



Pride and Prejudice

Lesson 4: Jane and Elizabeth Alone

Lesson Plan and Resources

Pride and Prejudice


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Clip Resources

How film and television adaptations have approached the presentation of Elizabeth and Jane in private

Main Adaptation: *Pride and Prejudice (1995)*

Adapted by Andrew Davies; produced by Sue Birtwistle.

Discussing Wickham [▶ Watch here](#) 

Discussing Darcy [▶ Watch here](#) 

Discussing the elopement [▶ Watch here](#) 

Secondary Adaptation: *Pride and Prejudice (2005)*

Adapted by Deborah Moggach; directed by Joe Wright.

Discussing Wickham [▶ Watch here](#) 

Discussing Darcy [▶ Watch here](#) 

Discussing the elopement [▶ Watch here](#) 

Skills and Objectives

GCSE Literature Assessment Objectives

AO1	Read, understand and respond to texts
AO2	Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate
AO3	Understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written

GCSE Language Assessment Objectives

Reading AO2	Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views
Reading AO3	Compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts
Writing AO5	Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences
Spoken Language AO8	Listen and respond appropriately to spoken language, including to questions and feedback to presentations

Scene Setting

Where we are in the novel and television adaptation:

This lesson focuses on three separate interactions where Elizabeth Bennet and her sister Jane consider the reliability of Wickham's story and behaviour, either by discussing or sharing information in private. There are many such one-to-one moments in the novel which illustrate the challenges facing young, intelligent women of Austen's time in negotiating encounters with the opposite sex.

The first occurs in Chapter 17 where Elizabeth and Jane discuss what they should make of the account of the hardships that Wickham has told Lizzie about at her Aunt Phillips's party.

The second takes place in Chapter 40, on Elizabeth's return from Rosings, when Jane learns of Darcy's proposal to her sister and of the revelations of Wickham's lies and attempted elopement with Georgiana Darcy. The sisters discuss whether they should alert the Meryton community to his real nature and decide not to.

Their third sharing of information is written rather than spoken, when in Chapter 46 Elizabeth learns from two letters from Jane that Lydia has eloped with Wickham, that the pair are missing and potentially the Bennet family's reputation is ruined.

As well as representing significant points in the Wickham subplot, these scenes show Jane to be trusting and keen to defend the good in all people and Elizabeth at first challenging Darcy's behaviour, then gradually revising her views. Jane, however, also questions many of Elizabeth's sometimes hasty opinions. The contrasts in presentation of these scenes between the novel and the 1995 and 2005 adaptations emphasise different aspects of these plot points and the sisters' characterisations.

Starting Points

Pre-reading option

Before students consider the Jane and Elizabeth one-to-one episodes in the novel, use the illustration in **Resource 4.1** as a springboard for students to record their initial impressions of one such conversation between them. Students can feed back their ideas to the class and revisit them after they explore the three episodes further.

Post-reading option

What Austen does not tell the reader is how Jane looks when she is listening and responding to Elizabeth. The adaptations can portray this and give viewers another way to understand what Jane thinks about Elizabeth's comments, beyond what Jane says in response. Invite students to study the images from 3 adaptations in **Resource 4.2** and to say what they think Jane's looks reveal in each case.

Revision option

There are many examples in the novel of private talks or letters between Jane and Elizabeth. These have been mapped out for students against equivalent or similar moments in both adaptations in **Resource 4.3**. Ask students to choose a group of these scenes – they might all take place in the sisters' room; the drawing room or they might consist of Jane's letters and Elizabeth's reactions to them. Invite students to fill in the final column in **Resource 4.3** to summarise what they learn from these in each scene. Groups can then share their findings in class.

Main Activities

Jane as Elizabeth's sounding board ([click here to launch the digital tool](#))

Refer back to **Resource 4.2** which shows that as well as revealing much in her own looks, Jane is often the bearer of Elizabeth's too.

Link to the digital tool and play the 1995 and 2005 clips that correspond to Chapter 17. Invite students to explore what role Jane fulfils in the sisters' conversation about Wickham. She generally sees good in people, but here also asks Elizabeth why she should distrust Darcy yet trust Wickham so soon after meeting them. Austen sends up a small red flag when Jane questions her sister's views and her hasty judgements, encouraging the reader to do so too.

Jane's character is sometimes flattened in adaptations to make Elizabeth sparkle more. Does this happen in these clips? Also encourage students to compare the casting choices for the two sisters in each adaptation.

