



THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO TEACHING

# Jane Austen

Emma ❁ Sense and Sensibility ❁ Mansfield Park ❁ Persuasion ❁ Pride and Prejudice\* ❁ Northanger Abbey

MASTERPIECE™





Isabella Thorpe from *Northanger Abbey*


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## About This Guide

Originally written in conjunction with the 2008 series *The Complete Jane Austen* (film versions of all six Jane Austen works), this guide can be used with earlier MASTERPIECE versions of Austen's works, as well as the 2010 broadcast of *Emma* starring Romola Garai and Jonny Lee Miller. MASTERPIECE films are available for purchase on shopPBS.org. You may want to purchase the following films to use with this guide:

- Emma* (starring Romola Garai, 2010)
- Emma* (starring Kate Beckinsale, 1996)
- Mansfield Park* (starring Billie Piper, 2008)
- Northanger Abbey* (starring Felicity Jones, 1998)
- Persuasion* (starring Sally Hawkins, 2008)
- Pride and Prejudice* (starring Colin Firth, 1995)\*
- Sense and Sensibility* (starring Hattie Morahan and Charity Wakefield, 2008)
- Miss Austen Regrets* (2008)

This guide offers ideas and tips on how to teach the works of Jane Austen, using film as another avenue into her world. The guide has been organized so it can easily be adapted for various needs. Sections that explore universal themes—Novel to Film, the Art of Adaptation, Self-Discovery, Society and the Self, Satire and Irony—provide questions and activities that can be used for any of Austen's works. Before and After Viewing questions have been provided for each film so you can thoroughly explore whatever title you choose to teach. Other features include an essay about Austen's continued popularity, biographical information, and an exploration of the role of biography in an author's work. A list of selected resources and ordering information to purchase any of the Austen films (including an educator's discount) is also provided. 

\* *Pride and Prejudice* is a production of BBC Television and BBC Worldwide Americas, Inc. in association with A&E Networks. The Masterpiece broadcast of *Pride and Prejudice* is the first in the U.S. other than on A&E Television Networks.



Visit the MASTERPIECE Web Site

[pbs.org/masterpiece/austen](http://pbs.org/masterpiece/austen)

Subscribe to the MASTERPIECE newsletter to get the inside scoop on *Emma*, the MASTERPIECE Book & Film Club, and other upcoming MASTERPIECE programs.

# Why Jane? Why Now?

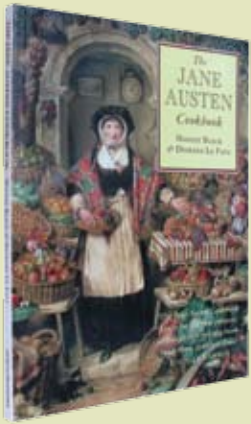
**A**STERPIECE brings the works of Jane Austen to television at a moment when interest in the author—both her works and her quiet, early-19<sup>th</sup> century life—may never have been greater. Since the 1940s, full-length film productions of Jane Austen’s novels have been turned out at a steady rate of three to seven per decade. Today, Austen “mania” is everywhere, from Hollywood features inspired by her life and works, to Jane’s image featured on the cover of *Newsweek*, to MySpace and YouTube. Her novels and books about her novels crowd the bestseller lists. Nearly two hundred years after the publication of *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen still has enormous appeal for contemporary readers and viewers. What accounts for the continuing popularity of Jane Austen? Why Jane, and why now?

At first glance—particularly for most high school students—Austen’s popularity is hard to fathom. Austen wrote about the problems and pressures of 19<sup>th</sup> century courtship and marriage. Action and adventure are limited to a walk in a rainstorm or a ride in an open carriage without a chaperone; powerful feelings and desires are expressed indirectly, if at all; conversation is a high art, flavored with ironic wit and the discussion of weather. Her characters’ behavior and life choices are dictated by standards and values that can seem utterly foreign in a world as rapidly changing as our own.

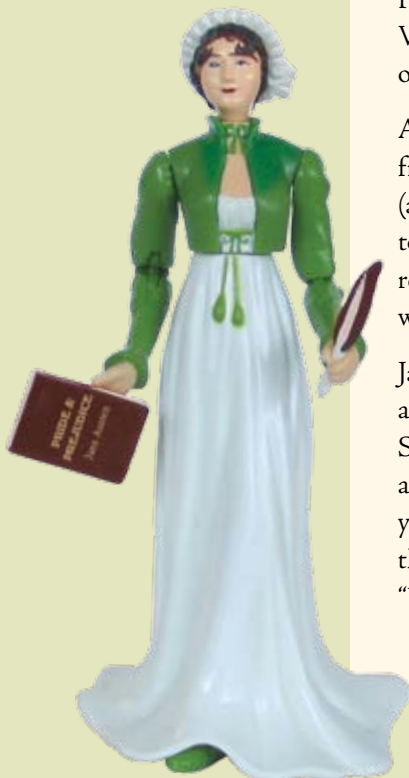
Perhaps modern readers and viewers continue to be drawn to Austen’s work because of the very limitations that may make us wary at first. The physical and social landscape within her work is restricted, but the field of themes, emotions, and even desires she explores there is deep and broad. How, her novels ask, does a person do the hard work of creating a good, happy, balanced life? Catherine Morland is a naïve girl with a fanciful imagination; how will she learn to distinguish reality from fantasy and come of age? What does it feel like to be Anne Elliot, disappointed by life before the age of twenty, and how will she find the courage to redeem the mistakes of her past? And why, we might ask Fanny Price, do love, respect, and affection not go to those who deserve them? Finally, all the novels ask a question that resonates today as powerfully as it did in Austen’s time: What chance do the needs of the heart and mind have in a world dominated by money? The world of Jane Austen’s novels may be small, but it is not simple.

Austen’s other great appeal is that spending time in her world is fun. Her world *is* different from ours, and the films and novels transport us there. We can travel through Regency England (approximately 1800–1820) as tourists, free to enjoy what is glittering and entertaining. Thanks to her deft sense of humor, we delight in her characters, with all their faults. We return home, remembering the pleasures of her world and think about how that world reflects upon our own, with its sharp differences and its subtle and surprising similarities.

Jane Austen first made her way onto standard U.S. high school and college reading lists because she is a great novelist. She remains there because she has proven herself to be a timeless one. Each generation, including the one that you are now teaching, “rediscovers” Austen. Chances are that at the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we will still be asking “Why Jane? Why Now?”



Books about all aspects of Jane Austen and her world are popular



Jane Austen “action” figure created in 2005



The Hartford Courant notes the appeal of Jane Austen

# Austen in the Classroom

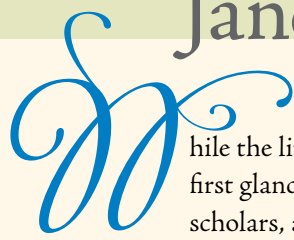
The broadcast *Emma* and other works of Austen opens the door for students to the world of Jane Austen. Using the films can ignite students' interest in and understanding of all six of Austen's novels. Try the following suggestions for using Austen novels and films in the English classroom and beyond.

