

TACKLING TEXTS

Whether you are a writer of screen dramas or a student who has to write literature essays, your task is the same: the adaptation of a novel into another form – an English Literature essay or a film script. You both face the same daunting task.

The student has to condense all the events, themes, and ideas of a long text into enough manageable knowledge to be used in an examination answer. Similarly, the writer of a screenplay has to condense the entire text into a faithful representation of no more than a few hours in length so that viewers who have read the original text recognise a version of it. Where do we start?



There are five key aspects of a novel that both the student and the screenwriter need to tackle in order to:

- a) analyse and understand the book
- b) create a new representation of it in the form of an examination essay or a screen drama

These are:

PLOT: not just the story but the order of events in the text

SETTING: the place where most of the events in the novel occur and the representation of a society

CHARACTERS: the people who interact in the text and whose behaviour we watch and learn from as readers and viewers

VALUES: the issues raised by the text

STYLE OR METHOD: how the novel is written

It is when a reader looks closely at each of these five aspects of a novel that they begin to read it as a construction - not just a story.

By tackling the text of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* in this way, we will soon be able to appreciate how the screen version has been constructed.

Firstly, the screenwriter has to approach the film producer with a story - can the story of a novel be recreated within a manageable time span. A long novel cannot be slavishly copied page by page - the story has to re-examine in terms of:

PLOT: how the text is organised



All texts are organised into the following structure:

SITUATION: what happens at the beginning of the text - where it is happening, who it involves

PROBLEM: a complication in the form of a conflict or problem takes place that creates some form of tension or difficulty. The calm order of the situation is disrupted

CLIMAX: the complications and problems increase or intensify until at some stage in the text they reach a turning point or unbearable limit - in some texts this is where the plot might end - literally as a cliffhanger

RESOLUTION: the problems are solved and something similar to (but not necessarily the same as) the original calm and order of the SITUATION is returned to.

TASK 1

If you have read Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice then see if you can divide the main events of that novel into the plot structure - the situation, problem, climax and resolution.

What were the problems you faced?

With a partner, list the difficulties you had and then talk with another pair about them.

TASK 2

Using the storyboard on the next page of the guide see if you can devise key images from the text to fit the situation, problem, climax and resolution - one image for each stage of the plot structure. Try to create your own image.

If you can, find a passage from the novel that could form the basis for your image.

Now compare storyboards. Has anyone chosen exactly the same incidents? How different are your choices?

It does not matter if you have taken different episodes - the process of tackling the texts in this way is the same. You are examining plot structure.

The fact is that there are many film and television adaptations of Jane Austen's novels and this itself is a mark of her popularity as well as her skill as a writer. The film industry tries not to take too many expensive risks and it is clear that, were Jane Austen alive and writing today, there would be a scramble amongst the studios to purchase the rights to her next novel. There is no doubt that a film or television adaptation of a Jane Austen novel can bridge the gap between the pleasure of reading the novels as romantic comedies and analysing the texts as social commentaries.

TASK 3

- ✦ *Why do you think that filmmakers and television directors turn to novels to adapt for cinema and television?*
- ✦ *How do you think that adaptations from novels might attract audiences?*
- ✦ *What do you think the problems are for adaptations from novels, from the point of view of audiences and also critics?*
- ✦ *What is the most common complaint raised about adaptations?*



ADAPTING AUSTEN

Reading books and reading films involves the same process: an individual reader brings expectations, assumptions, knowledge and experience to a text and the characteristics of that particular book or film produce a response.

WHAT DO WE BRING TO PRIDE AND PREJUDICE?

Let's now consider some of the things that an audience might bring to a screening of *Pride and Prejudice*.

Because *Pride and Prejudice* is a mixture of different types of storytelling technique, let us consider what each type or 'genre', might make us expect:

So, consider the following:

- + A romantic film
- + A Jane Austen novel

If a member of an audience had knowledge of only one of these then what would that knowledge, those expectations be? List the expectations that you have for each of these types of stories.

