

Discussion Questions for Pride and Prejudice

1. Analyze the opening statement. From whose viewpoint is it written?
2. List the members of the Bennet household and give a brief description of each person. How do Jane and Elizabeth differ from each other? Kitty and Lydia—How are they like their mother and Aunt Philips? Describe Mary. Account for her being different from her sisters. What can you tell of the Bennets' marriage? Happy? Unhappy? Why?
3. Describe Mr. Bingley. Why do people like him and dislike his friend Mr. Darcy?
4. Describe Bingley's two sisters. What are their attitudes toward the local people among whom they now live?
5. Describe Sir Williams Lucas, Lady Lucas, and daughter Charlotte. How did they acquire their money?
6. What are Charlotte's views on marriage?
7. Describe Mrs. Bennet's maneuvering when Jane is invited to Netherfield. What does this tell you about her and her understanding of the mother's duty?
8. Describe the 19th century lady. Refer to the conversation at Netherfield with Bingley, his sisters, Darcy, and Elizabeth.
9. Cite examples of humor in this section as Jane Austen exposes the genteel 19th century woman in search of a husband---or a mother in search of a mate for her daughter.
10. After Elizabeth's stay with ailing Jane at Netherfield, what is Darcy's impression of her? Has it changed from his initial impression? How? Has Elizabeth's initial impression of him changed or been reinforced? Explain.
11. Who is Mr. Collins, and why is he coming to visit?
12. What do you deduce of Mr. Collins' Character from his letter? Is our analysis borne out when he arrives? Explain. Characterize Mr. Collins. What does Austen say about him? What do the Bennets think of him?
13. What is Lady Catherine de Bourgh to Mr. Collins?
14. What does Mr. Wickham tell Elisabeth about Mr. Darcy? What is Elizabeth's reaction? What does Jane say? How is this typical of her?
15. Analyze the humor in the account of Lydia's and Mr. Collins talk on the way home from the party.
16. At the Netherfield Ball, how does Mrs. Bennet embarrass Elizabeth? How does Mr. Bennet handle it? Relate this to the novel's theme.
17. How does Mary also embarrass Elizabeth? What does Mr. Bennet do? Is this consistent with his character? Account for his different responses to Mrs. Bennet's and Mary's gauche behavior.
18. Describe Mr. Collins' proposal to Elizabeth. What is Mrs. Bennet's Reaction to her Daughter's refusal? Mr. Bennet's? Are these typical of the time? Compared with her other daughters, what are Mrs. Bennet's feelings for Elizabeth? How do you account for this?
19. What is the gist of Caroline Bingley's letter to Jane? What is the real reason they have all left Netherfield? What are Bingley's Sisters trying to arrange?
20. Mr. Collins expressed admiration and love for Elizabeth when he proposed. How long does it take for him to recover from her refusal and propose to Charlotte Lucas? What does this say about him? What does this suggest about Austen's attitude toward marriage?

