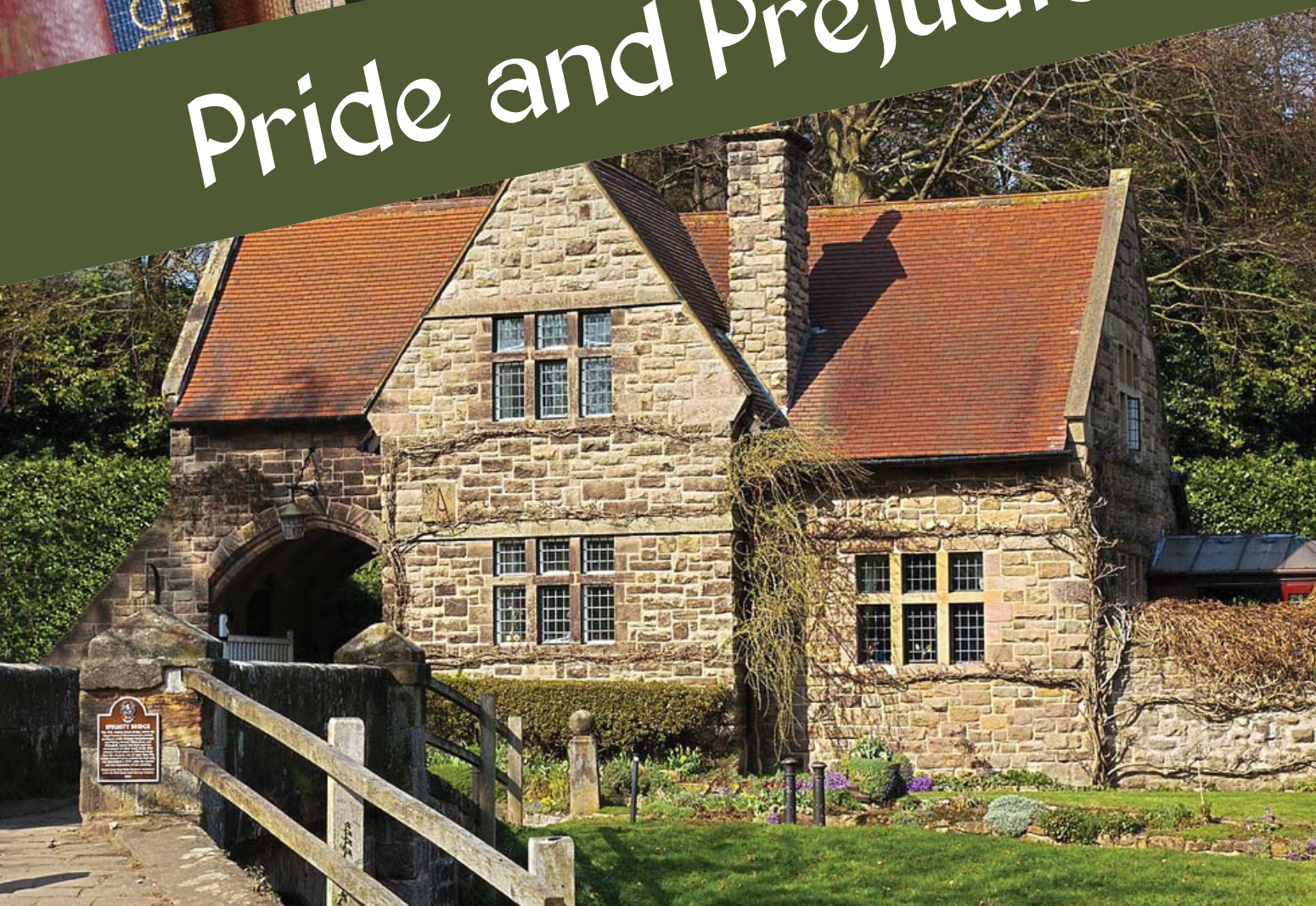
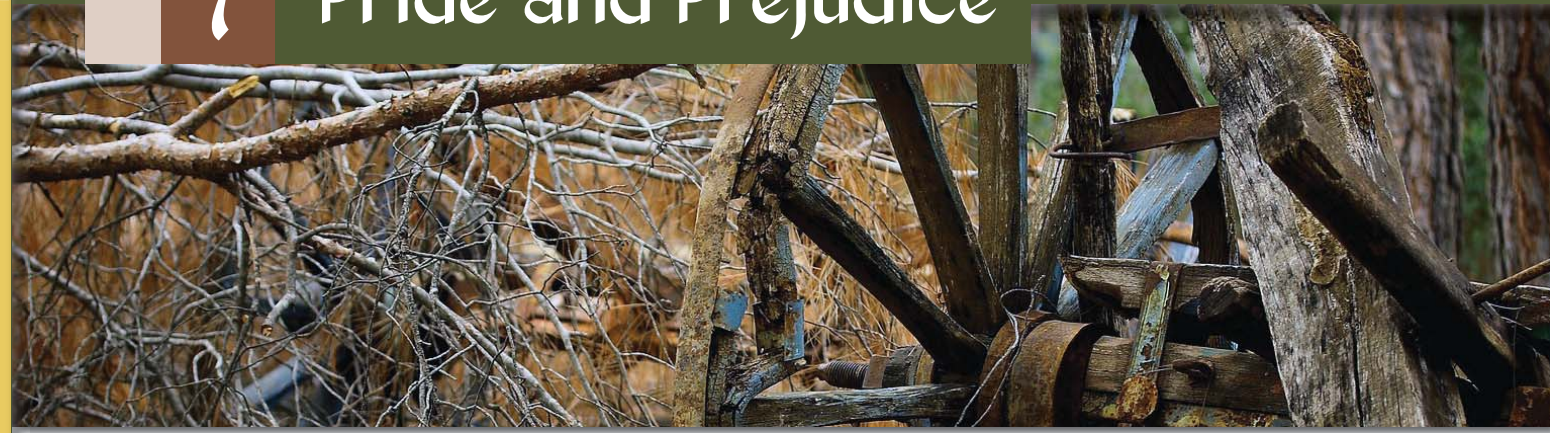


