

Individual Learning Packet

**Teaching Unit**

**Emma**

by Jane Austen

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Item No. 201356

# Emma

## Objectives

*By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:*

1. discuss the author's representation of class distinction in the novel.
2. interpret how this novel reflects the limitations of women's roles during the nineteenth century.
3. discuss the importance of marriage as a reflection of one's social status in the novel.
4. identify how social customs restrict communication among the characters and lead to misunderstandings.
5. identify how self-interest leads to the misinterpretation of other characters' intentions.
6. identify and give examples of the element of humor in this novel.
7. understand, define, and provide examples for the following literary terms:
  - irony
  - foil character
  - foreshadowing
  - narrator.

# Emma

## Questions for Discussion and Essay

1. Jane Austen commented that Emma is a heroine whom “no one but myself will much like.” By the end of the novel, how do you feel about Emma? Give examples of her behavior that cause you to like or dislike her.
2. A number of marriages are described in the novel, and social position rules these unions. Choose two marriages to examine. Detail the elements that make up each person’s social status (i.e., fortune, name, and employment), and then evaluate who gains from the match or if it is relatively equal. Also, evaluate if the union is a happy one.
3. Discuss why marriage is so crucially important to women in the scope of the novel.
4. Mr. Knightley’s comments foreshadow a number of events and secrets before they are revealed. Describe two of these instances, and how his clearer opinion conflicted with Emma’s.
5. How does humor function in Emma? Choose a speech made by Mr. Woodhouse, Miss Bates, or Mrs. Elton. Describe how Austen makes them look foolish. Detail their absurd comments, and contradictions.
6. Consider where riddles and word games appear in the novel. How are they symbols for the confusion of social interactions? Specifically, consider the word game Frank and Emma play in Chapter 41.
7. Consider the importance of visits in Emma. Discuss what the frequency and length of visits indicate about the two characters’ relationship. Also, consider what the centrality of visits in the novel indicates about women’s lives.
8. In the course of the novel, Emma comes to a number of realizations that fundamentally change the way she thinks about herself and the world. Discuss what you perceive as the most important realization Emma makes. Why is it so important, and how does Emma change as a result?

# Emma

All references come from the Dover Thrift Edition of *Emma*, copyright 1991.

## Chapter 1

### Vocabulary

**mizzle** – to rain in very fine drops

**valetudinarian** – a person of weak or sickly constitution

1. What is your initial impression of Emma? Quote a description of her that influences your view.

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2. What is the nature of Emma's relationship with her long-time governess, Miss Taylor?

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3. What event has taken Miss Taylor away from Hartfield, and how is this both a positive and negative occurrence?

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4. Why can Emma find no other suitable companions in Highbury to replace Miss Taylor?

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**Chapter 10**

1. Why does Emma not want to marry now?

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2. What condition makes celibacy contemptible according to Emma?

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3. Who is Jane Fairfax, and what bothers Emma about her?

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4. What charitable action does Emma perform, and how well does she accomplish it?

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5. What does Emma think might have happened if she had stayed away from Harriet and Mr. Elton longer?

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**Chapter 20**

Vocabulary

**cavil** – to raise trivial and frivolous objection to  
**noviciate** – a beginner

1. What happened to Jane's parents?

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2. What social situation was Jane placed in after her mother's death?

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3. How did Colonel Campbell become involved with Jane, and what did he do for her?

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4. What sort of future awaits Jane Fairfax?

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**Chapter 39**

1. What does Emma think has finally cured Harriet of her infatuation with Mr. Elton?

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2. How are gypsies regarded in terms of social status?

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3. What do the gypsies do to Harriet?

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