The novel and the film *Pride and Prejudice* takes a basic story and develops it into a structured narrative. The basic story can be explained as follows:

- + Boy meets girl (or girl meets boy) boy loses girl, boy gets girl – the classic romantic story.

It is now important to look at the ways in which an author or scriptwriter will take this basic formula and fill it out with characters, events and themes.

TASK 1

*In no more than 100 words, write a short summary of the film *Pride and Prejudice*.*

TASK 2

Once you have completed this, you will be given a summary of the novel (Student Sheet A). What have you not included in your summary? Which elements of the novel's plot do not appear in the film?

Try to give reasons why you and the filmmakers missed out certain parts of the plot of the novel.



AUSTEN AND THE SCREEN

What is it about *Pride and Prejudice* that still makes it so attractive to filmmakers?

TASK

Here are some of the reasons why an adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* is still likely to succeed. The task is to decide which you feel are the most important factors by numbering them one to ten (one being the highest score). Follow this by discussing your choices and determining a definitive list in order of importance.

Having decided which are the most important aspects of the novel and its place within film production, write down why you feel the world is ready for a new screen version of *Pride and Prejudice*.



| PITCH FACTORS | ORDER OF IMPORTANCE |
|---|---------------------|
| It remains one of the best-loved tales, in the top ten of English readers' choices when asked to list their favourite novels. | |
| There is a wealth of character actors in Britain able to provide the kind of acutely observed cameo performances needed to make <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> 's cast come alive. | |
| Its most recent TV adaptation in the mid-nineties was hugely popular both in the UK and abroad. Far from being a reason for steering clear, any new version of the novel is likely to benefit from the collective awareness the BBC series helped to create and into which the new project can tap. | |
| The novel <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> is set in the early nineteenth century. However is ultimately a classic love story, in which a hero and heroine overcome obstacles, many of their own making to find true love. As a romance it has the universal appeal of a recognisable genre. As a story it deals with timeless issues that are relevant to today. | |
| The fact that Keira Knightley agreed to play Elizabeth Bennet. She is a star with the capacity to guarantee an audience – a rare thing in an English actress. The role comes at an important time for her, providing an opportunity for the kind of nuanced performance that is impossible in blockbuster films like <i>Pirates of the Caribbean</i> . | |



| PITCH FACTORS | ORDER OF IMPORTANCE |
|---|---------------------|
| <p>Darcy is one of the most romantic heroes in fiction. He embodies many fantasy elements, not least the need to be freed from constraining emotional bonds that initially render him aloof and judgemental.</p> | |
| <p>Yes, Pride and Prejudice depicts a lost world in which class and deference were paramount, but its air of gentility and quiet humour is enough to make it distinctive. It has a strong nostalgic appeal that should translate into good box office in the UK, US and other important marketplaces.</p> | |
| <p>Recent adaptations of Emma, Sense and Sensibility and Mansfield Park have set the stage for a screen version of Austen's most famous novel.</p> | |
| <p>The fact that established screen actors such as Judi Dench and Donald Sutherland have agreed to take the roles of Lady Catherine De Bourgh and Mr Bennet respectively will draw in an audience. Donald Sutherland's presence gives the project an all-important American star to feature in the publicity.</p> | |
| <p>There are superb locations in Britain, in which Georgian settings can be created at a fraction of the cost of building sets. Among these is the spectacular Chatsworth House in Derbyshire which is to be used as the setting for Pemberley, Darcy's family seat in the Peak District.</p> | |
| <p>It is a comedy. There are some superbly amusing characters such as Mrs Bennet and Mr Collins. Also in keeping with a comedy, it ends happily which is refreshing at a time of anxiety.</p> | |



ROMANTIC GENRE

Genres are formal systems for transforming the world in which we actually live into self-contained and controllable structures of meaning. they shape reality, thus making it less random and disordered.'

Patrick Phillips: An Introduction To Film Studies
(Editor: Jill Nelmes)



THE PLEASURES OF GENRES

Many stories are formulaic. They follow a set formula or pattern. They start and end in quite a predictable way and yet they still have the power to entertain the audience because they contain unexpected elements.

