

QUESTIONS ON *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*
(Please bring these questions with you on July 25)

1. In a letter to her sister, Jane Austen calls Elizabeth “as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print,” a statement with which few readers would disagree. Why is Elizabeth so appealing? What qualities in Elizabeth do you most admire?
2. Yet despite her fondness for Elizabeth, Austen devotes much of the novel’s first volume (chapters 1-23) to exposing her weaknesses. In this volume Elizabeth makes several rather serious mistakes. What are they and why does she make them?
3. In their conversation after his proposal, Elizabeth makes two accusations against Darcy, one concerning Wickham and one concerning Jane. In his subsequent letter how does Darcy defend himself against each of these accusations?
4. Astute readers will notice that Elizabeth makes a third accusation against Darcy, one that he does not—indeed cannot—respond to in his letter. What is this accusation? When they accidentally meet at Pemberley, how does Darcy convey to Elizabeth that he has taken her criticisms to heart?
5. Discussing Darcy’s refusal to dance with her at the Meryton assembly, Elizabeth tells Charlotte Lucas, “I could easily forgive *his* pride if he had not mortified *mine*” (chapter 5). What roles do pride, mortification, forgiveness, and self-knowledge (“Till this moment I never knew myself”) play in Elizabeth’s changing attitude toward Darcy?

Bonus Questions:

6. Is Mr. Bennet a better father than Mrs. Bennet is a mother? Defend your position with evidence from the text.
7. Reading *Pride and Prejudice* offers comfort to those of us with embarrassing relatives. We are not alone! To whom would you least wish to be related—Elizabeth’s mother or Darcy’s aunt?
8. At the end of the novel Mr. and Mrs. Collins are expecting “a young olive branch.” Is this kid most likely to take after his father or his mother? In pondering this profound question, you might want to consider the Bennet family.