The sisters' moral dilemma ([click here to launch the digital tool](#))

The sisters face a real quandary in Chapter 40. Should they respect Darcy's confidence and protect his sister's reputation, or should they expose Wickham's reprehensible behaviour to the local community and most importantly to their family? Invite students to discuss why Elizabeth and Jane choose the wrong option in not exposing Wickham, believing he will not repeat his crime. Elopement was illegal in Georgian times.

Ask students to consider how the sisters' conversation is depicted in the 1995 and 2005 adaptations.

Jane's letters at Lambton ([click here to launch the digital tool](#))

What the letters from Jane, in Chapter 46, reveal about her:

- Sensible nature
- Good judgement
- Selflessness but eventually overcome by desperation for her sister's return

Share the class's ideas and create a character profile for Jane at this point in the novel.

Students could also discuss why the delay in the letters' arrival is significant, i.e. the delay both telescopes the events and delays Elizabeth's response. The results are that Elizabeth feels even less in control; it makes the reputational damage to the Bennets potentially worse; it causes Elizabeth's visible distress in front of Darcy and, drives him into action to find Lydia and Wickham.

The next step is for students to consider how the 1995 and 2005 adaptations interpret this - what they add to or omit from the scene and with what effects.

Creative writing – What Jane thinks

Austen does not use free indirect narrative to get inside Jane's head as she does with Elizabeth. Ask students to supply this insight by writing Jane's diary entry for the day Elizabeth returns home from Rosings, as she and Elizabeth share the news of Darcy's proposal and the true story of Wickham's dealings with Darcy and his family. Jane might reflect on how good it is to have Elizabeth back at home and on the sisters' decision not to reveal Wickham's behaviour to their local community. She might also wonder if Darcy said anything about Bingley to Elizabeth while she was in Kent - something Elizabeth withholds from her in the novel to spare her suffering. Students could discuss if this was the right thing for Elizabeth to do. **Resource 4.4** offers a starting point for the diary entry.

Character and performance: proposal emotions

Take a close look at the dialogue between the sisters in Chapter 17 after Wickham informs Elizabeth of Darcy's unfair actions against him. Invite students to compare this with the way this scene is depicted in the 1995 and 2005 adaptations. Why have the screenwriters chosen to position them differently in relation to the Netherfield Ball and what effect does this have? Play the clips and consider the brevity of the 2005 scene and how the actors (Keira Knightley and Rosamond Pike) play their reactions to Wickham's story. Which performances do students prefer and why? Refer to digital tool to play the clips and for notes on these performances. Then ask students to complete a table like the one below:

Jane and Elizabeth discuss Wickham's story		
Novel dialogue/narrative	1995 television script	2005 film dialogue
Jane... knew not how to believe that Mr Darcy could be so unworthy of Mr Bingley's regard;	Jane: I cannot believe it, Lizzie. Mr Darcy would have far too high respect for his father's wishes...	Jane: I still think there must have been a misunderstanding... Well how could Mr Darcy do such a thing?



Extensions

Theme: An officer and a gentleman – Students wishing to look further into whether Wickham was to be trusted by Elizabeth could explore the information in **Resource 4.6** about how the application of the term ‘gentleman’ was broadening in Jane Austen’s time and the associations of being a member of the militia.

Drama – Invite students to script and then perform a modern-day version of the scene in Chapter 17 where Jane cautions Elizabeth about championing Mr Wickham when she hardly knows him and about her having a crush on him. How would this conversation sound today?

Students can work in pairs, using the script starter in **Resource 4.5**. Encourage them to give stage directions for where the scene takes place (indoors or outside) as well as creating the dialogue. Scripts can be short enough to perform to the class who can offer feedback.

Setting – **Resource 4.1** demonstrates that nearly all the 1995 ‘Jane and Elizabeth alone’ scenes come directly from the novel. However, many of these conversations in the 1995 adaptation are set in a bedroom. Ask students to consider some reasons for this:

- they are more likely to be relaxed and share their feelings in their own rooms
- they are more likely to have time alone at night in their rooms where they do not want their parents or other family members to overhear them
- modern viewers relate to behind-closed-doors scenes due to their use in TV soaps

Using **Resource 4.2**, students interested in *mise-en-scène* could take a close look at how the bedroom scenes are lit and what props are used – the use of the dressing table mirror is very interesting, for example.

