

# Introductory Lesson

## Before Reading

- ① *Look at the title of the book.*
  - a *What does 'pride' mean?*
  - b *What does 'prejudice' mean?*
  - c *Can you think of any ways in which people can be proud or prejudiced?*

Jane Austen



*Jane Austen* was born in Steventon, England, on 16th December 1775, the daughter of a clergyman, and one of eight children. She was tutored at home by her father, who encouraged her to write, and she wrote her first

- ② *'Pride and Prejudice' is a novel of manners. Literary works of this kind deal with the social behaviour, habits and moral values of the people of a particular era. They often show a character's struggle to defy convention and social etiquette. What was the social context in Jane Austen's time like? Do you think it looks old-fashioned today?*
- ③ *Read Jane Austen's biography, then answer the questions:*
  - a When and where was Jane Austen born?
  - b How many novels did she write?
  - c What theme is important in her novels?
  - d Where is she buried?
  - e What are the typical features of her novels?

novel when she was only 14. Her greatest works were written later in her life. She finished six novels in all, including 'Sense and Sensibility' (1811), 'Pride and Prejudice' (1813) and 'Emma' (1816).

Even though marriage is an important theme in her novels, Jane Austen herself never married. She did receive a proposal when she was 27, but rejected it. The only man she judged worthy of marriage died before they could become engaged. Instead she continued to live a quiet life with her mother and her sister Cassandra, who was also unmarried. After a period of illness, Jane Austen died on 18th July 1817, and was buried in Winchester Cathedral.

Although her work received good reviews, her success during her lifetime was limited. Today she is regarded as one of the greatest novelists of the nineteenth century, and one of the greatest women writers of all time. Her work is best known for its realistic characters, her insights into the workings of relationships, and the irony with which she treats the attitudes of her times.

**4** Read the following statements. Circle 'True' or 'False'.

1 Jane Austen had no support from her family when she started out as a writer.

1 True    2 False

2 She wrote one of her greatest novels when she was a teenager.

1 True    2 False

3 Jane Austen was against marriage.

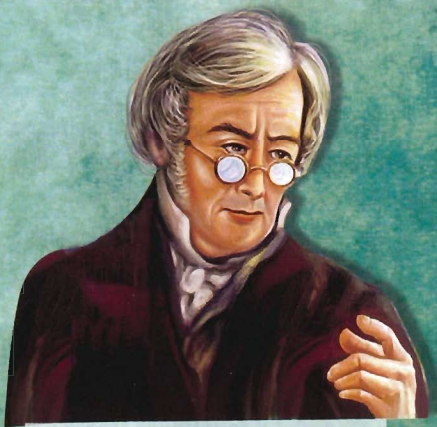
1 True    2 False

4 It was after her death that her books were considered great novels.

1 True    2 False

5 Her books were written with a critical eye.

1 True    2 False



*Mr Bennet*



*Mrs Bennet*



*Jane Bennet*



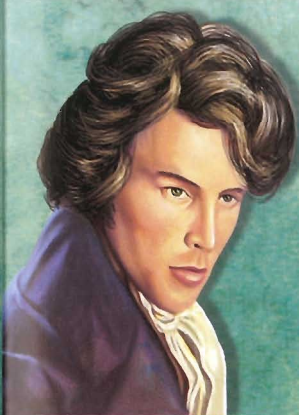
*Mr Bingley*



*Mr Wickham*



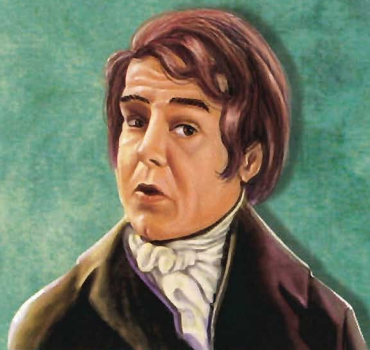
*Lydia Bennet*



*Mr Darcy*



*Elizabeth Bennet*



*Mr Collins*



*Charlotte Lucas*



*Lady Catherine de Bourgh*



*Colonel Fitzwilliam*

## *New Neighbours*

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man with a large fortune must be looking for a wife. And so, when such a wealthy young man moves into a neighbourhood, the local families hope that one of their daughters will soon be married to him.

One sunny autumn morning in their home at Longbourn, Mrs Bennet announced some important news.

“Have you heard that Netherfield Park has been let at last? It’s a wonderful opportunity for our girls.”

When Mr Bennet made no reply, Mrs Bennet continued.

“Don’t you want to know who’s taken it?”

Mr Bennet smiled ever so slightly as he responded to his wife.

“You want to tell me and I have no objection to hearing it.”

“A wealthy single man by the name of Bingley is moving in.”

“Really? How does it affect our girls?”

“Mr Bennet, you must know! I am hoping he will marry one of them! You should go and visit Mr Bingley as soon as he moves in.”

“I don’t think it’s necessary for me to go. You and the girls can go, if you like.”

“You know very well that we can’t. Just think of what a marriage it would be for one of them. Even the Lucases are going and, as you know, they hardly ever go to welcome newcomers.”

“I don’t see why you can’t go instead. I’ll send Mr Bingley a note to give him my permission to marry whichever of them he chooses, although I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy.”

“You will do no such thing. Lizzy is no better than the others –

she's not as pretty as Jane or as outgoing as Lydia, and yet you always favour her."

"Well, they're all silly and ignorant, of course, but Lizzy is a little quicker to understand things than her sisters."

"Mr Bennet, how can you speak of your children like that? You so enjoy teasing me and have no concern for my nerves!"

Despite what he had said to his wife, Mr Bennet did visit Mr Bingley on the day after Mr Bingley moved in. That evening he decided to break the news to his family in his own way. He noticed Elizabeth repairing a hat.

"I hope Mr Bingley will like that hat, Lizzy."

Mrs Bennet responded before Lizzy could say a word.

"But, if we aren't going to visit Mr Bingley, how will he ever see Lizzy's hat?"

"You're forgetting, Mama, that we'll meet him at the public balls. Mrs Long has promised to introduce us."

Mr Bennet played along.

"When is your next ball, Lizzy?"

"There's one in Meryton in two weeks' time."

This worried Mrs Bennet.

"But Mrs Long will be away till the day before the ball. How can she introduce us, when she won't yet know him herself? Oh, I'm sick of Mr Bingley!"

Mr Bennet quite enjoyed the next moment.

"I'm sorry to hear that. If you had told me, I wouldn't have visited him this morning. Now, we cannot simply ignore him."

Mrs Bennet and her daughters' concern turned to joy. Mr Bingley was certain to be at the ball in Meryton!