- ⊗ **Compare the novel to the film.** If you traditionally teach an Austen novel, compare it to the MASTERPIECE film version. If you don't have time to show an entire film, watch selected scenes and compare them to the text. The "Art of Adaptation" section (pages 8–9) has specific suggestions to help you explore the advantages and disadvantages of translating fiction into a film.
- ⊗ **Mine the films for their interdisciplinary content.** Explore the history of the Napoleonic wars that sets up *Persuasion*, the culture and sociology of Regency England that limit the freedom of the Dashwood sisters in *Sense and Sensibility*, or the fashion and design on display in the scenes from Bath in *Northanger Abbey*.
- ⊗ **Pair the reading of one novel with the viewing of another.** If you don't have time to teach two Austen novels, you may want to pair a book and a film based on similarities in theme, such as:
  - ♦ Coming-of-Age: *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*
  - ♦ Wealth and Privilege: *Emma* and *Mansfield Park*
  - ♦ Achieving Balance: *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*
- ⊗ **Compare the viewing of an Austen film with a young adult novel.** For younger students, try Polly Shulman's *Enthusiasm*, about a pair of friends who go looking for their own Mr. Darcy (*Pride and Prejudice*), or Louise Plummer's *The Unlikely Romance of Kate Bjorkman*, a send-up of romance novels (*Northanger Abbey*).
- ⊗ **Pair the viewing of an Austen film with the reading of another 19<sup>th</sup> century work about women, society, and autonomy.** For older students try Henry James' *A Portrait of a Lady*, Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*, or Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*.
- ⊗ **Compare and contrast two Austen films.** Consider adaptation, direction, film techniques, performances, etc. Use activities and ideas from the "Novel to Film" section (pages 6–7) or use the MASTERPIECE *Film in the Classroom* guide, which can be viewed by selecting Learning Resources at [www.pbs.org/masterpiece](http://www.pbs.org/masterpiece).
- ⊗ **Compare a MASTERPIECE film to modernized adaptations,** such as *The Jane Austen Book Club*, *Clueless*, *Bride and Prejudice*, or *Bridget Jones's Diary* (be sure to preview these films to judge their appropriateness for use in your classroom). &#x26



Northanger Abbey's Catherine Morland writes to a friend

# Jane Austen's Life




While the literary art of Jane Austen is remarkable, the facts of her biography, at first glance, are not. The contrast has long intrigued Austen readers and Austen scholars, and interest in her life is today almost as keen as interest in her works.

Dating back to her own time, when Austen's first four novels were published anonymously, we have her letters (those her sister Cassandra did not destroy after her death), and *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, written by her nephew J.E. Austen-Leigh in 1869. What these sources reveal is that while Austen did lead the quiet life of an unmarried clergyman's daughter, she found early encouragement for her art within her family circle and a starting point for her novels in her personal and family history.

Born in 1775 to George and Cassandra Austen in the English village of Steventon, Jane Austen grew up in a highly literate family. Jane's father was an Oxford-educated clergyman and her mother was a humorous, aristocratic woman. Educated only briefly outside of her home, Jane Austen read freely in her father's library of 500 books, which left her better educated than most young girls of the time. While her family never anticipated she would be a published writer (not considered an appropriate profession for a young lady of her background), within the walls of their household she was encouraged to write. In this lively intellectual household the 15-year-old Jane Austen began writing her own novels; by age 23 she had completed the original versions of *Northanger Abbey*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Pride and Prejudice*. Her own delight in reading and her ironic mocking of its impact on young girls comes alive in *Northanger Abbey*.

After Austen's father died in 1805, Jane, her mother, and sister Cassandra lived in a small house provided by her then-wealthy brother Edward in the village of Chawton. When Jane Austen received a proposal from the wealthy brother of a close friend, for whom she felt no affection, she initially accepted him, only to turn him down the next day. This was a painful decision for her, as she understood deeply that marriage was the sole option women had for social mobility; she further understood the vulnerability of single women without family estates who depend on wealthy relatives for a home. This subject is at the heart of *Sense and Sensibility*.

Austen keenly observed the shifting of social class during her day. Two of her brothers were in the Royal British Navy and she saw first-hand the rise of naval officers in class-conscious British society. Those who returned from the Napoleonic wars with both wealth and notoriety were able to break through class barriers that were previously impenetrable. She wrote elegantly about this sea change in her last novel, *Persuasion*.

Jane Austen died on July 18, 1817, at age 41. She never wrote a memoir, sat for an interview, or recorded whether she had herself felt the joys and disappointments of love. The biographical facts may never adequately explain the quick wit, the sharp insight, and the deep emotional intelligence she brought to her novels. Perhaps that is impossible; it is likely that the novels will continue to transcend our understanding of where they came from. 

## Family and Money

As a keen observer of social class, Jane Austen translated the life choices made by her family into the conflicts at the heart of her novels. This is particularly true for money and its impact on families. The Austens were country gentry, and were accepted socially by wealthier families in the neighborhood, but they were not wealthy. They had enough to live on, and a few household servants, which made them the equivalent of middle class. Like Mr. Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice*, George Austen could give his daughters little to marry on, and had little property to leave to his sons. Jane Austen saw her beloved brother Edward adopted by a wealthier family, the Knights of Kent. As Austen biographer Park Honan notes in *Jane Austen: Her Life*, "The lasting, subtle effect of the adoption was to make [Jane Austen] more fully aware of how money, land, inheritance, and social advantage easily take precedence . . . over family love."




1873 engraving based on a drawing by  
Cassandra Austen

# Miss Austen Regrets

Little is known for certain about the romances in Jane Austen's own life. With some dramatic license, the docudrama *Miss Austen Regrets* speculatively explores why Jane Austen chose to stay unmarried and how she felt about that choice, painting a background that illuminates the choices Austen's heroines make in her novels.

Does biography matter? In the history of critical theory, the pendulum has swung back and forth on the use and relevance of a writer's biography in reading, appreciating, and understanding a work of fiction. Can you infer biography from the fiction (e.g., Austen *must* have been in love at some point!), and does knowing the biography make you a better reader of it? Or should the work stand on its own and be experienced without the interference of biographical information and influence?

*Miss Austen Regrets* is one interpretation of Jane Austen's life, but what else can students find out? After reading one of Austen's novels or viewing one of the films, students are just as likely to be interested by Austen's personal story as others have been. How did a sheltered "spinster aunt" come to write so intelligently about society, love, and longing? Was she a staid and quiet woman, a spirited rebel, or something in between? Jane Austen herself is still a riddle, and *Miss Austen Regrets* offers one possible answer. 

Single women have a dreadful propensity for being poor, which is one very strong argument in favour of matrimony.

*Jane Austen*

letter to Fanny Knight, 1817

## Before Viewing

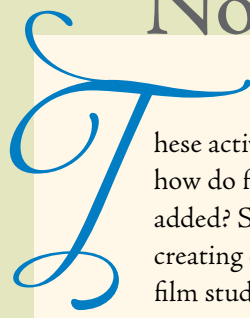
1. Ask students to "take a stand" by writing a few sentences defending or refuting the following statement: *To write convincing fiction about a subject such as loss, love, or poverty you must have experienced it yourself.* At the front of the classroom, identify one end of an imaginary line on the floor as "agree," the other end as "disagree." Invite students to come forward one at a time and literally take a stand along that line to show how strongly they agree or disagree. Ask them to defend their position. As students hear their classmates' arguments, they are free to move their position if their own opinion shifts. At the end of the activity, discuss how students felt.
2. If you saw a magazine at a checkout counter featuring the life story of your favorite musician, athlete or actor, would you buy it? Why? What does biographical


information tell you, and is it important to understanding the work or performance of this person? Why or why not?

## After Viewing

1. Why do you think the film is titled *Miss Austen Regrets*? Does Jane regret that she did not marry? What did that choice cost her? What did she gain? What pressures did she have to resist? Why do you think Jane Austen, as you come to know her in *Miss Austen Regrets*, married off all of her heroines in her novels?
2. In the film, Jane points out to Fanny several times that life and fiction are not the same. Let her debate the point with her own characters! Have students stage an Oprah Winfrey-style talk show featuring Jane Austen and two or three of her characters as guests. Take questions from the "studio audience."