Language (Click here to launch digital tool) – Students could conduct a short analysis of Jane’s language traits using the notes in the digital tool for the three ‘Jane and Elizabeth alone’ scenes. These look at both the words Jane uses herself and the way Elizabeth repeatedly highlights her kindness, selflessness and ability to see good in others. Use the free search tool to scan for words like ‘sweetness’, ‘beauty’ and ‘Dear Jane’. The analysis should also reveal more nuanced traits about Jane’s intelligence and perceptiveness.

Context: The materiality of letters – In the Eighteenth Century, letters held great value to both senders and recipients, as the main means of personal and business communication. Letters were shared with family members if they brought news from other family or friends – even very personal letters such as Jane’s to Elizabeth with the shocking news of Lydia’s elopement. Paper was also an expensive commodity and so every centimetre of a sheet would be covered by the letter writer, often in small handwriting. Ask students to consider the importance of letters in the novel. They could identify four or five letters and decide what kinds of news and advice and instructions are brought by the different letters. Why might Austen choose to deliver some of the most important plot points via letter? Students can be reminded that *First Impressions* – the initial version of the novel – was probably written entirely in letters and students can be introduced to the term ‘epistolary novel’. They might also look at how the 1995 adaptation deals with the dramatic challenges of presenting their chosen letters on screen.

Turn to **Resource 3.8** in Lesson 3 to read an adaptation of Darcy’s proposal letter from Rob Brannen’s 2024 stage script. This is also interesting in the way it by-passes the confidences shared between Elizabeth and Jane in Chapter 40.

Glossary

From Chapter 17

Veracity - truthfulness/honesty

Conjecture - speculate/guess

Without ceremony - plainly/simplely

From Chapter 40

Suppress - hold back/keep from being known

Partiality - bias in favour/special fondness

Vindication - defence/justification

Extorted - obtained by force/squeezed

Ample - plentiful

Profusion - excess/lavish amount

Lament - express sorrow or regret

Countenance - face/facial expression

Deficient - lacking

Acquaintance - people we know

Undeceive - reveal the truth

Allayed - reduced/calmed

Forbade - prevented/prohibited

Disclosure - making known

Partake - share

Incumbrance - burden/obstacle

From Chapter 46

Repining - feeling of discontent/complaining

Direction - address

Express - letter sent by messenger

Imprudent - unwise

Utmost - greatest

Intelligible - able to be understood

Turnpikes - toll roads

Apprehensions - fears/anxieties

Exert - make a great effort

Exigences - urgent situation

Impetuous - hasty

Superseded - displaced

Commissioned - authorised

Acquiescence - agreement/submission

Meditation - deep thought

Consolatory - providing comfort

Palliation - easing suffering

Unavailing - useless

Cordiality - friendliness/goodwill

Perverseness - contrary/obstinate nature

Infamy - disgrace/ruined reputation

Incomprehensible - impossible to understand

Perceived - sensed/been aware of

Deranged - disordered/out of control

Pride and Prejudice Resources for Lesson 4

Resource 4.1: Jane and Elizabeth discuss

What do you learn about Jane and Elizabeth from this image?

Think about where they are; what they are doing; their surroundings; their body language.



C. E. Brock, 1894, public domain

Resource 4.2: Jane – the bearer of Elizabeth’s looks

Look carefully at each picture and note down next to it, what Jane’s thoughts might be in reaction to Elizabeth’s look and mood.



1980 BBC series, Fay Weldon



1995 BBC, Davies



2005 film, Moggach

Resource 4.3: Elizabeth and Jane alone moments

Novel	1995 (Episode/scene)	2005	What is learnt about Elizabeth and Jane
	<p>1/8 Jane's bedroom - sisters in night-wear Elizabeth watching Jane comb her hair. Talk of respect in marriage; Elizabeth tells Jane that she will have to marry well.</p>		
		<p>6. Meryton ball (05:40) Jane cautions Elizabeth that someone will catch her eye and she will have to watch her tongue. Darcy then enters. [The film includes Charlotte in this exchange.]</p>	
		<p>7. Bedroom (12:58) Elizabeth and Jane under the bed covers, 'too excited to sleep' after the ball. Jane romantic, Elizabeth cynical but also shares her plan only to marry for love (as she does in 1/8). The two gossip about Darcy's snub at the ball.</p>	
<p>Ch.4 'WHEN Jane and Elizabeth were alone, the former, who had been cautious in her praise of Mr. Bingley before, expressed to her sister how very much she admired him.' Discussion of Bingley, his sisters and Darcy after the Meryton assembly.</p>	<p>1/23 EXT. LONGBOURN. GARDEN. LATE SEPTEMBER. DAY 5. [11.15] JANE and ELIZABETH picking flowers. Unpacking the Meryton Ball. Interrupted by Charlotte Lucas.</p>		