This mixture of the predictable and the unexpected is a very useful way of starting to understand film genres. Part of the reason film genres survive is because they are able to offer audiences a mix of the pleasantly familiar and the unusual.

We have already mentioned that when we go along to see a film we will have expectations of what we are going to see. These expectations will relate to the genre, or type of film, that we are seeing.

What do you think makes romantic fictions, whether novels or cinematic, very popular? As an audience we expect certain things to happen in romantic stories. Which will lead us to one of two endings – either happy or sad. What interests us is the ways in which the story itself is constructed to arrive at one of these possible endings.

TASK

In Pride and Prejudice, what do you think are the key storylines that interest us and keep us both reading and viewing the story?

Many of the ingredients are present in both the novel and its film version. If you know the novel well, use the table on page 7 to remind yourself of some of the main elements that make up the romantic narrative. If the film is your first encounter with the story, then fill in the grid based on your recollection of what you have seen.

Once you have completed the chart for Pride and Prejudice, you should then think about other romantic films that you have seen recently. Do the conventions outlined above hold true for all romantic comedies?



| GENERIC ROMANTIC ELEMENTS | PRIDE AND PREJUDICE INCIDENT |
|---|------------------------------|
| <p>A heroine – lively and attractive, though perhaps not obviously so. At the start her circumstances may not be ideal. She may lack advantages that might smooth her path in life and love.</p> | |
| <p>A hero – ideally tall, dark and handsome. He may have a past, one that continues to colour his present, making him seemingly aloof and unattainable. His circumstances (social standing) may also set him apart.</p> | |
| <p>Early misunderstandings. Despite the hero and heroine being eminently suitable for one another, their initial contacts are not happy ones. The differences between them seem to predominate and circumstances seem to conspire against them.</p> | |
| <p>The family as obstacle. Families are often a major source of impediments in romantic fiction. Both the hero and heroine’s families might prove problematic. There are many ways families can interrupt the course of true love, but one of the main ones is in undermining the heroine or hero’s love in some way or by demanding that they choose different partners in life.</p> | |
| <p>Misunderstandings. The hero and heroine might be driven apart by their misreading or misinterpretation of one another.</p> | |
| <p>Rivals as obstacles. The hero and heroine might well need to see through the allure of possible love rivals. These characters may pose an illusory threat, but for a while they will seem like real challengers for the hero or heroine’s affections.</p> | |
| <p>The crucial meeting(s). At some point the hero and heroine might meet in a context outside of their normal environment. Freed from some of the social constraints and conventions that hampered them in the past, they are able to read one another more clearly.</p> | |



GENERIC ROMANTIC ELEMENTS

Trials and tribulations. Circumstances will arise that test the love of hero and heroine. The hero may well be required to make a sacrifice or perform a trial that secures the heroine's affections.

The happy ending. There will be a coming together for the hero and heroine. The strength of their marriage will be born of the trials and tribulations they have overcome. Against the pattern of mutual respect and love they achieve, other relationships are clearly to be seen to be wanting. Their love marks a triumph over narrow mindedness and societal pressures.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE INCIDENT



JANE AUSTEN AND THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

If you have some understanding of the society in which Jane Austen lived and her own preoccupations, then you are more likely to respond confidently.

WOMEN, MONEY AND MARRIAGE

TASK 1

*Read the opening of *Pride and Prejudice* and underline any words or phrases that are to do with money and property, marriage and social position. Now search through the passage to find any obvious contrasts or oppositions that might begin to reveal what this novel is going to be about.*



PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

CHAPTER 1

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife. However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, the truth is this much is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

'My dear Mr Bennet,' said his lady to him one day, 'have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?' Mr Bennet replied that he had not.

'But it is,' returned she; 'for Mrs Long has just been here, and she told me all about it.' Mr Bennet made no answer.

'Do not you want to know who has taken it?' cried his wife impatiently.

'You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it.'

This was invitation enough.

'Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it that he agreed with Mr Morris immediately; that he is to take possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week.'