7

Pride and Prejudice





Pride and Prejudice is a romantic novel by Jane Austen, focusing on the concept of love during the late 18th century in England. In fact, Austen originally titled her novel *First Impressions*.

The novel revolves around the importance of marrying for love, not simply for money, despite the social pressures to make a good (i.e. wealthy) match. The comedy of the writing lies in the depiction of manners, education, marriage and money during the British Regency period.



1. Work in groups and discuss the following questions:

- Is reputation and people's social status critical for you to appreciate them as individuals?
- To what extent are you influenced by first impressions? Explain giving examples.
- Which characteristics make a person 'significant', in your opinion?



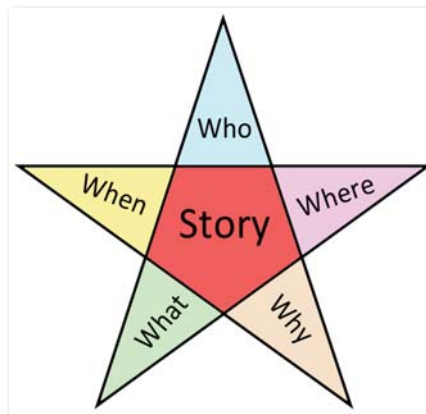
2. Read the plot summary of the novel and work in pairs to do the tasks below.

Mr Bennet is an English gentleman who lives in Hertfordshire with his overbearing wife and their five daughters; beautiful Jane, clever Elizabeth, bookish Mary, immature Kitty and wild Lydia. The family's future happiness and security depend on the girls' marriages since their house, after Mr Bennet's death, will be inherited by a distant cousin they have never met before. They all lead an ordinary life until the arrival of a rich gentleman in their neighbourhood. Mr Bingley, who rents a large house in order to spend the summer in the countryside, brings along his sister and his attractive, wealthy and proud friend, Mr Darcy. Love is soon in the air for one of the Bennet

sisters. Yet many trials and tribulations stand between the Bennet sisters and their happiness due to social status and class differences, gossip and scandals.