Not in novel	<p>1/38 INT. NETHERFIELD. BEDROOM. OCTOBER. NIGHT 8. [20.54]</p> <p>JANE is sitting up in bed now, and has taken a little refreshment with ELIZABETH. ELIZABETH is at the candlelit toilet table... JANE He's not my Mr Bingley.</p>	<p>20. Jane's bedroom at Netherfield (17:38). Only very brief conversation between the two where Elizabeth says how pleased their mother is before Bingley enters.</p>	
Not in novel	<p>1/50. INT. NETHERFIELD CARRIAGE....</p> <p>ELIZABETH and JANE. ELIZABETH Oh, Jane, I'm sorry to say it, but notwithstanding your excellent Mr. Bingley, I've never been so happy to leave a place in my life!</p>		
<p>Ch.17 'ELIZABETH related to Jane the next day, what had passed between Mr. Wickham and herself.' Conversation in the shrubbery. Otherwise, very similar to AD dialogue</p>	<p>2/15 Jane's bedroom at night. 'Another soft light and shoulders scene' after Wickham tells all on Darcy at Aunt Philip's party. Jane cottons on that Elizabeth likes Wickham.</p>	<p>45. Bedroom at Longbourn, day time (32:32). Elizabeth and Jane prepare for the Netherfield Ball. Jane arranges Elizabeth's hair as she sits in front of the mirror. They share Wickham's explanation. Elizabeth is already smitten and excited as the thought of dancing with Wickham that night.</p>	
<p>Ch.18 '...at that moment solicitude for Wickham, resentment against his enemies, and every thing else gave way before the hope of Jane's being</p>	<p>2/29 Netherfield ball, night. Jane and Elizabeth talk after Miss Bingley warns her off Wickham. Elizabeth is outraged by her</p>		

<p>in the fairest way for happiness. Miss Bingley warns off Elizabeth as in AD but Elizabeth keeps her temper reined in and lets Jane also talk about Bingley's regard.</p>	<p>insolence. Jane hasn't learned much from Bingley other than that Wickham is 'by no means a respectable young man'.</p>		
<p>Ch.21 Jane receives Caroline's letter and while she rallies in front of Wickham and his friend who walk them home from Meryton, she goes to her room when they leave, and invites Elizabeth to follow. Jane reads out the letter. Elizabeth challenges her reading of it and it works: 'Jane's temper was not desponding, and she was gradually led to hope'.</p>	<p>3/3 - 3/9 Drawing room after Charlotte accepts Mr Collins. 'She knows she's marrying one of the stupidest men in England'. Letter arrives from Caroline Bingley.</p> <p>Elizabeth is angry, Jane unwilling to doubt Caroline's motives.</p>	<p>56. Bedroom at Longbourn, night (50:40).</p> <p>Caroline Bingley's letter arrived that afternoon. The sisters discuss it together. Jane thinks the message is clear; Elizabeth asks her not to give up hope.</p> <p>Elizabeth packs Jane's luggage while she sits on the bed.</p>	
<p>Ch.24 starts on a more sombre note – Bingley's gone, Jane upset by more letters from Caroline and her mother's comments; Elizabeth disappointed in Charlotte.</p> <p>It takes 'a day or two' before Jane has the 'courage' to share her frustrations. She wants to move on, but she also scolds Elizabeth a bit for how she speaks of Charlotte and Bingley.</p>	<p>3/14 Jane's bedroom at dusk. Sisters sat together on the bed.</p> <p>Jane is upset and 'not far from tears' but trying to persuade Elizabeth that she will forget Bingley.</p>		