'What is his name?'

'Bingley.'



'Is he married or single?'

'Oh! single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year.

What a fine thing for our girls!'

'How so? How can it affect them?'

'My dear Mr Bennet,' replied his wife, 'how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them.'

'Is that his design in settling here?'

'Design! Nonsense. How can you talk so! But it is very likely that he may fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes.'

'I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go, or you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better, for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr Bingley might like you the best of the part.'

'My dear, you flatter me. I certainly have had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be anything extraordinary now. When a woman has five grown up daughters, she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty.'

'In such cases, a woman has not often much beauty to think of.'

'But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr Bingley when he comes into the neighbourhood.'

'It is more than I engage for, I assure you.'

'But consider your daughters. Only think what an establishment it would be for one of them. Sir William and Lady Lucas are determined to go merely on that account, for in general you know they visit no new comers. Indeed you must go, for it will be impossible for us to visit him, if you do not.'

'You are over scrupulous surely. I dare say Mr Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying which ever he chuses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy.'

'I desire you will do no such thing. Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good humoured as Lydia. But you are always giving her the preference.'

'They have none of them much to recommend them,' replied he; 'they are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters.'

'Mr Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves.'

'You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least.'

Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen (Oxford World's Classics, 2004)



TASK 2

Look at extract one from the film study extracts and try to identify how the filmmaker has tried to capture these ideas on screen.

When Jane Austen was writing, marriage was much more than a contract between two people who love each other enough to want to spend their lives together. In fact, love might not even have been a consideration. For women, marriage gave the only form of financial security. Legally, married women owned nothing; all money and property belonged to their husbands. In families with sons, there was little complication about who inherited the wealth - the eldest son. Daughters had to be allocated a portion of the family's wealth (a dowry) but this was really for use as bargaining power in the marriage marketplace.

During Jane Austen's short life (she was born in 1775 and died in 1817), there were many important events and changes in society. The most obvious point to make about her life is that it bridged the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. As far as literary history is concerned, there was a gradual change in attitudes and philosophy which also spanned the two centuries, so that it is possible to recognise typical eighteenth century views reflected in books written in that century as well as views typical of the nineteenth century. Broadly speaking, the eighteenth century has been called 'The Age of Reason' - the age of sense when there was a belief in a 'right way' for the universe to work and in 'true' human behaviour. The nineteenth century saw a gradual move away from 'reason' towards human instinct and feeling, so that it became known as 'The Age of Romanticism' with the emphasis on sensibility. The influence of this transition was broad reaching affecting attitudes to art, architecture, music, philosophy as well as literature.

TASK 3

Draw a time line that begins in 1775 and ends in 1817. Using as many sources as possible, try to find out some of the main historical events that took place throughout Jane Austen's lifetime. Now discuss what you can remember of the film and how accurate a portrayal of early nineteenth century England it is. You might discuss some of the following topics: fashions, the presence of the military, social class differences etc.



CHARACTERS

One of the key elements of storytelling is the characters in the story. A novelist or filmmaker has to create believable and interesting characters in order to involve the reader/viewer in the story.

The major techniques used by writers and filmmakers to establish a character and to help us understand what type of person they are include:

- + Physical description (including dress, looks, voice)
- + Personality (friendly, happy etc.)
- + Actions of the character
- + Interaction with other characters
- + Comments on other characters

Characters are essential to the movement of a story. As a story is a construction and everything within it should be relevant to its development, then we can see that the actions, thoughts and words of any character are a vital element of the dynamic of a story.

In the novel, 'character' means one of two things. Firstly it is used to refer to the imaginary people that populate the novel. Talking about character however, can also refer to a psychological judgment of some kind. Bingley says to Elizabeth, 'I did not know before, that you were a studier of character, it must be an amusing study.' (Ch 9). The study of a person's character; in other words their personality, ethics and manner of conducting themselves is a matter discussed frequently in the novel. True judgment of character is exhorted as a valuable skill, especially by Mr Bennet when he is giving advice to his daughters.

