

Jane Austen

Pride and Prejudice



free Audiobook



Jane Austen

Pride and Prejudice

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These symbols indicate the beginning and end of the passages linked to the listening activities.



Jane Austen: *an English novelist*

Jane Austen was born on 16 December, 1775, in the village of Steventon in Hampshire. Her father was the rector¹ of the local parish² and both he and his wife came from the upper classes or landed gentry.³ However, the family was not wealthy. Jane was the seventh

of eight children, six boys and two girls. She was educated at home by her father and lived a quiet life, very similar to the one she describes in her stories. Her only sister Cassandra was her life-long friend and confidante.⁴

Jane started writing at an early age. In her early twenties she wrote the novels that she later reworked and published as *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Northanger Abbey*. Their original titles were *Elinor and Marianne*, *First Impressions*, and *Susan* respectively.

As a young woman she enjoyed dancing, an activity which features frequently in her novels, and she attended balls in many of the great

1. **rector** : priest in an Anglican church.
2. **parish** : district with its own church and priest.
3. **landed gentry** : old word for people from a high social class.
4. **confidante** : woman who you trust and can share your secrets and private feelings with.



The Royal Crescent, Bath, 1777.

houses of the neighbourhood.⁵ She loved the country and enjoyed going for long country walks. However, in 1801 her father retired and took the family to the fashionable spa town⁶ of Bath. The next four years were difficult ones for Jane because she missed her Steventon life. While the Austens were in Bath, they went on holidays to seaside resorts including Lyme Regis in Dorset, which gave Jane the background for her novel *Persuasion*.

It was also at this time that, while on holiday, Jane fell in love. Unfortunately, the young man died and this event upset her deeply. In 1805 her father also died and the Austen ladies moved to Southampton, a city on the south coast.

5. **neighbourhood** : area that surrounds someone's home.

6. **spa town** : place where people go to drink the natural mineral water.



Jane Austen's house in Chawton.

It wasn't until 1809 that Mrs Austen and her two daughters were able to move back to Hampshire. Their small but comfortable cottage in the village of Chawton, not far from their old home in Steventon, finally provided the settled home that Jane needed in order to write. In the seven and a half years that she lived in this house, she revised *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* and published them. A period of intense productivity followed. *Mansfield Park* came out in 1814, followed by *Emma* in 1816. She also completed *Persuasion*, which was published posthumously⁷ in 1818, together with *Northanger Abbey*. None of the books published in her life-time had her name on them — they were described as being written "By a Lady".

At the beginning of 1816 her health started to decline⁸ but she continued writing. She started her last novel *Sanditon*, but her illness

7. **posthumously** : published after a writer's death.

8. **decline** : get worse.



The Cloakroom, Clifton Assembly Rooms (1817) by Rolinda Sharples.

prevented its completion. By May 1817 she was so ill that she and Cassandra rented rooms in Winchester to be near Jane's doctor. Tragically, there was then no cure for the disease she had contracted and she died in her sister's arms in the early hours of 18 July, 1817. She was 41 years old. She is buried in Winchester Cathedral.

1 Comprehension check

Decide if each sentence is correct or incorrect. If it is correct, mark A. If it is not correct, mark B.

- 1 Jane came from a poor upper class family.
- 2 Her father moved to Bath because of his work.
- 3 Jane wrote *Persuasion* while she lived in Bath.
- 4 She was very happy to return to Hampshire in 1809.
- 5 She published six novels in her lifetime.

A	B
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Characters



From left to right: Mr Darcy, Mr Bingley, Mr Collins, Mr Wickham, Elizabeth, Mr Bennet, Mrs Bennet, Miss Bingley, Jane, Charlotte, Lady Catherine.



Before you read



1 Listening

track 02

Listen to the beginning of Chapter One. Decide if each sentence is correct or incorrect. If it is correct, mark A. If it is incorrect, mark B.

	A B
1 Mrs Long lives at Netherfield.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2 Mr Bennet isn't particularly interested in the news his wife gives him.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3 Mr Bingley is a local man.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4 Mr Bingley has fallen in love with one of the Bennet girls.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5 Mrs Bennet wants her husband to go and visit Mr Bingley.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6 Elizabeth is her father's favourite daughter.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7 Mr Bennet has known Mrs Bennet for over twenty years.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8 Mrs Bennet is expecting more young men to move to the neighbourhood.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

2 Vocabulary

Match the words (1-6) with their synonyms (A-F).

1 <input type="checkbox"/> chance	A noble
2 <input type="checkbox"/> good-humoured	B property
3 <input type="checkbox"/> astonishment	C not easily upset
4 <input type="checkbox"/> aristocratic	D rude, not pleasant
5 <input type="checkbox"/> estate	E opportunity
6 <input type="checkbox"/> disagreeable	F surprise

3 Characters

Look at the pictures of the characters on pages 8 and 9. Which of the adjectives in the list below would you use to describe them?

agreeable disagreeable elegant fashionable friendly
 good-humoured handsome intelligent lively pretty
 proud rich single snobbish



A newcomer at Netherfield



It is common knowledge that a single man with a fortune must be looking for a wife. The man himself might not know this but, when he moves into a new neighbourhood, all the families there immediately consider him to be the **rightful¹** property of one of their daughters.