<p>Ch.26 Charlotte has left for Kent and their friendship has changed. Letters are frequent but ‘the comfort of intimacy was over’. Elizabeth receives Jane’s letters from London, covering 4 weeks of events. ‘This letter gave Elizabeth some pain; but her spirits returned as she considered that Jane would no longer be duped, by the sister at least. All expectation from the brother was now absolutely over.’</p>	<p>3/20 - 28 Letter from Jane to Elizabeth. Jane recounts the London visit, cutting between scenes from this and Elizabeth reading in the window of her bedroom.</p>		
		<p>80. Drawing room at Longbourn (1:13:18)</p> <p>Elizabeth and Jane are back together after their separate trips. Jane swears that she is over Bingley and doesn’t want to talk about it. Elizabeth is upset by this and doesn’t let on what happened in Hunsford.</p>	
<p>Ch.40 Elizabeth returned from London with Jane the day before, and is impatient to tell her sister all the following morning. She is ‘allayed’ by doing so, having shared 2 secrets, but still keeps the truth about Bingley from Jane.</p>	<p>4/49 Jane’s bedroom. Jane gets into bed, Elizabeth seated. Shares Darcy’s proposal – first time they’ve been together to talk about it as Elizabeth has only just returned from Hunsford.</p>	<p>83. Bedroom at night (1:15:52)</p> <p>Elizabeth shares that she saw Darcy at Rosings but nothing else. Jane asks quickly about Bingley. Elizabeth refuses to say more.</p>	
	<p>4/51 Longbourn garden. Jane is picking daisies. Elizabeth recognises that she is still unhappy but Jane denies it.</p>		

<p>Ch.46 Jane's two letters, the second of which had been 'missent' because the address was written 'remarkably ill'. Explains Lydia's elopement.</p>	<p>5/12 – 5/15 Lambton Inn, private parlour. Elizabeth stays behind to read Jane's two letters. Cues Jane's voiceover and flashbacks of the express post arriving at the Bennets' with news from Brighton; flashback of Wickham and Lydia; Darcy's v/o 'she was then but fifteen years old'</p>	<p>97. Parlour at Lambton Inn (1.27:04). Elizabeth receives a single letter from Jane. Elizabeth describes what has happened – no flashbacks or Jane V/O.</p>	
<p>Ch.47 Elizabeth and the Gardiners reach Longbourn by dinner-time the next day. Elizabeth meets Jane in the 'vestibule' and they quickly catch up. They move to the drawing room where the same questions are asked again by everyone.</p> <p>After lunch, Elizabeth and Jane are alone again for half an hour and Elizabeth 'instantly availed herself of the opportunity of making many enquiries' (289-90). In particular, they discuss how well known Wickham's reputation was before Brighton, Lydia's letter to Mrs Forster; Mary and Kitty's reactions; aunt Philips and Lady Lucas, and what Mr Bennett is doing in town.</p>	<p>5/19 Longbourn hall. Jane greets Elizabeth on her return from Derbyshire. Jane is relieved that Elizabeth is back as Mr Bennet is still away and Mrs Bennet is ill in her room after news of Lydia broke.</p>		
	<p>5/24 Drawing room. Jane and Elizabeth to catch up more. Jane blames herself for helping to conceal Wickham's behaviour. Shares Lydia's letter to Mrs Forster.</p>		
	<p>5/26 Drawing room. Return to the sisters after Lydia's letter cues a flashback of the events. Elizabeth is upset, 'more things have been ruined by this business than Lydia's reputation!' She leaves the room.</p>		

	5/27 Elizabeth's bedroom at night. She readies for bed and imagines Darcy in the mirror. Jane enters in her dressing gown. Elizabeth explains that Darcy has been kind but she realises he will want nothing more to do with her.		
	5/46 Jane's bedroom at night. Jane has been washing her hair. Elizabeth sits with her. She is still upset and confused at the thought of losing Darcy's respect.		
	6/1-6/2 This revelation is split between scenes with Mrs B, Jane and Lizzie and Mr B and Lizzie.		
	6/22 LONGBOURN. STILL ROOM. JANE and ELIZABETH tying up bunches of flowers to dry.		
Ch.54 Quick conversation after Bingley's first visit. Contrast between Elizabeth's concern at Darcy's graveness and Jane's satisfaction at the visit. She assures her sister that she cannot be 'so weak, as to be in danger now.' Elizabeth disagrees. No additional commentary from the narrator but it is clear Bingley is interested: 'When first he came in, he had spoken to her but little; but every five minutes seemed to be giving her more	6/25 Longbourn garden. ELIZABETH and JANE walking. JANE: Don't think me to be in any danger now, Lizzy! ELIZABETH: I think you are in very great danger of making him as much in love with you as ever!	117. Drawing room at Longbourn (1:39:09). Mr Bingley's first aborted attempt at a proposal. He leaves for a pep-talk and in the meantime, Elizabeth and Jane sit together while the rest of the women are in the background. Jane tells Elizabeth that now she can be 'indifferent acquaintances' with Bingley. Elizabeth doesn't believe her!	

