourable answer than you have now given me; though I am far from accusing you of cruelty at present, because I know it to be the established custom of your sex to reject a man on the first application, and perhaps you have even now said as much to encourage my suit as would be consistent with the true delicacy of the female character."

"Really, Mr. Collins," cried Elizabeth with some warmth, "you puzzle me exceedingly. If what I have hitherto said can appear to you in the form of encouragement, I know not how to express my refusal in such a way as may convince you of its being one."

"You must give me leave to flatter myself, my dear cousin, that your refusal of my addresses is merely words of course. My reasons for believing it are briefly these: -- It does not appear to me that my hand is unworthy your acceptance, or that the establishment I can offer would be any other than highly desirable. My situation in life, my connections with the family of De Bourgh, and my relationship to your own, are circumstances highly in my favour; and you should take it into farther consideration that, in spite of your manifold attractions, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made you. Your portion is unhappily so small, that it will
in all likelihood undo the effects of your loveliness and amiable qualifications. As I must therefore conclude that you are not serious in your rejection of me, I shall chuse to attribute it to your wish of increasing my love by suspense, according to the usual practice of elegant females."

"I do assure you, sir, that I have no pretension whatever to that kind of elegance which consists in tormenting a respectable man. I would rather be paid the compliment of being believed sincere. I thank you again and again for the honour you have done me in your proposals, but to accept them is absolutely impossible. My feelings in every respect forbid it. Can I speak plainer? Do not consider me now as an elegant female, intending to plague you, but as a rational creature, speaking the truth from her heart."

"You are uniformly charming!" cried he, with an air of awkward gallantry; "and I am persuaded that, when sanctioned by the express authority of both your excellent parents, my proposals will not fail of being acceptable."

To such perseverance in wilful self-deception Elizabeth would make no reply, and immediately and in silence withdrew; determined, if he persisted in considering her repeated refusals as flattering encouragement, to apply to her father, whose negative might be uttered in such a manner as must be decisive, and whose behaviour at least could not be mistaken for the affectation and coquetry of an elegant female.

---

2. Literary context: other excerpt from the same text: Charlotte Lucas’ view of marriage
(chapter 22)

Pre-reading

1.

a. Why would any woman in her right mind want to marry Mr Collins? Give at least two reasons.
b. As you read the excerpt below, check your answers and sum up what the excerpt tells you about the characters’ views on love and marriage.

*Mr Collins is made to understand that Elizabeth will not marry him. Shortly afterwards, the Bennets and Mr Collins dine with the Lucases, and Charlotte decides that she wants Mr Collins to marry her. Her scheme succeeds; Mr Collins proposes.*

---

© Gyldendal, 2012 14
Pride and Prejudice, chapter 22

[…] Charlotte herself was tolerably composed. She had gained her point, and had time to consider of it. Her reflections were in general satisfactory. Mr. Collins, to be sure, was neither sensible nor agreeable; his society was irksome, and his attachment to her must be imaginary. But still he would be her husband. Without thinking highly either of men or of matrimony, marriage had always been her object; it was the only honourable provision for well-educated young women of small fortune, and however uncertain of giving happiness, must be their pleasantest preservative from want. This preservative she had now obtained; and at the age of twenty-seven, without having ever been handsome, she felt all the good luck of it. […]

Elizabeth who cannot understand why Charlotte has encouraged Mr Collins, comes to see Charlotte.

“Engaged to Mr Collins! my dear Charlotte – impossible!”

[...] "Why should you be surprised, my dear Eliza? Do you think it incredible that Mr. Collins should be able to procure any woman's good opinion, because he was not so happy as to succeed with you?"

But Elizabeth had now recollected herself, and making a strong effort for it, was able to assure her with tolerable firmness that the prospect of their relationship was highly grateful to her, and that she wished her all imaginable happiness.

"I see what you are feeling," replied Charlotte; "you must be surprised, very much surprised -- so lately as Mr. Collins was wishing to marry you. But when you have had time to think it all over, I hope you will be satisfied with what I have done. I am not romantic, you know; I never was. I ask only a comfortable home; and considering Mr. Collins's character, connexion, and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair as most people can boast on entering the marriage state."