Pride and Prejudice is a story of romance between the spirited and lovely but poverty-stricken and prejudiced Elizabeth, and the pompous, proud and intriguing aristocrat Mr Darcy. The story charts the emotional development of the protagonist, Elizabeth Bennet, who learns from her mistakes, regrets having made hasty judgments and comes to appreciate the difference between superficial and essential.

- Who are the main characters? Fill in the graphic organiser with basic information about the story.
- Which of the Bennet daughters seems to play a significant role in the book?
- Who seems to be important to Elizabeth from the beginning of the novel?
- Why do the Bennet sisters have to marry wealthy men?
- Why does Mr Bingley's arrival seem to be important?





3. Read the adapted summary of the first chapters of Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* and work in groups to do the tasks below.

A. The news that a wealthy young gentleman named Charles Bingley has rented the manor known as Netherfield Park causes a great stir in the neighbouring village of Longbourn, especially in the Bennet household. The Bennets have five unmarried daughters, and Mrs Bennet, a foolish and fussy gossip, is the sort who agrees with the novel's opening words: "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife." She sees Bingley's arrival as an opportunity for one of the girls to obtain a wealthy spouse, and she therefore insists that her husband call on the new arrival immediately. The Bennets invite him to dinner shortly afterwards, but he is called away to London. Soon, however, he returns to Netherfield Park with his two sisters, his brother-in-law, and a friend named Darcy.

B. Mr Bingley and his guests go to a ball in the nearby town of Meryton. The Bennet sisters attend the ball with their mother. The eldest daughter, Jane, dances twice with Bingley. Within Elizabeth's hearing, Bingley exclaims to Darcy that Jane is "the most beautiful creature" he has ever beheld. Bingley suggests that Darcy dance with Elizabeth, but Darcy refuses, saying, "she is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me." He proceeds to declare that he has no interest in women who are "slighted by other men." Elizabeth takes an immediate and understandable dislike to Darcy. Because of Darcy's comments and refusal to dance with anyone not rich and well bred, the neighbourhood takes a similar dislike; on the

other hand, they declare Bingley to be quite "amiable."

C. Bingley has inherited a hundred thousand pounds from his father, but for now, in spite of his sisters' complaints, he lives as a tenant. His friendship with Darcy is "steady," despite the contrast in their characters, illustrated in their respective reactions to the Meryton ball. Bingley, cheerful and sociable, has an excellent time and is taken with Jane; Darcy, cleverer but less tactful, finds people dull and even criticizes Jane for smiling too often.

D. Bingley's sisters exchange visits with the Bennets and attempt to befriend Elizabeth and Jane. Meanwhile, Bingley continues to pay attention to Jane, and Elizabeth decides that her sister is very much in love with him but conceals it very well. Elizabeth says it is better for a young woman to be patient until she is sure of her feelings.

E. Darcy finds himself attracted to Elizabeth. He begins listening to her conversations at parties, much to her surprise. At one party at the Lucas house, Sir William attempts to persuade Elizabeth and Darcy to dance together, but Elizabeth refuses. Shortly afterwards, Darcy tells Bingley's unmarried sister that "Miss Elizabeth Bennet" is now the object of his admiration.

F. Miss Bingley spends the following night in a similar fashion, trying to attract Darcy's attention: first by reading, then by criticizing the foolishness of balls, and finally by walking about the room. Only when she asks Elizabeth to walk with her, however, does Darcy look up, and



then the two women discuss the possibility of finding something in his character to ridicule. He states that his only fault is resentment – “my good opinion once lost is lost forever.” Elizabeth replies that it is hard to laugh at a “propensity to hate everybody,” and Miss Bingley, observing Elizabeth monopolizing Darcy’s attention once again, insists on music. The next morning, Elizabeth writes to her mother to say that she and Jane are ready to return home.