# Novel to Film



These activities ask students to investigate the possibilities and problems of adaptation: how do filmmakers bring a novel to the screen? What may be lost, and what can be added? Studying adaptation drives students from the film into the text and back again, creating opportunities to think about the language and structure of both. For more on film study and the language of film, see MASTERPIECE'S *Film in the Classroom: A Guide for Teachers*, available under Learning Resources at [www.pbs.org/masterpiece](http://www.pbs.org/masterpiece). 

## The Missing Narrator

Turning a novel into a screenplay is not as easy as pulling dialogue from the pages of a book. In Austen, as with most novelists, the narrator's words supplement dialogue in reporting action, establishing setting and tone, giving voice to unspoken thoughts and emotions, all of which are important for developing character and advancing the plot.

Screenwriters and filmmakers must ask themselves if the work done by narration in the novel they are adapting is worth saving. If so, they must use the elements of film in order

to transfer to the screen what the narrator provides on the page.

1. Using a chart (see below), take the opening of the film you viewed as a case study. Look carefully at the narrated passages in the first few chapters of the original text. Create a list detailing what these pieces of narration establish for the reader. Do they describe setting, introduce a character, give background information, or identify the characters' conflicts and concerns?

Now re-view the first few scenes in the film that correspond to the chapters you studied. As you watch, notice how the information you recorded while reading is visible on the screen. Try to identify how the pieces of narration are communicated to the viewer in the narrator's absence: in the locations and sets, in the costumes, through newly written dialogue? In the facial expressions or physical actions of the actors, in the way they look and speak to one another? Take notes as you watch.

2. Do you feel the filmmakers have adapted the beginning of the novel you read effectively? Why or why not? What aspects were successful and what did the film version lack? Using their notes as evidence, have students debate whether or not the beginning of the film is a faithful adaptation of the novel.



Mary and Henry Crawford in *Mansfield Park*

## Comparing Novel to Film

Note how narration comes to life on film.

	Setting	Characters	Background	Costumes	Dialogue
Film					
Text					

## Point of View

Whose story gets told, and how is it told? What is the reader or viewer shown, or allowed to see and know? In Austen's novels, we are only present in "live" scenes when the heroine is present; any other action is simply reported, without dialogue. For instance, we never see Lucy Steele alone with Edward Ferrars in *Sense and Sensibility*, or what Mr. Darcy is up to when he is in London in *Pride and Prejudice*. Even with the help of the omniscient narrator's commentary, our point of view is limited.

1. Think about films you've seen in which every scene is "live" rather than narrated (unless there is a voice-over narration, as in *Northanger Abbey*). If you were adapting Austen for the screen, would you maintain the original restricted point of view, or would you deliver "live" the scenes and events that are only referred to or narrated in the novel? Why? Did the Austen film you watched present a single character's point of view, or multiple points of view, including "live" scenes in which the main character does not appear? Was it a good choice for this film, and why? Share specific examples to support your answer.

Now try a more radical point of view shift. What would the opening of this film look like if it were constructed from the point of view of the central *male* character? Create a storyboard sketching or describing the first series of images you would see. Then write a short script to accompany it. You can find a helpful storyboard template at [www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/learningresources/fic\\_storyboard.pdf](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/learningresources/fic_storyboard.pdf).

2. Readers who are very familiar with Austen's novels will find scenes, subplots, and even characters necessarily deleted in the film adaptations. More controversially, you may also notice new scenes added to the films. Watch one or more of the newly invented scenes (box right). Each offers an alternate point of view. After viewing, write down as many reasons as you can to explain why the screenwriter and the filmmakers made this choice. Do you think it was a good one?

3. A screenwriter who creates an adaptation of a novel often feels responsible for capturing the best of what the novel is. However, he or she must also feel free to make changes in the adaptation process if the film hopes to be a successful work of art in its own right. Would Jane Austen understand and approve of what the filmmakers have done with her novels? Write a letter of explanation from the screenwriter to Austen, explaining and defending some of the choices made in adapting her novel to the screen. Then imagine and compose the letter Austen would write in response.

### Added Scenes

- ✧ *Sense and Sensibility*: The opening scene: Willoughby and Eliza's daughter.
- ✧ *Pride and Prejudice*: Darcy at the fencing studio in London, followed by his arrival at Pemberley, where Darcy dives into the lake.
- ✧ *Emma (1996)*: Emma and her father pass by poor, working families in their coach.
- ✧ *Northanger Abbey*: Catherine's dreams and daydreams.
- ✧ *Persuasion*: Opening sequence in which Anne is directing the closing up of the Kellynch Hall; Captain Wentworth watching Anne play the piano; Wentworth and Harville walking the cliffs at Lyme, discussing Louisa.
- ✧ *Mansfield Park*: Mary and Henry Crawford's conversations as they walk toward Mansfield Park for their first visit.

#### NOTE:

Some of the films contain mature themes, images, and language. Be sure to preview any film before showing it to your class.

#### Off-Air Taping Rights

Educators may tape *Persuasion*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma*, *Mansfield Park*, and *Northanger Abbey* and use the films in the classroom for one year after broadcast. Educators may not tape and use the film *Pride and Prejudice*.

# The Art of Adaptation

## In Focus: *Northanger Abbey*

The following excerpts from the novel and the script for *Northanger Abbey* show how Andrew Davies interpreted Austen's work. Watching the same scene from the film (either from the DVD or on the MASTERPIECE Web site at [pbs.org/masterpiece/austen](http://pbs.org/masterpiece/austen)) gives students a chance to see the entire process of adaptation. The following activities will help students analyze the benefits and compromises that adaptation can bring.

1. Ask students to read Andrew Davies comments about adapting Austen's work (below). Then have students read the excerpts from the novel and from Davies' script (right). Next watch the clip from the film. How does Davies use the screenplay to emphasize and dramatize his interpretation? Ask students to identify what Davies has changed, added or deleted. Why do you think Davies made each choice that he did, and what is the effect of each?
2. Do you think Davies succeeds in making *Northanger Abbey* a bit like an "American teenage movie"? Does he make it more "fun"? Write a movie review that explicitly discusses the differences between the novel and the film, especially the fact that Catherine's fantasies come to life in the film.
3. Davies built the dialogue in Example #2 from a slender thread in Austen's narration. Was this scene an important addition? Why or why not?



Catherine Morland and Henry Tilney

## Andrew Davies, Screenwriter

Andrew Davies is the screenwriting genius behind some of MASTERPIECE's best-loved productions. He has adapted four of the six Austen films that will air in *The Complete Jane Austen: Pride and Prejudice, Northanger Abbey, Sense and Sensibility, and Emma*.



An Andrew Davies screenplay has a distinctive signature. He sees his job as more than translating a written page into a shooting script—he aims to interpret the work for modern audiences and help viewers experience what he thinks is most engaging and most relevant about these classics of British literature.

In a recent interview, Davies described his work on the Austen novels and his adaptation of *Northanger Abbey* in particular. His comments offer useful insight into the art of adaptation.