21. Why does Charlotte accept? What is Elizabeth's reaction? Mrs. Bennet's reaction?
22. What is Mrs. Bennet's reaction when she learns that Mr. Bingley is will not be returning to Netherfeild? Mr. Bennet's reaction? What does her say about his wife? Which one is a bigger failure as a parent? Defend our choice.
23. How are the Gardeners related to the Bennet girls? In what other capacity do the serve?
24. Charlotte urges her father, younger sister, and Elizabeth to visit her at the parsonage. Does she seem happy in her new situation? Why has she encouraged her husband to become deeply involved with gardening?
25. How does Mr. Collins treat Elizabeth? What does this tell us about his character?
26. Describe the way Lady de Bourgh treats the Collins, and the way they respond. Describe the type of evening spent at Rosings. Is Sir William intimidated? Is Elizabeth? Explain.
27. What is Lady de Bourgh to Mr. Darcy? What plans does she have for him?
28. Elizabeth meets Darcy again at Fossings, along with his cousin Col. Fitzwilliam. With which one does she find conversation easier? Why?
29. What have we learned about Wickham so far? Is this to his credit? From a 19th century point of view is it? Discuss the relative moral judgments.
30. England was a very class conscious society in the 19th century. How is this apparent according to the novel?
31. Compare Mrs. Bennet's crudeness with Lady Catherine's. Does this even things out a bit between Elizabeth and Darcy? Explain.
32. Elizabeth's suspicions are confirmed when Col. Fitzwilliam tells her of Darcy's influence on Bingley. What happened? What is Elizabeth's reaction to this information? What does this tell us about class?
33. Describe Darcy's proposal to Elizabeth. How would you characterize it? Describe Elizabeth's response. Is it justified? Explain.
34. How did the Author prepare you for the proposal scene? Why is Elizabeth so surprised? Explain how the title of the book works in this scene.
35. What is revealed in the letter Darcy gives Elizabeth? Why does her write it? What is Elizabeth's reaction to the information about Wickham? About Darcy's criticism of her family? How does she analyze the defects of her family? Does she agree with him?
36. As Elisabeth and Jane return home from their respective visits, they meet Kitty and Lydia. Describe the conversation of the two younger sisters. How does Elizabeth now view them? Are they characters of caricatures? Explain.
37. What is Mr. Bennet's reaction when Elizabeth begs him not to permit Lydia to follow the regiment to Brighton? Is this what you would expect of him? Why?
38. How does Elizabeth find herself at Pemberly? What does she thing of it? Any regrets at not having accepted Darcy's proposal? In what way does the housekeeper add to her changing point of view?
39. how does she feel when Darcy appears? How does her treat her? Her Aunt and uncle? What is their impression of him? Is his pride changing? Are her prejudices changing? Explain.
40. Explain the significance of Darcy's introducing his sister to Elizabeth.
41. How does Lydia bring disgrace to the family? Why is this disgrace? How does Elizabeth feel this will affect her new relationship with Darcy?
42. Explain how Mr. and Mrs. Bennet each react to Lydia's "elopement."

43. In addition to eloping with Lydia, how else has Wickham disgraced himself in Meryton and Brighton? How does this reflect on the Bennets?
44. In Meryton where Wickham was once welcomed, what do people now say? Is this Human Nature? Explain.
45. Describe Mr. Collins' letter about Lydia to Mr. Bennet. Is this what you would expect? Why/Not? What is ironic about the letter, considering that it comes from a clergyman?
46. Describe Mrs. Bennet's reaction when Lydia is found and will be married. How does this contrast with the reaction of the rest of the family?
47. What role does Darcy play in effecting the wedding and paying the gambling debts? How does Elizabeth find out about the details? What does she think?
48. Describe the way Lydia and Wickham act when they come to Longbourn after they are married. How does Wickham treat Elizabeth? How does she respond? Is this characteristic? What is the future of the Wickhams in terms of living situation and emotional involvement with each other? How do you know?
49. Bingley comes back to Netherfield, bringing Darcy with him. When he proposes to Jane, what analysis does Mr. Bennet make of their personalities and future happiness.
50. Lady Catherine comes to call on Elizabeth. Why? What information and what promise does she try to extract? How well does Elizabeth handle the situation?
51. Mr. Bennet gets another of Mr. Collins' infamous letters. In what way does it relate to Elizabeth? What does Mr. Bennet think of this?
52. Analyze Mr. Bennet's famous quotation: "For what do we live, but to make sport of our neighbors, and laugh at them in turn?" Is this what the novel is about? Why do you think so? Or not think so?
53. Darcy calls on Elizabeth. How does Mrs. Bennet treat him? Why? He tells Elizabeth why he helped Wickham and Lydia. What are his reasons?
54. What leads Darcy to feel that Elizabeth may have changed her mind about him and might be receptive to his proposing again? In what way has her previous rejection changed him? How has he overcome his pride and his prejudice?
55. Analyze Darcy's second proposal and Elizabeth's acceptance? Does Austen disappoint you here? Does she lead you up to a point and then back away? Would you like to read what Elizabeth said? Is the Novel too controlled? Discuss.
56. Describe Jane's and the Bennet's Reactions to Elizabeth's engagement. What advice does her father give her? What insight does he throw on his own marriage? What is his reaction when she learns that it was Darcy that financed Wickham and Lydia?