G. In the evening, Elizabeth observes Miss Bingley piling compliments upon Darcy as he writes to his sister. The conversation turns to Bingley’s style of letter writing and then to Bingley’s impetuous behaviour, which entangles Elizabeth and Darcy in an argument over the virtues of accepting the advice of friends. Afterwards, Miss Bingley plays “a lively Scotch air” on the pianoforte, and Elizabeth again refuses to dance with Darcy. Her refusal only increases his admiration, and he considers that “were it not for the inferiority of her connections, he should be in some danger.” Miss Bingley, observing his attraction, becomes jealous and spends the following day making fun of Elizabeth’s family, inviting Darcy to imagine them connected to his proud and respectable line.



<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/pride/>



<http://historyandfilmblog.wordpress.com/category/review/>

4. Work in groups and do the following tasks.



- 1 Irony is the use of language in a way that expresses the opposite of its literal meaning. Find **examples** of irony in the text.
- 2 How does the author criticise the society of that era? Compare that society with contemporary society. Make a **chart** outlining these differences.
- 3 Austen's remarkable skill at shaping characters into unique personalities through the most commonplace actions or events in the whole novel is apparent. Choose one of the characters and justify the previous statement with specific examples based on the text. Make a **character map** (traits, feelings, accomplishments, change over time etc) and compare it with that of other groups.
- 4 Why was it really important for women of the era to get married, especially to someone who was well-off? Discuss the position of women and compare it with their position in the 21st century. Make a **poster** recording the differences.
- 5 Based on the text, provide specific **examples** in order to justify why Jane Austen initially titled the novel "First Impressions".

5. Read the text again and match the titles to each paragraph.

- 1 An affection to be hidden deep inside
- 2 Pursuing a much wanted marital status
- 3 Cunning behaviour and hypocrisy at play
- 4 Inviting negative feelings on personal and social level
- 5 A spark is born
- 6 Contrasting temperaments
- 7 Demonstration of vigour and intelligence

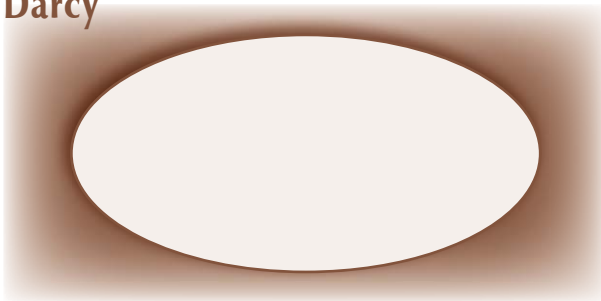


6. Read the definitions of the words *pride* and *prejudice* provided by "Oxford" and "Collins" dictionaries. Work in pairs to do the tasks below, drawing on information provided in the summary of the first chapters:

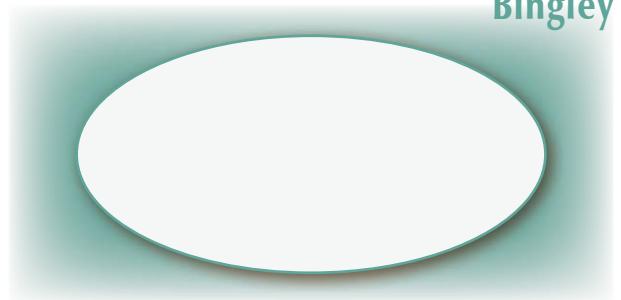
<i>pride</i>	a. a feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one's own achievements b. the quality of having an excessively high opinion of oneself or one's importance
<i>prejudice</i>	a. preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience b. dislike, hostility or unjust behaviour deriving from preconceived and unfounded opinions

- a. Decide which character shows **pride** and which one shows **prejudice** in the novel, according to the definitions. Justify your answers with specific examples from the text.
- b. Fill in the oval shapes below with words or phrases from the text implying that the main characters indicate such behaviour and present your work to your classmates.