‘My dear Mr Bennet,’ said Mrs Bennet one day. ‘Have you heard that Netherfield Park is let² at last?’

Mr Bennet replied that he hadn’t.

‘But it is,’ she said. ‘Mrs Long has just been there and she told me all about it.’

Silence.

‘Don’t you want to know who has taken it?’ cried his wife.

‘You want to tell me, my dear, and I have no objection to hearing it.’

Mrs Bennet took this as an invitation to continue.

1. **rightful** : officially or legally accepted as correct.

2. **let** : rented.



CHAPTER ONE

'Well, my dear! Mrs Long says that Netherfield has been let to a rich young man from the north of England. He came down on Monday to see the place and agreed to take it immediately.'

'What's his name?'

'Bingley.'

'Is he married or single?'

'Oh, single, my dear! A single man - and wealthy! What a good thing for our girls!'

'Why do you say that?'

'My dear Mr Bennet!' answered his wife. 'Don't you understand? I'm hoping that he'll marry one of them.'

'Is that his reason for coming here?'

'Oh, don't be so tiresome!³ Of course it isn't his reason. But it's very likely that he might fall in love with one of them, so you must visit him as soon as he gets here.'

'Why me? You and the girls can go. No, on the other hand, it might be better for them to go alone. You are just as pretty as they are and Mr Bingley might prefer you.'

'My dear, you flatter⁴ me. I used to be a beauty it's true, but when a woman has five daughters she must stop thinking about herself. However, I insist that you go and see Mr Bingley when he comes.'

'I can't promise to do that.'

'But Mr Bennet! Think of your daughters! Think of Jane and Elizabeth. Think of Mary, Kitty and Lydia. It would be a wonderful chance for one of them. You must go because it will be impossible for the girls and myself to visit him if you don't.'

'I am sure Mr Bingley will be very glad to see you. I'll write to him and give him my permission to marry one of the girls. And I'll

3. **tiresome** : making you feel annoyed or bored.

4. **flatter** : praise, compliment.

A newcomer at Netherfield

put in an especially good word for my little Lizzy.'

'I forbid you to do that! Lizzy is no better than the others. She isn't as pretty as Jane or as good-humoured as Lydia. I don't know why she's your favourite.'

'All our daughters are silly but Lizzy is more intelligent than her sisters.'

'Mr Bennet, how can you speak like that about your own children? You have no respect for my poor nerves.'

'On the contrary, my dear. I have a lot of respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. You've talked about them constantly for at least twenty years.'

'Oh! You don't know how much I suffer.'

'Well, I hope you'll feel better soon and see many rich young men come into the neighbourhood.'

'There's no point in them coming if you refuse to visit them.'

'My dear, when there are twenty, I'll visit them all.'

Despite what he told his wife, Mr Bennet had always intended to visit Mr Bingley and was one of the first people to do so.



end

He casually mentioned his visit one evening and the ladies' astonishment delighted him. They asked many questions about the new occupant of Netherfield, but he cleverly managed to avoid giving away too much information. They therefore had to be content with the opinion of their neighbour and friend Lady Lucas. Her report was very encouraging, however. Mr Bingley was young, very handsome, extremely agreeable and, best of all, he intended to be at the next ball at the assembly rooms⁵ with a party of friends. That was surely a good sign. To be fond of dancing was a sure step towards falling in love.

5. **assembly rooms** : hall where dances and other social events were held.



CHAPTER ONE

The day of the ball finally arrived and Mr Bingley turned up with four guests: his two sisters, the husband of the eldest and another young man. His sisters were fashionable, elegant women. Mr Hurst, his brother-in-law, was ordinary-looking but his friend Mr Darcy was a very striking⁶ man — tall and handsome with aristocratic features. He received many admiring looks from the ladies. A rumour quickly went round that he had a large estate⁷ in Derbyshire and a fortune to go with it.

Mr Bingley had a friendly, pleasing manner and had soon made the acquaintance of everyone in the room. He danced every dance and was unhappy that the ball finished so early. He talked about having one at Netherfield.

How different he was from his friend!

Mr Darcy danced once with Mrs Hurst and once with Miss Bingley. He refused to meet any of the local ladies and spoke only to his friends all evening. He was judged to be the proudest, the most disagreeable man in the world.

Mrs Bennet was particularly cross with Mr Darcy because he had been rude about one of her daughters. Elizabeth had overheard⁸ the following conversation between him and Mr Bingley.

‘Come on, Darcy,’ Bingley said. ‘You must dance.’

‘Certainly not. I hate dancing with women I don’t know. Your sisters aren’t free and you are dancing with the prettiest girl here.’

Mr Darcy looked at Jane.

‘It’s true,’ replied Bingley. ‘Jane is very beautiful, but one of her sisters is also quite pretty. She’s sitting behind you. I can ask my partner to introduce you.’