<p>of his attention. He found her as handsome as she had been last year; as good natured, and as unaffected, though not quite so chatty.'</p>			
<p>Ch. 55 Elizabeth returns to the drawing room to find the couple together. Bingley runs away and Elizabeth embraces Jane - the 'happiest creature in the world'. She quickly goes to share the news with their mother.</p>	<p>6/33 Longbourn Drawing Room. Bingley leaves (having proposed and been accepted) and Jane confesses her happiness to Lizzy.</p>		
<p>Ch. 55 Bingley becomes a 'daily visitor' at Longbourn and when Jane is busy, he attaches himself to Elizabeth. When he is gone, Jane 'constantly sought the same means of relief'. She tells Elizabeth one evening' how happy Bingley has made her by explaining that he didn't know she was in London. Elizabeth jokes about another Mr Collins.</p>	<p>6/34 Gardens at Longbourn (aside as Bingley leaves). JANE Oh, Lizzy if only I could see you as happy! If there were only such another man for you! ELIZABETH If you were to give me forty such men, I could never be as happy as you. Till I have your goodness I can never have your happiness. [cont ...] ...But perhaps if I have very good luck I may in time meet with another Mr. Collins!</p>	<p>123. Bedroom at night. Camera moves up through the house from the outside and settles on Jane and Elizabeth, excitedly chatting about Bingley. Elizabeth wryly hopes for a cousin to Mr Collins.</p>	
		<p>126. Bedroom and night. No conversation! Elizabeth can't sleep after confronting Lady Catherine and telling her family to leave her alone. She gets up and goes for a walk where she meets Darcy.</p>	

<p>Ch.59 After returning from the walk when he proposes, the family and the 'acknowledged lovers' spend the evening together. Elizabeth is 'agitated and confused' in Darcy's presence: she 'rather knew that she was happy, than felt herself to be so' because she knows only Jane likes Darcy.</p> <p>That night she 'opened her heart to Jane' who is initially incredulous.</p>	<p>6/42 Elizabeth's bedroom. She is seated at the mirror and Jane reflected in it. Lizzy tells Jane of her engagement to Darcy.</p>		
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Resource 4.5: Stage-crafting a Jane-Elizabeth alone scene

Reimagine the scene where Elizabeth and Jane discuss Wickham's tale of his grievances against Darcy in Chapter 17.

Remember to include stage directions for where the modernised scene takes place, details of props and lighting, as well as updating the dialogue.

It could start like this:

Scene 33

Jane and Elizabeth are sitting

JANE: I just can't believe Darcy would act like that, sis... _____

Resource 4.6: An officer and a gentleman

Read these extracts from commentators on the changing meaning of the term 'gentleman' during the Georgian era and the nature of the militia in England during the Napoleonic wars. Both offer some useful context for understanding Wickham's character.

Gentleman

...the title was elastic, straddling the upper and middle classes. By the later eighteenth century the great majority styled as 'ladies and gentlemen' were in fact urban residents, not country landowners. Ideally, the concept implied a moral audit to find individuals of personal worth.

...Interpersonal encounters in everyday life were variegated, being often casual and fleeting. There was rarely time to undertake a careful moral audit of everyone encountered in a busy life. Hence for most purposes, the social accolade of being considered a 'gentleman' turned on self-presentation, particularly in smart clothing, manners, style and, to an extent, learning.

From *The Georgians: The Deeds and Misdeeds of 18th-Century Britain* (P. J. Corfield, Yale University Press 2022, p.263)

Glossary

Audit: assessment

Ariegated: having an irregular pattern

Accolade: special privilege

Officers in the militia

Where the villainous Mr Wickham was taught before going up to Cambridge University – all paid for by Mr Darcy's father – is not stated; but his 'gentleman's education' and 'social powers' have equipped him not only to hold an officer's commission in Wellington's army, but to move in the same circles as Darcy himself.

.....As *Pride and Prejudice* makes plain, the social side of army life in Jane Austen's day was alluring... Mr Wickham admits cheerfully that the prospect of 'society, and good society' was his 'chief inducement for seeking a commission in the militia'. There is no mention of manoeuvres, drills or despatches from battle front in Jane Austen's fiction; but at every ball there is the predictable group of gorgeously uniformed Regency officers to catch the eye of susceptible young ladies.

From *Jane Austen A Companion* (J. Ross, John Murray, 2002 pp.212, 224-5)

Glossary

Alluring: very attractive

Inducement: incentive; persuasive attraction

Despatches: official messages

Susceptible: easily influenced