**On Austen:** *All the six novels are love stories. And that's something that never goes out of date. In a way they've got plots like the track—all the basic stories are in all kinds of trashy romantic novels. Young girl who has disadvantages, things in her way, gets a man who's sort of probably rich, handsome, loving, etc., etc. Within that, though, Jane Austen manages to do it in a way that doesn't insult our intelligence. It's witty. It's*

*ingenious. The plots are believable. The obstacles seem real and the outset insurmountable. You get surprises. You get reversals. She's technically just such a brilliant writer in terms of pacing and plotting. And that's just something that never goes out of date.*

**On Adaptation:** *I try very hard not to think about what Austen purists or fans of the books are going to say. I am very consciously representing the books for a contemporary audience, trying to bring out the themes of the scenes and the undercurrents in the books that most speak to us today.*

**On *Northanger Abbey*:** *[Northanger Abbey] has a bit of resonance with those American teenage movies in which terrible things...happen. So I was thinking let's make it a little bit like this, and let's dramatize Catherine's fantasies.... That's, I suppose, the fun bit of it. In a way, it does have a very serious point to it because she imagines that General Tilney is really kind of a monster who has murdered his wife. But she discovers that the truth is rather more subtle, but no more pleasant really, that General Tilney is a cold and selfish man who more or less wore his wife to death with his cold nature, that he married her for her fortune.... And so the lesson, in a way, is that the crimes we are most likely to come up against are the crimes of the human heart, which don't carry death penalties.*

## Example #1: Catherine's Imagination

### From the novel Volume I, Chapter 3

"I see what you think of me," said [Tilney] gravely – "I shall make but a poor figure in your journal tomorrow."

"My journal!" [replied Catherine]

"Yes, I know exactly what you will say: Friday went to the Lower Rooms; wore my sprigged muslin robe with blue trimmings—plain black shoes—appeared to much advantage; but was strangely harassed by a queer, half-witted man, who would make me dance with him, and distressed me by his nonsense."

"Indeed I shall say no such thing."

"Shall I tell you what you ought to say?"

"If you please."

"I danced with a very agreeable young man, introduced by Mr. King; had a great deal of conversation with him—seems a most extraordinary genius—hope I may know more of him. *That*, madam, is what I *wish* you to say."

...

They danced again; and, when the assembly closed, parted, on the lady's side at least, with a strong inclination for continuing the acquaintance. Whether she thought of him so much, while she drank her warm wine and water, and prepared herself for bed, as to dream of him when there, cannot be ascertained; but I hope it was no more than in a slight slumber, or a morning doze at most, for if it be true...that no young lady can be justified in falling in love before the gentleman's love is declared, it must be very improper that a young lady should dream of a gentleman before the gentleman is first known to have dreamt of her.

### From the screenplay:

INTERIOR. BALLROOM. NIGHT.

The dance comes to an end, and let's say it was the last dance. People are moving off the dance floor.

HENRY: So what will you write in your journal tonight? "Friday, went to the Lower



*Isabella befriends Catherine*

Rooms, wore my sprigged muslin dress with blue trimmings and look very pretty though I say so myself—dance with one man and was stared at by another much more handsome..."

CATHERINE (laughing, but flattered):

Indeed I shall say no such thing!

HENRY: Then what will you say?

She's not sure what she'll say—certainly nothing she'd be able to tell him now.

CATHERINE: Perhaps I don't keep a journal at all

INTERIOR. PULTENEY STREET  
LODGINGS. CATHERINE'S  
BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Catherine is in bed writing in her journal. We don't need to see what she is writing, but it's about Henry, and then she snaps the journal shut and blows out the candle and settles down.

EXTERIOR. GOTHIC RUIN. NIGHT.  
(CATHERINE'S DREAM)

A shattering clap of thunder—lightning illuminates the lowering walls of the Abbey, as Catherine clinging for dear life to Henry Tilney gallops away pursued by a man in a mask. Another flash of lightning illuminates John Thorpe as the attacker, who smiles devilishly and draws his sword. The men fight, Catherine swoons.

## Example #2: Catherine and Henry meet at Fullerton, her parents' home.

### From the novel Volume II, Chapter 15

They began their walk, and Mrs. Morland was not entirely mistaken in [Henry's] object in wishing it. Some explanation on his father's account he had to give; but his first purpose was to explain himself, and before they reached Mr. Allen's ground he had done it so well, that Catherine did not think it would ever be repeated too often. She was assured of his affection; and that heart in return was solicited, which, perhaps, they pretty equally knew was already entirely his own.

### From the screenplay:

EXTERIOR. MORLAND HOUSE. DAY.  
Catherine and Henry turn and begin speaking almost at once.

CATHERINE: I am so ashamed of what I said—what I thought—however badly you think of me I deserve it –

HENRY: No—no—it is I should apologize—nothing you said or thought could justify the way you have been treated—

CATHERINE: But you were angry with me, and rightly so—

HENRY: I was angry with you—but that is long past. Your imagination might be overactive—but your instinct was true. Our mother did suffer grievously, and at the hands of our father. There are more ways of breaking a woman's spirit than starving her or locking her in an attic. You remember—I spoke of a kind of vampirism?


CATHERINE: Yes.

HENRY: Perhaps it was stupid of me to express it so—but we did watch him drain the life out of her with his coldness and cruelty. He married her for her money, you see—she thought it was for love. It was a long time before she knew his heart was cold. No vampires, no blood: the worst crimes are crimes of the heart.

CATHERINE: But it was stupid and wicked of me to imagine such terrible things as I did.

Her girlish earnestness makes him smile.

# Self-Discovery

A few chapters or a few minutes into a Jane Austen novel or a film, a reader or viewer can make a pretty reliable guess as to how the story will end: The heroine will get married and live happily ever after. But if these works are so predictable, why do we read them, and why do new film versions continue to be released year after year? It's about the journey. In these films, Austen's heroines all travel a path toward the end-of-story wedding that requires them to learn and discover truths about themselves—who they are, where they came from, and what they truly need, before they can see where they are going. 

## Family and Identity: Who Am I?

1. Within the first five minutes of most Austen films, we see the heroine surrounded by her family. Replay an early family scene for students several times and ask them to observe carefully how the heroine compares to each member of her family, including physical appearance, clothing, actions, and speech. Does the heroine stand apart? How? Can you tell how she feels about each family member? Have students write a diary entry from the main character's point of view, describing her thoughts and feelings about her family based on the film.
2. Austen's heroines get fairy-tale endings, but like the heroines in most fairy tales, they don't have mothers who can help or guide them. Explore the effect of this storytelling choice on the heroine's journey to self-knowledge and happiness with a "what if" game. In small groups, ask students to brainstorm:
  - a) *What if...* Mrs. Bennett were a wise and compassionate woman with an intellect like her daughter Lizzie's in *Pride and Prejudice*?
  - b) *What if...* Mrs. Dashwood were someone to whom Elinor confided all her thoughts and feelings in *Sense and Sensibility*?
  - c) *What if...* Fanny's mother sent her good advice in weekly letters mailed to *Mansfield Park*?
  - d) *What if...* Emma Woodhouse or Anne Elliot had been raised by understanding and loving mothers in *Emma* and *Persuasion*?

- e) *What if...* Catherine Morland's mother had traveled with her to *Northanger Abbey*?

Have each group write and present a revised plot summary for the film based on the "what if" exercise.

3. In the absence of effective mothers, do the fathers or father figures in the films fill the void and help the heroines along their path to self-discovery and happiness? Ask students to identify a film or television show they have seen, or a novel they have read, in which the main character has a wise and loving father or father figure, one who does a good job of helping the hero or heroine learn who she is or what he can become.

Have students imagine a scene between this ideal father figure and the father in the Austen film they viewed, and write a dialogue between these two characters or improvise the scene. What should the Austen father understand about the heroine that he does not? What should he be doing to guide and support her? How might the Austen character explain and defend his actions and choices?