Readers are able to exercise their own character judgments. For example, the easy-going Bingley is a simpler character to understand. He is polite and affable to everybody. Whereas Darcy is a more intricate character. His actions seem to be controlled by a struggle between his decency and his pride, the latter often resulting in antisocial behaviour.

How far does this hold true for the film?

Jane Austen is economic in her descriptions of characters. This is to the advantage of filmmakers who have more freedom when it comes to their casting decisions.

In the next exercise, use the table on page 13 to collect and analyse descriptions of Elizabeth from the novel. We have given you four descriptions to start you off.



DESCRIPTIONS/INCIDENTS

SIGNIFICANCE

CHAPTER 20

Mr Bennet: 'An unhappy alternative is before you, Elizabeth. From this day you must be a stranger to one of your parents. Your mother will never see you again if you do not marry Mr Collins, and I will never see you again if you do.'

Elizabeth could not but smile at such a conclusion of such a beginning; but Mrs Bennet, who had persuaded herself that her husband regarded the affair as she wished, was excessively disappointed.

CHAPTER 3

Mr Bingley: 'But there is one of her sisters sitting down just behind you, who is very pretty, and I dare say, very agreeable...'

Mr Darcy: 'She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me.'

CHAPTER 3

Elizabeth remained with no very cordial feelings towards him. She told the story afterwards, however with great spirit among her friends, for she had a lively, playful disposition, which delighted in anything ridiculous.

CHAPTER 4

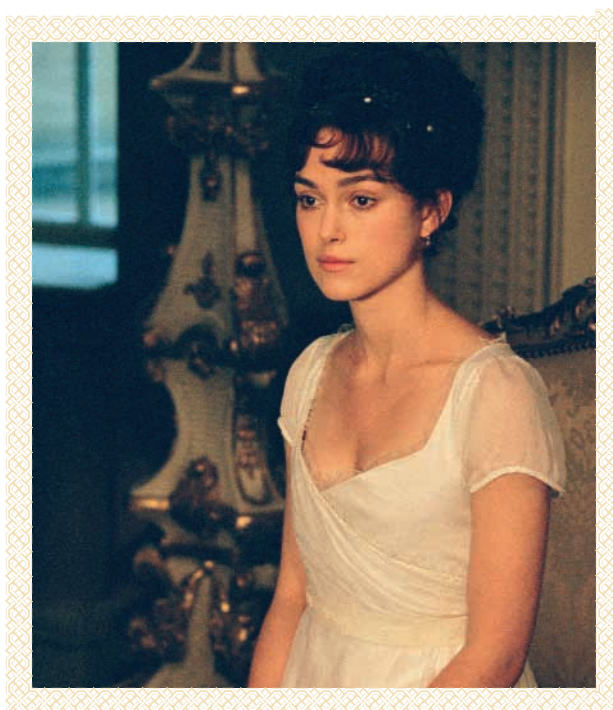
Lizzie: 'Oh! You are a great deal too apt, you know, to like people in general. You never see a fault in any body. All the world are good and agreeable in your eyes. I never heard you speak ill of a human being in my life.'

Jane: 'I would wish not to be hasty in censuring any one; but I always speak what I think.'



TASK

Come up with a series of key words describing Elizabeth. Write them in the space around the still image of Keira Knightley in the role given below.

**EXTRACT TASK**

Look carefully at extract one from the film study extracts which shows the opening of the film.

The opening of the film shows Elizabeth outdoors as day breaks. What impression do you gain of her from this brief sequence? What might it signify that her arrival is heralded by the sound of the dawn chorus (as opposed to the geese that seem to surround her house) and that she is pictured against the dawn?

How do these opening shots of Elizabeth in natural surroundings, anticipate other times when she is shown to be outside?



ACTIONS AND MOTIVATION

Having looked at the physical and personality aspects of the characters we should now look at their motivation and also their actions in order to see how each character relates to the other characters.