6. **striking** : attracting your interest or attention.

7. **estate** : house and grounds.

8. **overheard** : heard what people were saying in a conversation that you were not involved in.





CHAPTER ONE

‘Which one?’ Darcy turned around and looked at Elizabeth. Feeling his eyes on her, she looked up. He immediately turned away and said coldly: ‘She’s alright, but not pretty enough for me.’

When Darcy had gone, Elizabeth told her friends the story. She had a good sense of humour and was able to laugh at Darcy’s remark.

Later, when the sisters were alone, Jane told Elizabeth how much she liked Mr Bingley.

‘He is just what a young man should be,’ she said. ‘Intelligent, agreeable, lively.’

‘He is also good-looking,’ remarked Elizabeth.

‘I was surprised that he asked me to dance twice,’ Jane went on. ‘I didn’t expect such a compliment.’

‘I did. It was natural. You were five times as pretty as all the other women in the room.’

‘Dear Lizzy!’

‘And what did you think of his sisters?’

‘At first they didn’t seem very friendly but when I spoke to them, I found them very pleasant women. I think they’ll be good neighbours.’

Elizabeth was not convinced. She was always less generous in her judgement of people than her sister was. She hadn’t formed a good impression of the Bingley sisters. Rich and beautiful they were, and they could also be charming when they wanted to be. But Elizabeth suspected them of being proud, snobbish and conceited.⁹

9. **conceited** : (neg.) behaving in a way that shows the person thinks (s)he is intelligent, skilful or attractive.

The text and **beyond**

FCE 1 Comprehension check

For questions 1-5 choose the best answer – A, B, C or D.

- 1 Why didn't Mr Bennet tell his family he intended to visit Bingley?
A He made the decision to go at the last minute.
B He enjoyed surprising them.
C He didn't want them to know.
D He never told them about his plans.

- 2 Why did Mr Bingley want to have a ball at Netherfield?
A Because he wanted to dance with Jane again.
B Because he liked entertaining.
C Because he enjoyed dancing.
D Because he wanted to get to know his neighbours better.

- 3 Why didn't Mr Darcy dance?
A He didn't like dancing.
B All the girls there already had partners.
C The girls he wanted to dance with weren't free.
D He was too shy to ask girls he didn't know.

- 4 How did Elizabeth feel about Darcy's comment about her?
A Amused.
B Offended.
C Upset.
D Angry.

- 5 Why did Jane like the Bingley sisters?
A They were very nice women.
B They had been very friendly and welcoming.
C She enjoyed their intelligent conversation.
D She tended to think well of everyone.

FCE 2

Sentence transformation

Complete the second sentence so it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between two and five words, including the word given.

0 Can you describe Netherfield Park to me in detail?

DETAILED

Can you give me a detailed description of Netherfield Park?

1 Mr Bingley is rich and single so he surely wants to get married.

MUST

Mr Bingley is rich and single so he for a wife.

2 'I have no objection to hearing who has taken Netherfield,' Mr

Bennet said.

MIND

'I tell me who has taken Netherfield,' Mr Bennet said.

3 Lizzy is far more intelligent than Lydia.

NEARLY

Lydia is not Elizabeth is.

4 Mr Bennet cleverly managed not to give them much information.

SUCCEEDED

Mr Bennet cleverly them little information.

5 Bingley arrived just before the ball started.

TURNED

Bingley for the start of the ball.

6 Darcy couldn't be compared with his friend.

BETWEEN

There was and his friend.

7 Perhaps Darcy didn't want to dance.

MAY

Darcy to dance.

8 'I was surprised that he asked me to dance twice,' said Jane.

EXPECT

'I ask me to dance twice,' said Jane.

**3 Word formation**

Use the word in capitals at the end of the lines to form a word that fits in the gap.

A rich young man called Bingley has just moved into the (1) Mr Bennet went to visit him, much to the (2) of the Bennet ladies. He has a very pleasant manner, unlike his friend Darcy, who everyone finds extremely (3) Bingley's sisters are elegant, (4) women but Elizabeth hasn't formed a good (5) of them.

NEIGHBOUR
ASTONISH
AGREE
FASHION
IMPRESS

4 Writing

Imagine you work for the local newspaper in Meryton, the nearest town to Longbourn. Write a short article about the ball at the assembly rooms for the gossip column. Use between 100 and 120 words. Begin like this:

The carriages started to arrive just before seven o'clock last Saturday for the ball at the assembly rooms...

Before you read**1 Listening**

Listen to the beginning of Chapter Two. Choose the correct word.

track 03

- 1 Charlotte is a *sensitive/sensible*, intelligent young woman of twenty-seven.
- 2 Charlotte had been Bingley's first *choice/chance* as a dance partner.
- 3 Mrs Bennet thinks that Darcy is very *disagreeable/handsome*.
- 4 According to Miss Bingley, Mr Darcy is perfectly *polite/charming* when he is among friends.
- 5 Charlotte thinks that Darcy's *arrogance/pride* can be excused because he's rich, handsome and comes from a good family.