## Love and Self-Knowledge: Who Will I Love?

1. What does the main character in the film you viewed learn about herself over the course of the film? Ask students to create "before and after" portraits to explore this question—one of the character when the film opens and one when it ends. Offer students a range of forms:

- a) a pair of word portraits: a list of words describing the character arranged into a figure or design
- b) a pair of original sketches, drawings, or paintings
- c) a pair of descriptive paragraphs
- d) a pair of popular songs, familiar poems, or found images that capture the spirit or outlook of the character at each point in time

In small groups, examine the finished portraits side by side. How do they differ? Ask students to identify the experiences or moments of understanding that are responsible for the change the portraits capture. How did these changes make it possible for the main character to find happiness and love?

2. The path to love, in Austen films, is a maze. Challenge students to create a graphic representation of the path the characters

travel in the film by drawing a maze that leads to the happy ending. Wrong turns, dead ends, or blockages can be labeled or illustrated to represent desires, characters, duties, or temptations that lead the characters in the wrong direction for a time.

3. Individually, or as a class, have students create a list of novels and films they are familiar with that tell the love story of two people finding each other. Which ones feature main characters who must come to terms with their own family, its strengths and its failings, while on their journey to love and happiness? Looking over the entire list, how common are the themes of identity and self-discovery in love stories?

*A woman, especially,  
if she have [sic] the misfortune  
of knowing anything,  
should conceal it as well as she can.*

*Jane Austen,  
Northanger Abbey*



Catherine Morland and her brother, James Morland.

# Persuasion

## Before Viewing

1. Ask students what they do when they have a difficult decision to make. Do they seek out advice? Have students recall a time when they had to make such a decision and create a diagram that shows the steps they took. They should include the people they discussed their decision with, note why they did so with each of them, and what their contribution was. Was all this consultation helpful? Is there anyone in their lives whose advice they would take unconditionally, no matter what others said or what uncertainties they still felt?
2. At what age should people marry? Set up a debate in your classroom. Have one team support the position that no one should marry before they are 25 years old and have the other team refute this notion. Give students



Lady Russell advises Anne

time to practice their arguments before the debate begins. As a class, discuss some of the factors couples consider when making a decision about the timing of marriage.

3. Like many of Austen's heroines, Anne Elliot, the central character in *Persuasion*, learns and grows during the course of the novel. On the screen, her slow transformation from a passive girl to a more independent, mature woman is observable not only in her increasingly assertive speech and behavior, but in her physical confidence, energy, and movement. As students watch the film, ask them to make note of scenes when Anne's physical manner changes.

## After Viewing

1. Discuss Anne Elliot's transformation in *Persuasion*. What circumstances force Anne to come out of her shell? What are the scenes in the book and/or film that show this transformation?
2. Consider the role Sir Walter Elliot plays in his daughter's life. Anthony Head, the actor who plays Sir Walter in *Persuasion*, describes him as "the most objectionable man, I think, in any of the novels. He's bigoted. He's extremely class-conscious and he's a fop. He spent all the family money on clothes and partying. He really detests...his daughter Anne, who is actually the only sane human being in the family." Write a journal entry from Anne's point of view describing her feelings about the decisions her father has made that have affected her life.
3. When Anne and Wentworth first see each other again, what are the barriers that stand between them? Which ones are caused by the strict codes of the society in which they live, and which are more universal? Would a modern-day couple have as much difficulty? Divide the class into pairs and have students act out the scenes in which Anne and Wentworth meet. Have some groups act it out as it appears in the book and film, and have other groups pretend they are reuniting in modern times.
4. *Persuasion* begins with Anne leaving her ancestral home unmarried and unsure of her place in the world. It ends with her triumphant return. As you watch the film, consider what Anne must accomplish and learn in order to return to her home. Using the library and the internet, choose five books for Anne, thinking about what she learned during the film. Why did you choose the nonfiction or fiction books you did? What would Anne have learned from them?

# Sense and Sensibility

## Before Viewing

1. Why are siblings so different? Ask students to think about siblings they know whose personalities, habits, temperaments or interests are very different. Without using names, have students create a two-column chart on which they list words that describe each sibling. Where possible, list words that show how the two siblings are similar or different. Ask for volunteers to present the siblings they wrote about. What factors do students think account for the differences between the siblings? Is it innate personality, birth order, or other factors? Remind them to keep these ideas in mind as they watch or read *Sense and Sensibility*.

2. What are the modern rules of dating? Reading or watching the film of *Sense and Sensibility* shows that in Austen's time there were very strict rules of courtship for those of her class. Most of these restrictions are far-removed from the way people date and love today. What are "the rules" of dating and courtship among teenagers in America? As a group, discuss these rules and make a list of them. Who makes these rules and what is their purpose? Are they too restrictive? Are they too liberal? Should they be questioned or accepted? Why?

## After Viewing

1. For this activity you will need a copy of the book *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices* by Paul Fleischman (Harper Trophy, 1992). A poem for two voices shows two different points of view and is meant to be read aloud by two people. The words sometimes overlap or stand alone, but together the two people

create a beautiful sound. Since the Dashwood sisters are so close and yet so different, they make good subjects for a poem for two voices. Arrange students into pairs and ask them to read aloud an example of a poem for two voices. Once they have practiced with the format, ask each student to write a poem for two voices about the Dashwood sisters. Make sure both Elinor's and Marianne's perspectives are represented. When all of the poems are written have students read them aloud.



Elinor and  
Marianne Dashwood

2. Students will create a picture called "The Dos and Don'ts of Telling Secrets," based on the characters in *Sense and Sensibility*. Have students identify the secret or secrets each of the following characters holds and/or asks someone else to hold: Edward Ferrars, Lucy Steele, Willoughby, Colonel Brandon, John Dashwood, Elinor, Marianne, Robert Ferrars. Ask students to draw a face for each character and include a speech bubble in which they write a "do" or a "don't" for each character.

3. What would happen if Elinor and Marianne were suddenly transported into modern times? Given the personalities, strengths, weaknesses, and skills these women display throughout *Sense and Sensibility*, what would students imagine each character doing in modern times and why? Ask students to create a social network-type Web page (something that might appear on Facebook or MySpace) that includes details about Marianne or Elinor's living, working, and romantic situations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Where so many hours have  
been spent in convincing myself  
that I am right, is there not  
some reason to fear I may be wrong?

Jane Austen,  
*Sense and Sensibility*

# Society and the Self

**I**f the first challenge for Jane Austen's main characters is learning about the self, the second is learning how to navigate in, through, and around the complex social and cultural landscape in which they live and love. Austen neither wholly accepted nor wholly rejected the standards of behavior, social structure, and values of her time. But in her novels she explores how these standards and influences can be either harmful or helpful to individuals and to society. The following activities can be used to explore society's influence in the context of both Austen's world and ours. &#x2639;

## Life in Regency England

In order to understand the way characters behave in Jane Austen's world, students will need to familiarize themselves with some of the realities and assumptions that governed behavior in early 19<sup>th</sup> century England. Austen's novels concern themselves with the landed gentry in England whose social significance derived primarily from their inherited property, the history of their families, and their embodiment of idealized morals and manners. This social class, which was lower in prestige than the nobility or aristocracy, has no exact parallel in modern American society. Crucial for Austen personally, as well as for her characters, was the fact that, for both legal and customary reasons, wealth was not shared equally among all the members of gentry families. Women were often obliged to seek financial security through prosperous marriages, even at the cost of their own happiness. Austen was especially interested in the behavior of those characters who, for reasons of birth or chance, find themselves on the margins of the gentry, either clinging to former respectability or hoping to elevate themselves into this social class. Social conventions governed every aspect of gentry life, from everyday courtesies to the professions considered suitable for men (only being a governess or teacher was considered marginally suitable for a gentlewoman). Use the following activities to learn about Austen's world.