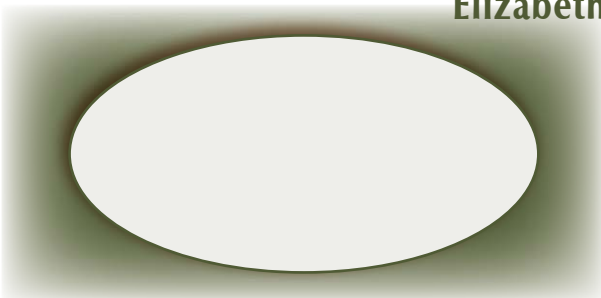
Darcy



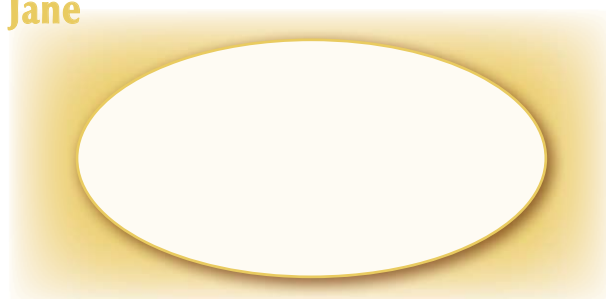
Bingley



Elizabeth



Jane





<http://www.theodysseyonline.com/marriage-pride-prejudice>

7. In groups, discuss the following questions:

- a. Although the setting and characters of the novel are out of date, *Pride and Prejudice* has remained a popular novel since its publication in 1813. Why do you think it has retained its popularity?
- b. Make a list of the elements or values in the novel that you believe are universal. Do they transcend time? Make a poster and present it to your classmates comparing each other's findings.
- c. Do you think that Elizabeth Bennet would still be considered a remarkable woman in modern-day society? What qualities does she have which may be significant for a young lady nowadays?



"Which do you mean?" and turning round, he looked for a moment at Elizabeth, till, catching her eye, he withdrew his own and coldly said, "She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men. You had better return to your partner and enjoy her smiles, for you are wasting your time with me."

Darcy, Meryton ball Volume I: Chapter 3

- How does Darcy see people living in Meryton?
- How do you characterise him? What kind of behaviour does he display?
- What is his impression of Elizabeth?

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

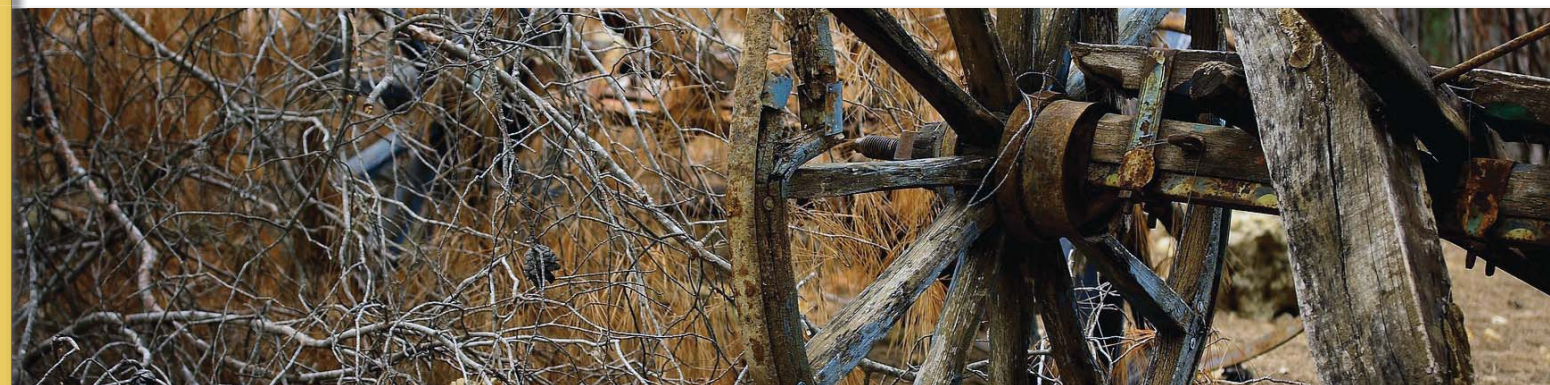
"You are mistaken, Mr Darcy, if you suppose that the mode of your declaration affected me in any other way, than as it spared me the concern which I might have felt in refusing you, had you behaved in a more gentleman-like manner."