Gloser

composed fattet
sensible fornuftig, klog
society selskab
’irksome kedsommelig, trættende
’matrimony ægestand, ægteskab
object mål
provision forsørgelse, underhold
pre´servative (her) middel
want nød
pro´cure få
recollect oneself fatte sig, tage
sig sammen
grateful velkommen
3. Literary criticism: why read Jane Austen? (Fay Weldon and Sebastian Faulks) and written assignment

a. Read through what Fay Weldon and Sebastian Faulks have to say about the role of Jane Austen’s novels in their lives. Underline key issues, and write down your personal comments and answers. Exchange views in groups about the justification for spending time on reading.

Fay Weldon, a British author has published a series of essays about Jane Austen’s novels, Letters to Alice. These essays are written as letters addressed to a niece Alice, who has just started as an undergraduate at a British university. The excerpts here are from the first letter.

“You tell me in passing that you are doing a college course in English Literature, and obliged to read Jane Austen; that you find her boring, petty and irrelevant and, that as the world is in crisis, and the future catastrophic, you cannot imagine what purpose there can be in your reading her. […]” (p. 7)

“But no one burns Emma. No one would dare. There is too much concentrated here: too much history, too much respect, too much of the very essence of civilization, which is, I must tell you, connected to its Literature. It’s Literature, with a capital ‘L’, as opposed to just books: Hitler, of course, managed to burn Literature as well as Just Books at the Reichstag fire, and his nation’s cultural past with it, and no one has ever forgiven or forgotten. You have to be really bad to burn Literature. […]” (p. 9)

She continues like this:

“If society is to advance then those that hath must empathise with those that hath not. I am not offering so severe a doctrine as Auden’s – ‘we must love one another or die’ – rather that we must learn to stand in other people’s shoes and look out at the world with their eyes, or die[…] You can practise the art of empathy very well in Pride and Prejudice, and in all the novels of Jane Austen, and it is this daily practice that we all need, or we will never be good at living, as without practice we will never be good at playing the piano[…]” (pp. 84-5)

Gloser

undergraduate studerende ved universitet
in passing i forbifarten
obliged nødsaget
petty ubetydelig
Emma navn på roman af Jane Austen
essence essens, det vigtige
Reichstag fire 27. februar 1933. Antagelig refererer Fay Weldon til bogafrændingen på Operapladsen i Berlin samt i andre tyske byer den 10.maj 1933, hvor tusindvis af systemkritiske bøger af fx jødiske, marxistiske og pacifistiske forfattere blev brændt under stor offentlig opmærksomhed
empathise udvise indføling
severe streng
“we must love one another or die” citat fra W.H. Audens digt “September 1, 1939”
In Faulks on Fiction (BBC Books 2011) Sebastian Faulks, a British author, describes a number of characters from major British novels. Check Faulks on Fiction episode 2 – the lover on Youtube.

“I first read Pride and Prejudice at the age of fourteen. It was one of the handful of decisive books for me – decisive in the simple sense that they shaped my life. David Copperfield, Pride and Prejudice, Sons and Lovers, The Catcher in the Rye ... it was these books of the fifth-form canon, read in the space of that spring term, that made me think literature was the most important thing on earth. [...]”

b. Written assignment: Write an essay with the title “A piece of literature which has influenced my life in a significant way” (1000 words).

4. Other media: film references and tasks

Watch one or more of these programmes or films and discuss why Jane Austen’s work has become so popular within the last 15 years.

- The BBC version of Pride and Prejudice, starring Colin Firth as Darcy (1995)
- A film version of Pride and Prejudice starring Keira Knightley as Elizabeth (2005)
- Emma starring Gwyneth Paltrow as the main character (1996)
- A film version of Sense and Sensibility starring Emma Thomson, Kate Winslet and Hugh Grant (1996)
- Helen Fielding’s novel (1997) , and later film (2001) Bridget Jones’ Diary offering a 20th century perspective on Pride and Prejudice starring Colin Firth as Mr Darcy and Renée Zellweger as Bridget
- Becoming Jane starring Anne Hathaway and John McAvoy (2006) describes the alleged love affair (and suggested inspiration for Pride and Prejudice) between Jane Austen and Thomas Langlois Lefroy
- Lost in Austen is a TV series which describes the desires of a young woman to be a character in Jane Austen’s novels (2008)
- Bride and Prejudice is the Bollywood version (2004)