

Pride and Prejudice Discussion Questions

1. “It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.” This first line has become one of the most famous in English literature. In addition to setting the narrative in motion, how does this line alert us to the tone of the novel and our role, as readers, in appreciating it? What does the line imply about women? (From the Chicago Public Library’s *One Book, One Chicago* pamphlet on *Pride and Prejudice*, 2005)
2. Elizabeth is upset to learn that Charlotte has accepted Mr. Collins’s marriage proposal. Do you think Charlotte should have married Mr. Collins? Did she choose him or did he choose her? What do you think influenced her decision to accept him? Is Charlotte a romantic? Is Elizabeth?
3. How does Pemberley play a role in Elizabeth’s change of heart? Does she really fall in love with Darcy after seeing his estate? Trace the development of her feelings for him. Why is Darcy attracted to Elizabeth? Trace the development of his feelings for her.
4. What might have happened if Elizabeth had accepted Darcy’s first proposal? Do you think he really expected her to accept? How does the first proposal change their feelings for, and opinions of, each other?
5. Several letters are reproduced in full in the text. What is the effect on you as a reader when you read a letter instead of getting the information contained in it from the 3rd person narrator? Why do you think Austen might have used letters so often in this novel? (There are 59 references to letters in the book.)
6. How does the title *Pride and Prejudice* relate to the original title Jane Austen used for the novel, *First Impressions*? Do you think *Pride and Prejudice* is a better title? Why? How does it relate to Elizabeth? Darcy? Does it relate to other characters in the novel?
7. Mr. and Mrs. Bennet do not agree on very much, especially when it comes to their daughters’ futures. Who is the better parent—Mr. or Mrs. Bennet? What role does family play in this novel?
8. Darcy says that Wickham tried to elope with Georgiana for revenge. Does revenge play a part in his elopement with Lydia?
9. Lady Catherine’s visit to Elizabeth to persuade her not to marry Darcy actually has the opposite effect and propels them toward the final conclusion, their marriage. What is it about this use of dramatic irony that is so appealing to readers? What other examples of irony do you find in the novel?

10. The novel has many universal themes that make it relevant today and inspire contemporary spin-offs and adaptations. Imagine the Facebook pages of each of the Bennet daughters. Who would be most active on Facebook? How would their entries differ from each other? Would any of them choose not to be on Facebook?

11. Why is this novel so popular? Why do readers keep coming back to it, even after the original suspense is gone and they know how it ends?