Sir Walter Elliot and his daughters in *Persuasion*

**1.** As a class, have students create *A Survival Guide to Austen's World*. Organize students into small groups and ask them to select a topic from the Survival List. Using the Resources on page 22, ask students to find out everything they can about their topic and create a page, with text and illustrations, that describes the 19<sup>th</sup> century standards related to their topic. (For example, under the topic of Social Calls, one rule is: "A lady may not call upon any gentleman.") The page should also include specific examples from an Austen film that relates to their topic. Have each group present their page. Once all of the pages have been presented they can be compiled into a class book.

## 19<sup>th</sup> Century Society

**Wealth:** Inherited wealth is superior to wealth earned through business or a profession.

**Social class:** You should remain in the social class you are born into, only socialize with those of the same class, but treat those "below" you with respect, not contempt.

### Courtship and marriage:

Unmarried men and women must always be chaperoned. Courtship is formal and physical contact is limited. Marriage is an economic arrangement to preserve or increase wealth in families.

**Gender roles:** Men's and women's roles are strictly proscribed along gender lines, from education and work to property rights and speech.

**Parents and family:** Parents demand and receive deference and respect. They have a strong voice in the choice of marriage partners.

### Survival List

Arts  
Coming Out into Society  
(For women, being presented  
as eligible for marriage.)  
Courtship and Marriage  
Dancing  
Education  
Etiquette and Introductions  
Fashion and Taste  
Food  
Military Service  
The Rules for Social Calls

2. Imagine that you (or one of her characters) were suddenly transported into Austen's world (Regency England), and she, into yours. File a newspaper or television news report that focuses on what is positive about her world. What would she like about the rules, social customs and values she finds in yours?

### Austen and Society

Through her characters, Jane Austen alternately defends and criticizes the social customs of her time. As she writes, Austen establishes that certain attitudes are fixed and cannot be ignored. In fact, those characters in her novels that challenge convention end up disgraced and unhappy. At other times, through witty comments and actions, her characters reveal the absurdity of some of the social customs. Use the list of statements [box, page 14] to help students explore how important wealth, status, marriage, and love were to Austen as expressed through her characters.

1. How does Austen criticize the society in which her characters live? Which of her characters openly object to or violate its conventions? How and when do they do it, and what is the result? Living in today's world, would Austen's characters still encounter the same problems?



Lady Bertram, Mrs. Norris, and Pug of Mansfield Park

2. How does Austen defend the society in which her characters live? Which of her characters violate standards with negative results? Some examples might be Frank Churchill, Mary Crawford, or Mr. Elton. Which of Austen's characters defend a rule when others violate it (e.g., Fanny, Mr. Knightley)? Name the standard and explain why the character thinks it is worth upholding.

3. Social standards and codes of conduct are always changing. Compare the social rules from Austen's time to those in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Interview a parent or a grandparent and ask them what rules they had to follow in terms of dating, table manners, modes of dress, marriage proposals, or any other societal rules that appear in Austen's world. Ask: What were the expectations for dating and marriage? How were they expected to treat their parents? Has social class defined or limited their experiences? Have students share the interviews with one another. As a class, discuss how society has changed and in what ways it has remained the same. Where would students rather be: in Regency England, 20<sup>th</sup> century America or 21<sup>st</sup> century America?

# Emma

## Before Viewing

1. Jane Austen is famous for her novels' first lines, especially in *Pride and Prejudice*: "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife." The reader immediately knows the subject of the novel. What does the first line of *Emma* tell us? Ask students to read it and predict what the film and/or novel will be about.
2. Like many Austen novels, *Emma* tells the story of how a character learns to see herself, others, and her relationships more clearly. While viewing, ask students to record the moments when Emma has a revelation, small or large, when she suddenly "sees" what she had been blind to before. Tell students they will be using these notes for an activity after viewing.



Emma and Mr. Knightley

## After Viewing

1. Because of the family she was born into, Emma enjoys high social status, power and influence. She is also clever, fun loving, full of energy, and a loving aunt and daughter. But when we meet her, her major occupation is matchmaking, which leads her to meddle with people's lives and do harm, rather than good. Why doesn't Emma use her talents and good fortune for something else? Ask students, Is Emma to blame, or is it her circumstances? Does Emma's position in the world give her freedom and opportunity, or does it limit her choices? Have students compare her to other characters, such as male characters or to women of different levels of wealth and social standing. How does Emma compare?



Mr. Woodhouse

2. The Emma we know at the end of the novel has traveled a great emotional distance from the young woman we meet in the opening scenes. How did she get there? Drawing upon the notes taken while viewing, ask students to create a cartoon strip to show Emma's journey. Students will generate a series of drawings that show significant events in the story and add a caption explaining each scene. Create a display of student work.
3. Explore the role of Mr. Knightley. Have them answer the following questions:
  - a) What does Knightley see and understand that Emma does not?
  - b) What values and ideas does Knightley stand for?
  - c) "You hear nothing but truth from me," Knightley tells Emma. What "truths" does he tell her?

The final "truth" Emma discovers is that she loves him; marriage to Mr. Knightley is the reward at the end of her learning curve. Is he too good to be true? Is he too good for Emma?

# Pride and Prejudice

## Before Viewing

**1.** The title of Jane Austen's first draft of *Pride and Prejudice* was *First Impressions*. Take a quick "yes or no" classroom poll with a show of hands: When you meet someone new, are your first impressions likely to prove accurate? Count and post the results of the poll and use it as a springboard into discussion. What are first impressions based upon? Make a list and then discuss the value or reliability of the items on the list. Do we ever meet someone new without prejudging him or her in some way? Is it possible not to?

**2.** *Pride and Prejudice* is set in a world in which money and social class determine, among many things, who has power, who is respected, and whom people marry. Is that statement true today or not?

## After Viewing

**1.** What is Elizabeth's "first impression" of Darcy? What information does she base her impression upon?

**2.** After Elizabeth reads the letter Darcy writes her, she tells Jane, "til that moment, I never knew myself." Similarly, when Elizabeth

rejects Darcy, he begins to see himself differently as well. What does each learn? Is it true that the better we know ourselves, the better we become at seeing other people? Why? Ask students if they have ever experienced this themselves.

**3.** When confronted by Lady Catherine near the end of the film, Elizabeth declares herself Darcy's equal, even though their family incomes are far from equal: "He is a gentleman, I am a gentleman's daughter." Based upon your viewing, what do you think Austen's view was of the class system of her time? What aspects of the system does she challenge? What does she seem to accept?

**4.** In what ways is Elizabeth out of place within her own family? In what ways does the family she was born into limit what she can do with her "lively mind"? How does she feel about her mother, father, younger sisters? What do Darcy and Pemberly represent to Elizabeth? Ask students to select a scene from the novel or film in which Elizabeth must cope with her family and write a monologue for her. What is Elizabeth thinking and feeling at that moment and why?

# Satire and Irony

If some readers are drawn to Jane Austen for her compelling love stories, there are as many who read and reread her for the satire and irony that are woven into them. Like most forms of comedy, satire relies on exaggeration. Satire brings human weakness, ignorance, and cruelty into the light and lets us laugh at them. We easily recognize foolishness in the exaggerated characters the writer creates, and when satire works well, as in Austen's work, we recognize our own occasional foolishness as well.