TASK

In the chart below you will be required to choose three key actions for each of the main characters. For each of these actions you should then try to say what each of them tells us about the character. Finally, you could think of the ways in which this particular action affects other characters.

| WHAT THE ACTION TELLS US ABOUT THE CHARACTER | REFLECTION IN OTHER CHARACTERS |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Character 1: | |
| 1 | |
| 2 | |
| 3 | |
| Character 2: | |
| 1 | |
| 2 | |
| 3 | |
| Character 3: | |
| 1 | |
| 2 | |
| 3 | |



TASK 1

Consider how the characters interact with each other.

See if you can draw a diagram that links the characters together.

When you have drawn your diagram try to think of key moments in the film that relate to each relationship.

OTHER CHARACTERS

Pride and Prejudice derives a great deal of its appeal from the large number of characters that surround the central couple, Elizabeth and Darcy. It is important to realise that each of the minor characters who appear in the novel contribute to the overall story and themes.

TASK 2

Why have so many other characters been included? How do they help move the story along? Choose three of the minor characters from the story and decide why both Austen and the filmmakers decided to include them in the story.

Firstly we want you to think about each character individually. For each of the three characters answer the following:

- + *Describe the physical characteristics of the character*
- + *Try to describe their personality*
- + *What do we know about the background of the character?*

The next thing to look at is how you have come to understand this. For your answers try to think of moments within the film that illustrate the points you have made.

TASK 3

In a small group, discuss which characters in the film were meant to be amusing and which were meant to be rather unattractive. Find references to these characters in the novel and compare the way Austen presents them to the way the actors interpreted their roles. List the characters according to their allegiance to pride or prejudice.



THEMES

We are now going to explore the ideas of themes within the story of Pride and Prejudice. Earlier in this guide you will have written a short summary of what happened in both the novel Pride and Prejudice and also in the film Pride and Prejudice. When we talk about themes of a story we are not talking about what happened but what the story is about and what the events illustrate.

So, now try to write one hundred words that would tell someone what the film is about. One thing you might say is that the film is 'about' marriage. This will lead you on to some of the other themes in the film. If you have studied the novel, you should then repeat the same exercise, trying to say what the novel is about. You will probably find that marriage crops up again!



Once you have the two lists of themes, compare them to see whether the film has stuck to the themes of the novel in the new-filmed version of the story. Are there any differences? Can you account for these?

Below are some of the themes that appear in both the novel and the film Pride and Prejudice.

- ✦ Values
- ✦ Economic status
- ✦ Class and wealth
- ✦ Pride
- ✦ Money and self-interest
- ✦ The role of women
- ✦ Prejudice
- ✦ Marriage and love
- ✦ Narrowness of vision

TASK

In the chart below write down four of what you think are the themes of the film. Next to each theme try to write down at least two incidents from the film that illustrate that theme.

| THEME | INCIDENTS IN FILM |
|-------|-------------------|
| 1 | |
| 2 | |
| 3 | |
| 4 | |



A SENSE OF PLACE

As has already been mentioned, a romantic story often needs a fairly tight set of locations in which to be played out. This sense of enclosure, or claustrophobia, was potentially highly pronounced in Jane Austen's day when travel was both expensive and time-consuming. For example, in the novel two weeks is deemed too short a time for Elizabeth and Mr and Mrs Gardiner to reach the Lake District from Southern England. They have to make do with Derbyshire – with all sorts of unforeseen incidents flowing from that change in itinerary.

One of the main ways in which the screen version of *Pride and Prejudice* is able to bring home the social and character distinctions between people is through their domestic settings.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL

Study the opening sequence in which we are taken on a tour of the Bennet's home Longbourn. What indications are there that this is neither a well managed or disciplined household? What impressions are there that the house is very much adjacent to farming activity? Can you think why the filmmakers, adopted these indicators of the Bennet's inferior status over the distinctions in sizes of parlours, gardens or deliberate areas of wilderness that are mentioned in the novel?

Again – late in the film identify the ways in which the Bennets have to modify their behaviour in the sitting room before they can receive Mr Darcy and Mr Bingley. What is required of the women in terms of their dress, deportment and behaviour before the gentlemen can be admitted?