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."

Elizabeth, Volume II: Chapter 11

- Which word best describes Darcy's way of making the first marriage proposal to Elizabeth?
- How does Elizabeth behave and react with reference to the title of the novel?
- Can you guess about the impact of Elizabeth's behaviour on Darcy? How should he behave from now on?
- Does Elizabeth pay any attention to his behaviour or his aristocratic standing?



"How despicably I have acted! I, who have prided myself on my discernment! I, who have valued myself on my abilities! who have often disdained the generous candour of my sister, and gratified my vanity in useless or blameable mistrust! How humiliating is this discovery! Yet, how just a humiliation! Had I been in love, I could not have been more wretchedly blind! But vanity, not love, has been my folly. Pleased with the preference of one, and offended by the neglect of the other, on the very beginning of our acquaintance, I have courted prepossession and ignorance, and driven reason away, where either were concerned. Till this moment I never knew myself."

Elizabeth, Volume II: Chapter 13

- Which words show that Elizabeth has shown narrow-mindedness?
- Has she recognised her faults? How has her judgment been affected by her pride and prejudice?
- Do you think she feels humiliated when admitting her feelings to Darcy?
- How would you characterise Elizabeth on the whole? Why? Draw a character map to show her traits based on her actions.



<http://www.vinhanley.com/2016/09/21/character-study-of-elizabeth-bennet-and-mr-darcy-in-pride-and-prejudice/>

"I have been a selfish being all my life, in practice, though not in principle. As a child I was taught what was right, but I was not taught to correct my temper. I was given good principles, but left to follow them in pride and conceit. Unfortunately an only son (for many years an only child), I was spoilt by my parents, who, though good themselves (my father, particularly, all that was benevolent and amiable), allowed, encouraged, almost taught me to be selfish and overbearing; to care for none beyond my own family circle; to think meanly of all the rest of the world; to wish at least to think meanly of their sense and worth compared with my own. Such I was, from eight to eight and twenty; and such I might still have been but for you, dearest, loveliest Elizabeth! What do I not owe you! You taught me a lesson, hard indeed at first, but most advantageous. By you, I was properly humbled. I came to you without a doubt of my reception. You showed me how insufficient were all my pretensions to please a woman worthy of being pleased."

Mr Darcy, Volume III: Chapter 16

- a. Has Darcy acknowledged that his class prejudice had clouded his judgment about Elizabeth? How is this revealed in the text?
- b. What is his opinion about a person's manner and his or her social status? Which words reveal this opinion?
- c. Has his upbringing affected his behaviour?
- d. Explain how the above quotation reveals Darcy's journey to self-discovery. Having in mind that self-actualisers accept their own human nature with all its flaws, how can it be characterised as a self-actualisation climax?
- e. Do you think that achieving a level of self-awareness leads to one's future happiness? Is future happiness determined by self-awareness only?



9. Work in groups and discuss the following topics.

- a. Have you ever encountered prejudice in your personal relationships? Have you ever had some kind of prejudice yourselves?
- b. Consider the sources of your misperceptions and prejudice regarding personal relationships. What steps did you take to break them down?
- c. Were these experiences painful? What dramatic elements did they involve? Did you have to overcome conflicts?
- d. Is class consciousness a characteristic of society in Greece? How is our society structured?
- e. Can you spot any similarities or differences between current social behaviours and the ones depicted in the novel? Which are they?
- f. Name some characteristic social values of the 21st century society.
- g. Which words in the summary and extracts you have read so far reflect the importance that Austen places on the family educating its children? Draw a comparison with our own society.



10. Organise a debate on the following issues:

- a. Family is mainly responsible for children's upbringing nowadays.
- b. Friends and peers mostly affect children's personality and behaviour

