



**Pride & Prejudice**



**BY JANE AUSTEN**  
**ADAPTED BY CHRISTOPHER BAKER**  
**DIRECTED BY HANA S. SHARIF**

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**COSTUME DESIGNER** Dorothy Marshall Englis  
**LIGHTING DESIGNER** Xavier Pierce  
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**PROJECTION DESIGNER** Alex Basco Koch  
**CHOREOGRAPHER** Ron Todorowski  
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 McCorkle Casting Ltd.  
 Katja Zarolinski, CSA  
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**ASSISTANT DIRECTORS** Alexis Cabrera, Victoria Chauvin  
**STAGE MANAGER** Emilee Buchheit  
**ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER** Lorraine Fiore  
**PRODUCTION ASSISTANT** