



# Pride and Prejudice

## Lesson 5: Confrontations

### Lesson Plan and Resources

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## Lesson 6: Confrontations

### Clip Resources

Elizabeth's verbal wit as she confronts Wickham and then Lady Catherine

**Main Adaptation:**  
***Pride and Prejudice (1995)***

*Adapted by Andrew Davies;  
produced by Sue Birtwistle.*

Wickham [▶ Watch here](#) 

Lady Catherine [▶ Watch here](#) 

**Secondary Adaptation:**  
***Pride and Prejudice (2005)***

*Adapted by Deborah Moggach; directed  
by Joe Wright.*

Wickham [▶ Watch here](#) 

Lady Catherine [▶ 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 is the point where Elizabeth now knows, from her aunt Gardiner, of Darcy's full involvement in ensuring that Lydia and Wickham get married (Ch.52). Very quickly after indicating to Wickham where she stands with him as a result, she has to face Lady Catherine's interrogation about her possible engagement to Darcy (Ch.56). In both these conversations the reader feels the power of Elizabeth's ready wit and articulacy.

## Starting Points

### Pre-reading option

Revisit the idea of manners in the time of Jane Austen and the way that differences of opinion, disagreements and insults needed to be shrouded in socially acceptable language or euphemism. Offer students one or two examples from the novel.

### Post-reading option

Ask students why and how Elizabeth's verbal confidence is restored and growing at this point in the novel. Elicit that she has new information from her aunt and then new evidence from Lady Catherine that something is about to change regarding Darcy. She is developing in herself and throwing off her former prejudices; no longer wedded to first impressions. Elicit from students adjectives to describe Elizabeth before the first proposal and after her meeting with Lady Catherine. How do they differ?

### Revision option

Revisit the characters of Wickham and Lady Catherine – Elizabeth's two adversaries in these verbal confrontations. Ask students to compare the way they express themselves and their manners here with the way they do when we meet them earlier in the novel. How does Jane Austen show they are now weaker than before and that Elizabeth has got the better of them?



## Main Activities

### Elizabeth v Wickham ([click here to launch the digital tool](#))

How does Elizabeth triumph – invite students to compare the novel dialogue with the 1995 adaptation. Draw out that Elizabeth moves from creating a false sense of security in Wickham to delivering a hammer blow at the end of the scene. But politeness codes are maintained in this woman-to-man confrontation.

Students' notes could also refer to the use of setting and movement in the 1995 adaptation.

### Elizabeth v Lady Catherine ([click here to launch the digital tool](#))

Does Elizabeth triumph? Ask students to compare the novel's dialogue with the 1995 adaptation in this much ruder woman-to-woman confrontation.

Analyse Lady Catherine's main tools of argument when compared to the main devices that Elizabeth uses. What differences are there in the way that they speak and try to persuade one another? Consider how, towards the end, politeness codes break down.

Again, students can consider how setting and movement is used in the adaptation to frame the argument.

## Creative writing

Recap with students on the rhetorical devices and language used by Elizabeth and Lady Catherine in their confrontation.

Then ask students to select around 10-20 lines from the novel's dialogue and to write a modernised version. They can either try to update the language devices used in the novel or invent some of their own.

For instance, how could they convey to a contemporary reader the precise meaning and implications of Lady Catherine's exclamation: 'Obstinate, headstrong girl! I am ashamed of you! Is this your gratitude for my attentions to you last spring? Is nothing due to me on that score?'

Students read their versions to the class. What topics do the listeners notice emerge from the argument – e.g. disagreement about class, status or family?

### Character and performance ([click here to launch the digital tool](#))

#### (Navigate to Chapter 52 in the novel pane of the tool)

Ask students to compare the Elizabeth/Wickham scene in the novel with Andrew Davies' screenplay for Episode 6 of the 1995 adaptation. What details do Davies' description and stage directions give to Austen's dialogue, and how does this scene round off Wickham's character arc?

How do actors' looks, pauses and emphasis on particular words or phrases interpret Jane Austen's original dialogue?

Using **Resource 6.1**, students could also compare the draft of Davies's script with the onscreen version to discover the changes that were made.

## Extensions

**Adaptations** – How and why do adaptations condense plot? Students watch both the 1995 and the 2005 versions of the Elizabeth /Wickham scene [These contrast strongly and show both small and fundamental changes.] Reasons why – i.e. genre contrasts: the film is only about 25% the length of the TV series and some conversations and plot details have to be cut. So, for example, the dialogue between Elizabeth and Wickham is replaced with poisonous looks from and a curt and formal wordless farewell. There is no letter from Aunt Gardiner and Elizabeth learns of Darcy's help to her sister from Lydia at the dining table. This condenses about four incidents in the novel into the brief visit and dinner with the couple at Longbourn. Andrew Davies' script can be looked at in detail for how it adapts the Austen.

([Click here to launch digital tool](#)) – Chapter 52

**Language** – ([Click here to launch digital tool](#))  
(Navigate to Chapter 22 in the novel pane of the tool)

What makes a good stage direction? Ask students to have a go at writing stage directions for another dialogue in the novel, for example Charlotte's conversation with Elizabeth around her decision to marry Mr Collins. They can then compare their directions with Davies' script.

**Drama** – ([Click here to launch digital tool](#))  
(Navigate to Chapter 52 & 56 in the novel pane of the tool)

Using the play extract from **Resource 6.2**, students take part in a 'ghosting' drama activity where the script is performed by one group of student actors while another student says what they actually mean after each line, to reflect inferred and deeper meanings.

**Setting: Interior or Exterior** – ([Click here to launch digital tool](#)) (Navigate to Chapter 52 & 56 in the novel pane of the tool)

Wickham joins Elizabeth while she is reading in a wooded area near the house, chosen precisely because she is 'least likely to be interrupted' there. Meanwhile, when Lady Catherine visits, she asks Elizabeth to accompany her on a 'turn' around the 'prettyish kind of a little wilderness on one side of your lawn'. Consider the importance of setting in both encounters in the novel. Why do Wickham and Lady Catherine both choose to have this conversation outside the house?

Invite students to compare the novel's setting with those chosen in both the 1995 and 2005 adaptations. Draw out the structural symmetry of the settings: both outdoors in the 1995 adaptation and both indoors in the 2005 adaptation.

**Intertextuality** – Watch the version of the Lady Catherine confrontation scene in the 1940s version of the film. (**142. 01"-147,06"** i.e. from 'Be seated, Miss Bennet' to 'I think you've found her'.) There is much here to contrast with other clips, e.g. Lady Catherine is seeking information about Elizabeth's views on marrying Darcy on his behalf; she is also the one to tell her of Darcy's involvement in Lydia's rehabilitation; she also discovers that Elizabeth would marry him even without his fortune.

# Glossary

## From Chapter 52

**Commendation** - recommendation, praise

**Steadfastly** - resolutely

**Subsisted** - continued

**In the affirmative** - in agreement

**Repine** - fret; feel unhappy

**Palatable** - acceptable

## From Chapter 56

**Copse** - small group of trees or shrubs

**Trifled with** - messed about

**Sentiments** - thoughts and wishes

**Disdain** - scorn; contempt

**Allurements** - attractions

**Explicit** - open; clear

**Presumption** - arrogance

**Aspire** - reach for/have ambition for

**Inclinations** - wishes; desires

**Prudence** - good judgement

**Brooking** - tolerating; accepting

**Pretensions** - claims

**Condition** - status

**Deliberation** - thought

**Assurance** - promise; word of honour

**Importuned** - harassed; appealed to

**Constitute** - establish

# Pride and Prejudice

## Resources for Lesson 6

### Resource 6.1 - Stage script meeting of Elizabeth and Lady Catherine de Bourgh

In groups of four, one pair acts out the scene while the other comments on the action and express what the characters are really saying and feeling.

*(MAID stands back to let LADY CATHERINE enter right. MRS BENNET, ELIZABETH, MARY, and KITTY all curtsy.)*

MRS BENNET *(All of a fluster)* Lady Catherine! We are honoured! Of course, we know of your great kindness, do please sit down, oh I see you have!

*(LADY CATHERINE crosses left, having already sat down, stares round disparagingly).*

LADY C I hope you are well, Miss Bennet.

ELIZABETH I am, thank you.

LADY C This lady I suppose is your mother.

ELIZABETH Yes.

LADY C And these are two of your sisters?

ELIZABETH They are.

MRS BENNET My youngest is married, and my eldest is out walking with her fiance, Mr Bingley.

LADY C Hm. You have a very small park here.

MRS BENNET I dare say it's nothing to Rosings, my lady, but it's much larger than Sir William Lucas's!

LADY C Hmp. Miss Bennet, would you take a turn in the garden with me?

ELIZABETH If you wish.

*(Lights fade. MRS BENNET sits, MARY and KITTY stand and stay left and freeze. ELIZABETH and LADY CATHERINE cross downstage).*

**TRANSITION TO -**

*(Sound of birdsong and lights up on ELIZABETH and LADY CATHERINE alone as if in a 'garden'.)*

ELIZABETH      What?

LADY C           I know it is impossible, but I insist on being satisfied: has my nephew made you an offer of marriage or not?

ELIZABETH      Your ladyship has declared it to be impossible.

LADY C           It ought to be so. Mr Darcy has long been engaged to my daughter. Now, what have you to say?

ELIZABETH      Only that if it is so, it's not likely that he'll make an offer to me.

LADY C           Their engagement is of a political kind; it was planned in their infancy. It was the favourite wish of his mother as well as mine. *(Her rage building)* And now, to be thwarted by a young woman of inferior breeding!

ELIZABETH      Mr Darcy is a gentleman. I am a gentleman's daughter. In that respect we are equal.

LADY C           But your mother! Your uncles and aunts! Your infamous younger sister, with her patched up marriage to a degenerate rogue and son of a steward! Are the shades of Pemberley to be thus corrupted?

*(A pause before ELIZABETH replies, quite calmly.)*

ELIZABETH      You can now have nothing further to say. You have insulted me in every possible way.

LADY C           Will you promise me never to enter into an engagement with my nephew?

ELIZABETH      I will not.

LADY C           *(Now very angry.)* Unfeeling, selfish girl! Very well! I now know how to act. I take no leave of you. I send no compliments to your mother. I am most seriously displeased.

*(LADY CATHERINE stalks off right pushing ELIZABETH out of the way. ELIZABETH watches after LADY CATHERINE as she exits. Lights up left as ELIZABETH crosses to MRS BENNET.)*

MRS BENNET     Oh! Is she gone then? Without saying goodbye? Well, these great folks have their little ways. I suppose she had nothing particular to say to you. Lizzy?

ELIZABETH      Nothing of consequence, mamma.

## Resource 6.2 Elizabeth's confrontation with Wickham - how does it change from script to screen?

Compare this draft script with the onscreen version and discover the differences between them. What effects do the cuts make?

6/21. EXT. LONGBOURN, GARDEN. AUGUST.  
DAY 62. [1055].

ELIZABETH looks up from the letter and hears:

WICKHAM [OOV]  
My dear sister!

The tone is affectionate, jokey, presumptuous - and now we see him:

WICKHAM  
I am afraid I'm interrupting your solitary reverie.

He has startled her - and she's not really pleased to see him, but determined to keep her cool and be pleasant and light.

ELIZABETH  
You are, indeed - but it doesn't follow that the interruption must be unwelcome.

WICKHAM  
I should be sorry if it were. You and I were always good friends; and now we are better.

ELIZABETH  
True.

He's being a bit flirty, I think, a bit over-intimate. He knows she used to fancy him a lot, and that gives him confidence. He's indicating a walk that leads them into rambling woods and spinneys - she indicates a more formal path closer to the house. He yields gracefully, and they walk in silence for a few steps.

WICKHAM

And so, my dear sister, I find from our Aunt and Uncle you have actually seen Pemberley.

ELIZABETH

Yes.

WICKHAM

I almost envy you the pleasure ... and yet, I believe it would be too much for me.

Too many painful memories, he means. He's doing his old hard-luck routine, which only amuses ELIZABETH now.

ELIZABETH

Truly? I am very sorry. It is a lovely place.

He's a little bit wary - he doesn't know how much she knows.

WICKHAM

Ah ... you saw the old housekeeper, I suppose?

ELIZABETH

Yes, we did.

She's not giving him the clues he needs.

WICKHAM

Poor Keynolds - she was always very fond of me.

ELIZABETH [innocently]  
Was she?

WICKHAM  
Yes; and I of her - but of course she  
wouldn't mention my name to you.

ELIZABETH  
As a matter of fact she did.

WICKHAM  
And what did she say?

ELIZABETH  
She said that you were gone into the  
army, and she was afraid you had not  
turned out well.

I think he might be biting his lip here, not later, as in  
the book. She's rather enjoying herself.

ELIZABETH [cont.]  
At such a distance as that, you know,  
things are strangely misrepresented.

WICKHAM  
Certainly ... certainly.

His mind racing - what else has she heard about me?  
But he's such a chancer - when he changes the subject  
it's to another dodgy area:

WICKHAM  
I was surprised to see Darcy in town last  
month. We, ah - we passed each other  
several times. I wonder what he could  
be doing there.

She might give him a long and disconcerting look then:

*I don't think  
Darcy will wake.*

ELIZABETH  
Perhaps preparing for the wedding ...  
[then after a pause]  
...with Miss de Bourgh.