At the heart of the appeal of Austen's work is her ability to blend drama, light comedy, and sharp satire, a combination she introduced to the English novel, paving the way for writers from Dickens in the Victorian era to J.K. Rowling in our own.

*It is certain that [Jane Austen] by her own artistic talent made interesting what thousands of superficially similar people would have made dull."*

*J.K. Chesterton*  
1922

Irony is about reversal: What we think should be, is not; what we expect to happen does not; what someone says is the opposite of what he or she means. Playful, verbal irony is not difficult to spot in Austen's work. Less humorous, and more deeply buried, is the dramatic irony that seems to show the world as "upside down," at least when the story begins. &

1. Read the following definition of satire aloud: *Satire is a literary work that ridicules its subject through the use of techniques such as exaggeration, reversal, incongruity, and/or parody in order to make a comment or criticism about it.* Explore with students why many satires on television today are animations (*Family Guy*, *The Simpsons*). Why is animation a good vehicle for satire? What do we mean when we call a



Anne Elliot in *Persuasion*

character "cartoonish"? Are Austen's satirical characters "cartoonish"? Would the Austen film you viewed work well as an animated film or a graphic novel? Why or why not? Experiment by choosing a scene from the film and creating a satirical cartoon featuring a character or characters drawn directly from Austen or based upon her characters.


2. Name and list each of the characters in the film you viewed that are satirized in some way. (Some of Austen's most satirized characters are Mr. Collins in *Pride and Prejudice*, John Thorpe in *Northanger Abbey*, Mr. Elliot in *Persuasion*, and Mrs. Elton in *Emma*.) Write the names on index cards and distribute them to volunteers who will then leave the room and re-enter "in character," using gesture, costume, monologue,

*Verbal Irony:* speech in which what is said is the opposite of what is meant

*Dramatic Irony:* when the reader or audience understands more about the events of a story than the character in the story.

or other clues to the character's identity. Students will guess who the character is. How did students make the identification? How much does Austen exaggerate her characters' traits and behaviors? What attitude, behavior, or value is she taking aim at through her satire?

3. Ask students to identify several instances of dramatic irony in the Jane Austen work they are studying. Use the evidence they gather to stage a "mock trial" of Austen on the charge of the use of irony, calling both characters and "expert detective witnesses" to present evidence. Replay for students the first five minutes of the film and then ask students to detect dramatic irony. Ask students to identify "what's wrong with this picture?" Look for visual clues as well as the characters' speech, clothing, and mannerisms. Ask students to answer the following questions:

- ⊗ Are there values that characters say they believe in, but do not follow?
- ⊗ Are there characters who are lower in social class who seem to have better values or strength of character than those above them in wealth and social standing?
- ⊗ What truths about characters or their situation are hidden in plain sight?
- ⊗ Ask students to recall the events that follow in the rest of the film. Are any ironies exposed or righted by the end?
- ⊗ Is there anything that remains ironically "upside down" even after the happy romantic wedding? 



## Jane Austen on YouTube

Jane Austen has made it into the digital age! Use the following article *Austen on YouTube* from *The New York Times* to find short films on YouTube about Austen novels and films. ([www.nytimes.com/2007/07/29/movies/29webjame.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/29/movies/29webjame.html)). Many of these have been created by high school students. Students will find everything from Austen-related music videos and montages built with clips from the films to remakes of movie "trailers," such as *Pride and Prejudice* as a tale set in the African savannah. The YouTube films can be used in the classroom in fun and instructive ways:

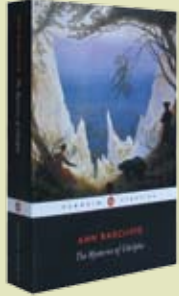
- ⊗ as an introduction to Austen and the period in which the films are set
- ⊗ as artifacts of the current Austen "mania"
- ⊗ as examples of satire: students can identify which films are satirical, and why
- ⊗ as explorations of themes: what does the selected music emphasize or celebrate about Austen?

Invite students to select and share their favorites, and to make and post their own videos as a supplementary activity or a culminating project.

As always, when using the Internet with students preview sites to be sure they are appropriate for your classroom.

# Northanger Abbey

## Before Viewing



The Mysteries of Udolpho  
by Ann Radcliffe

1. The gothic novel, a literary genre that originated in England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, features mysterious settings, unexplained or supernatural events, and an atmosphere of horror or dread. *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, a gothic novel by Ann Radcliffe, published in 1794, is the favorite book of Catherine Morland, the main character in *Northanger Abbey*. Modern horror fiction and films are the descendents of this tradition. Ask students if they are fans of the horror genre. Can they explain its appeal? Why do they think people read these books, and watch these films? What emotional or intellectual needs do these works satisfy?
2. Gothic novels were the pop culture of Jane Austen's time. Foreshadowing debates in our own time, parents and educators worried about the effect this new cultural form would have on young people. What forms of popular culture worry parents and educators today? As a class, make a list. Next to each item or name, note what the older generation sees as the possible negative influence.
3. In *Northanger Abbey*, Catherine leaves her family and travels to Bath, where she makes new friends in a completely unfamiliar

environment. Is it easy or difficult to make good choices about new friends in this kind of situation? How do new friendships develop, and which ones last? Keep these things in mind as you watch the film.

## After Viewing

1. How does Catherine's reading of gothic novels affect her thinking and her behavior? Do you think that Austen exaggerates the influence of Catherine's reading? Return to the list the class created of pop culture. Are people today influenced as strongly by popular culture as Catherine is? How?
2. Why is Catherine unable to see that Isabella Thorpe is not a true friend? What else does she fail to see and understand? Identify and compare the dangers and villains Catherine *imagines* with the *real* dangers and villains she fails to recognize or comprehend.
3. Near the end of the film, Henry tells Catherine, "The worst crimes are the crimes of the heart." Who are the "criminals" in *Northanger Abbey*? What motivates their actions? Does Austen condemn the connection between money and marriage that was so much a part of the world she lived in, or does she accept it as a reality?
4. *Northanger Abbey* is a satire in which Austen pokes fun at the gothic novel genre. Recently there have been several film in which screenwriters have taken aim at popular film genres: for example, horror films, action films, and teen movies. What common features of films in each genre do they exaggerate? Is the satire all in fun, or do these films try to make a serious point about the genre? Using *Northanger Abbey* and these contemporary satires as models, ask students to devise a "pitch" for a satirical film that pokes fun at a popular television show or genre, such as a reality show (*American Idol*) or a continuing drama (*Lost*). The "pitch" can be a written proposal, or a meeting in which they, the filmmakers, meet with a studio executive to sell their idea.



Henry Tilney and  
Catherine Morland

# Mansfield Park

## Before Viewing

1. *Mansfield Park* can be seen as a “Cinderella story.” Identify the elements of this kind of story. What other movies or television shows use those elements?
2. Who is the stereotypical “popular” guy or girl in contemporary film, television, and young adult literature? Have students share examples and examine the characters’ qualities. Where do these characters fall short? Do these characters ever change? Do they get a “happy ending”? In a typical high school, is the reality of who is popular similar to the representation in books and media? Explain.
3. An old proverb says, “Patience is a virtue.” Ask students if they agree. Ask them to describe a time in their lives when being patient was a good choice and a time when patience was not rewarded, or was a mistake. Does our culture encourage or discourage patience and waiting?