Contrast the appearance of Longbourn and its inhabitants with that of Netherfield and the party there. Consider the way in which the scenes in which Elizabeth is greeted after her cross-country walk or when Darcy is depicted writing to his sister Georgiana are arranged deliberately to emphasise the staged elegance of the scenes and their inhabitants.



OTHER CRUCIAL SETTINGS

HUNSFORD – how does the film use the environment of the parsonage to suggest the emotional space that has been quickly established between Caroline Lucas (as was) and her husband Mr Collins?

ROSINGS – the novel suggests that Lady Catherine's home is reflective of the kind of dreary ritual and conservatism that defines her worldview. Does the way in which the film depicts Rosings support this idea?

PEMBERLEY – the filmmakers had to use the art and architecture of Chatsworth House in Derbyshire to create their version of Pemberley. Although, it may differ in important respects from the Pemberley of the novel, it is still highly symbolic of both Darcy and the kind of life that Elizabeth might have enjoyed with him, had she not refused him. What messages are to be derived therefore from the ancient oak under which the idea to visit Pemberley is first hatched? And what do you make of the elegant parkland and drives on the approach to the house? How is the collection of marble sculpture photographed and in what way does it add to our understanding of Darcy and Elizabeth's feelings for one another? What makes the housekeeper's comments about Darcy so significant? It is not in the book, but what is revealed when Elizabeth spies on Darcy and Georgiana?



STUDENT SHEET A

Long summary of Pride and Prejudice

- + Mr and Mrs Bennet of Longbourn near Meryton, have five daughters. Jane is the eldest. She is beautiful and sensible. Elizabeth is clever and witty. The three younger sisters are called Mary, Kitty and Lydia.
- + When Mr Bingley, a rich bachelor, comes to stay at the nearby estate of Netherfield Park, Mrs Bennet is delighted, seeing opportunities to get one of her girls married into wealth. 'What a fine thing for our girls!' she beams.
- + Mrs Bennet devises strategies to bring Jane and Bingley together. Despite the mother's lack of subtlety the two of them fall in love.
- + Elizabeth (Lizzie) meanwhile takes a passionate dislike to Bingley's wealthy, yet taciturn friend Mr Darcy.
- + The militia comes to Meryton and Kitty and Lydia flirt with the officers.
- + A newcomer, Mr Wickham, charms Elizabeth. Wickham grew up with Mr Darcy, but detests him. It seems Darcy deprived him of a career in the church out of spite.
- + Bingley suddenly departs for London.
- + Jane feels miserable. Mr Collins, who will inherit the Bennet household, due to the laws of male property accession, comes to visit.
- + Mr Collins proposes to Elizabeth. She has the guts to refuse this pompous and rather pathetic character.
- + In a trip to Kent, Elizabeth meets Mr Darcy again. He haughtily proposes to her, emphasising the vulgarity of the Bennet family, in the midst of his proud declaration of love. Elizabeth angrily refuses him. Elizabeth's refusal is the more vehement thanks to her having learnt that he (Darcy) was indeed responsible for taking Bingley away from Jane.
- + A series of letters are exchanged between Elizabeth and Darcy. Darcy confesses to separating Bingley from Jane. He thinks Jane doesn't love Bingley. He also reveals the true history of Mr Wickham, as a spendthrift and seducer.
- + Elizabeth goes on holiday with the Gardiners. Darcy turns up and is very kind to her.
- + Bad news arrives. Lydia has run off with Wickham.
- + Elizabeth rushes home to assist with the search for the fugitives. A deal is made with Wickham that he must marry Lydia.
- + Elizabeth learns from Mrs Gardiner that it was Darcy who found Wickham and provided the money to make him marry Lydia.



- + Bingley moves back into Netherfield Park, courts Jane and proposes. Darcy is in attendance. He seems to have gone a bit cold towards Elizabeth.
- + Lady Catherine de Bourgh, Darcy's aunt, pays a visit to Longbourn. She is intent on preventing a marriage between Elizabeth and Darcy.
- + Elizabeth is not threatened. She takes an opportunity to thank Darcy for his work behind the scenes in the Lydia and Wickham affair. He proposes to her again and this time is accepted.