## After Viewing

1. The Crawfords come down from fashionable London and shake up the more conservative country world of Mansfield Park. Are Mary and Henry likeable? Why is Mary attracted to Edmund, and how does she want to change him? Why does Henry become seriously interested in Fanny, and how does he hope she will change him? Can you think of a film or a work of literature in which a “good” character saves or redeems a “bad” one? Why doesn’t that happen in *Mansfield Park*? Do you wish it had?
2. Fanny Price has been called the least likeable of Jane Austen’s heroines because she is too passive, consistent, and good—not interestingly flawed. Do you agree? As a group brainstorm a list of words to describe Fanny. How is she like or unlike the main characters in other Austen novels or in other novels you have read? Is Billie Piper, who plays Fanny, “invisible” enough to fade into the background when compared to Mary? What other actresses might you cast as Fanny?



Fanny Price and Henry Crawford

3. Ask students to pick one of the characters in *Mansfield Park* and create a scrapbook page that represents his or her interests, personality, and actions throughout the novel or film. Use magazine clippings, drawings, and quotes from the book or film. Try to make the scrapbook page reflect the complexity of the character it represents.
4. What elements of the Cinderella story are present in *Mansfield Park*? If Fanny Price is Cinderella, who is her Fairy Godmother? Does Edmund find and rescue her, or does she rescue him?
5. At different points in the film, three of the characters have moments when they look at Fanny and suddenly “see” her as they have not before. When is this moment for each character listed below? What does he recognize in Fanny, and why was he blind to it before? Ask students to draw a figure representing each character and fill in “thought bubble” showing what he is thinking at this moment of realization.
  - a) Henry
  - b) Lord Bertram
  - c) Edmund



Mary Crawford

# Selected Resources

## Web Sites

### The Austen Blog

[www.austenblog.com](http://www.austenblog.com)

This Web site offers commentary and news about Austen in popular culture.

### The Jane Austen Centre in Bath

[www.janeausten.co.uk](http://www.janeausten.co.uk)

This site provides background on Regency England, articles on Austen, reviews, and an online sequel to *Northanger Abbey*.

### Jane Austen's History of England

[www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/ttpbooks.html](http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/ttpbooks.html)

Hosted by the British Library, this site is an interactive version of Austen's handwritten *History of England* (a parody of the schoolroom history books of her time), written when she was 15.

### Molland's

[www.mollands.net](http://www.mollands.net)

An online community named for a shop in Bath that appears in *Persuasion*, this site provides e-texts of Austen's works and works about her, links, message boards, printable cards, and illustrations.

### Niceties and Courtesies:

#### Manners and Customs in the Time of Jane Austen

[chuma.cas.usf.edu/~runge/MasonJA1.html](http://chuma.cas.usf.edu/~runge/MasonJA1.html)

This Web site provides quotes from and links to many resources about proper social behavior in Regency England.

#### A Regency Repository

[regencylady.net/repository](http://regencylady.net/repository)

This site provides information on many aspects of Regency life, including art, literature, political and military matters, and more.

#### The Republic of Pemberley

[www.pemberley.com](http://www.pemberley.com)

This comprehensive site provides detailed information on Austen's novels and letters, a complete listing of film adaptations, and biographical and cultural background to the novels.

## Biographies

Austen-Leigh, J. E. *A Memoir of Jane Austen and Other Family Recollections*.

Oxford University Press, 2002. This edition of the first Austen biography combines the memoir of her nephew James Edward Austen-Leigh with the recollections of his sisters, Anna Lefroy and Caroline Austen.

Honan, Park. *Jane Austen: Her Life*.

St. Martin's Press, 1987. Considered the definitive Austen biography, this book emphasizes how the broad historical and social context of Regency England influenced Austen.

Spence, Jon. *Becoming Jane Austen*.

Continuum Publishing, 2007. The 2007 film *Becoming Jane* is based on Spence's biography, which mines Austen's letters and writing for clues to the people and events, that shaped her as a writer.

Tomalin, Claire. *Jane Austen: A Life*.

Knopf, 1997. This biography examines each of the novels in the context of Austen's life events and influences.

## Austen and Her World

Black, Maggie. *The Jane Austen Cookbook*. McClelland & Stewart, 2002. This book includes Georgian and Regency recipes set in the context of the era's social and domestic history.

Hughes, Kristine. *Life in Regency and Victorian England: From 1811—1901*. Writer's Digest Books, 1998. This resource provides details about daily life in England during this period in history.

Klingel Ray, Joan. *Jane Austen for Dummies*. For Dummies, 2006. A fun and informative guide to Austen's novels and the intricacies of Austen's world, by a former president of the Jane Austen Society of North America.

Le Faye, Deirde. *Jane Austen: The World of Her Novels*. Frances Lincoln, 2006. An Austen scholar and biographer offers historical and cultural background to the novels.

Pool, Daniel. *What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew*. Touchstone, 1994. This guide provides details about daily life in 19<sup>th</sup> century England in short, easy to read chapters.

Ross, Josephine. *Jane Austen's Guide to Good Manners: Compliments, Charades, and Horrible Blunders*. Bloomsbury, 2006. This guide to correct social behavior in Regency England is based on the correspondence between Jane Austen and her niece Anna.

Sullivan, Margaret. *The Jane Austen Handbook: A Sensible Yet Elegant Guide to Her World*. Quirk Books, 2007. This handbook offers step-by-step instructions for leading a proper aristocratic life in Regency England, from manners to dressing, dining, and courtship.

## Enter The JASNA Essay Contest

[www.jasna.org/essaycontest/index.html](http://www.jasna.org/essaycontest/index.html)

The Jane Austen Society of North America (JASNA) is dedicated to the enjoyment and appreciation of Jane Austen and her writing. It publishes an annual journal, *Persuasions*, and a newsletter. The JASNA holds an annual essay contest open to students at the high school, college, and post-graduate levels. Full information, including writing topics and prizes, is available at [www.jasna.org/essaycontest/index.html](http://www.jasna.org/essaycontest/index.html).

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## Austen and Film

Flavin, Louise. *Jane Austen in the Classroom: Viewing the Novel/Reading the Film*. Peter Lang, 2004. This guide offers approaches to reading Austen's novels and viewing their film adaptations.

Golden, John. *Reading in the Dark: Using Film as a Tool in the English Classroom*. NCTE, 2001. This general resource helps teachers incorporate film into the study of literature.

Parrill, Sue. *Jane Austen on Film and Television: A Critical Study of the Adaptations*. McFarland, 2002. This is a comprehensive filmography of Austen's adaptations, organized novel by novel, with comparative analysis.

Troost, Linda and Sayre Greenfield, eds. *Jane Austen in Hollywood*. University Press of Kentucky, 2001. This collection includes 13 essays on recent adaptations of Austen novels.

## Just for Fun

Fowler, Karen Joy. *The Jane Austen Book Club*. Plume, 2005. This is a novel, an exploration of Austen's work, and a resource for your own Austen book club all rolled into one.

Henderson, Lauren. *Jane Austen's Guide to Dating*. Hyperion, 2005. This book draws on the wisdom in Austen's novels to advise those searching for the perfect mate today. Includes personality quizzes to reveal which Austen character you most resemble.

Hannon, Patrice. *101 Things You Didn't Know about Jane Austen: The Truth about the World's Most Intriguing Romantic Literary Heroine*. Adams Media, 2007. This book offers trivia and tidbits from Austen's life.

Sutherland, John and Deirdre Le Faye, So *You Think You Know Jane Austen? A Literary Quizbook*. Oxford University Press, 2005. This book offers quizzes on Austen's novels, on the actions and motivations of characters, and on the meaning of events.

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