ON SCREEN

The following table defines a number of the key shots that filmmakers can use to create meaning in a movie. Look at the selection of extracts from the film on this disc and try to identify each type of shot from one or more of the extracts.

Once you have identified the shot, try to analyse the way it is used to give us information about either the event being portrayed or else the characters that appear in the extract.

| SHOT TYPE | PRIDE AND PREJUDICE MOMENT |
|---|----------------------------|
| <p>extreme long shot: This is used for views of landscapes or buildings. It might also be the point of view of a character looking out over a vista.</p> | |
| <p>long shot: A character is shown at some distance. They will be dominated by their surroundings.</p> | |
| <p>medium shot – also known as a mid-shot. In this kind of shot a character is shown from the waist upwards. The audience will be able to see their reactions but the background surroundings will also be prominent in the shot. When two characters are shown together in mid-shot it is sometimes called a 'two shot'.</p> | |
| <p>close-up. A shot of a person's head and shoulders. Not much, if any, background detail appears in the frame. The shot to use when wanting to catch a character's emotional response to something or when they are communicating their thoughts.</p> | |
| <p>extreme close-up. This is used to show an important detail, object, gesture or moment of contact between characters.</p> | |
| <p>high angle shot. This is used to communicate the idea that someone is being watched from above or is alone. It usually (but not always) makes characters seem less important.</p> | |
| <p>The most extreme form of high angle shot is a 'bird's eye' shot, taken directly above someone.</p> | |
| <p>A low angle shot. The ideal shot to make someone seem larger than life or to suggest we are seeing someone through the eyes of someone seated or smaller than them – a child looking up to an adult.</p> | |



PRIDE & PREJUDICE

In the 2005 version of *Pride and Prejudice*, the director uses the effect of filming through glass or water to suggest intriguing states of mind or to suggest characters' moral status. Here are a few of them. In each case suggest how the shot might add to our understanding of a character or their circumstances.

- 1 Elizabeth is viewed through glass at the time following Mr Darcy's first proposal to her and just before she receives his letter explaining his behaviour towards Jane and Mr Wickham.
- 2 As Lydia and Wickham leave Longbourn for an uncertain future in Newcastle, their receding coach is filmed through the glass of one of the house's windows.
- 3 Mr Darcy proposing to Elizabeth in the rain.



WRITING A REVIEW OF THE FILM VERSION OF PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

You have been set the task of writing a review of the film version of Jane Austen's novel. It is not necessary to know the book in detail, but clearly one major angle the critics will pursue when the film actually comes out is its faithfulness to its source.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

What do you feel is lost or gained by some of the following subtractions from the novel – done to fit the story into two-hours screen time?

- + The removal of characters such as the second Bingley sister, Mrs Hurst and her boorish husband.
- + The inevitable compression of scenes such as the removal of several of the stages at which Mr Bingley is encountered at the start of the novel before the Meryton Assembly, or the subtraction of several of the scenes near the end of the book where Elizabeth is confused by the signals being given off by Mr Darcy.
- + The reduction in the role and significance of Wickham. His contribution to the story is greatly reduced, his function limited really to telling tales about Darcy. There is little or no sense from the film that Elizabeth might fall in love with Wickham or that she has been particularly let down by his lies.
- + Changes in the events at Pemberley - in particular removing a further meeting between Elizabeth and Bingley and his sisters, after which Mr Darcy makes it plain to Miss Bingley how warmly he feels for Elizabeth.
- + The end of the film that sees Elizabeth and Darcy alone. The novel's final paragraph while celebrating their successful marriage does so by placing it at the centre of a set of satisfactory family relationships – the emphasis is very much on a marriage in society over a triumph of individualism. That said the final word of the novel is 'together'.



READING LIST

- + Jane Austen: Pride and Prejudice (Penguin Books – 1972)
- + Jane Austen by Tony Tanner (MacMillan - 1987)

Written by Jerome Monahan

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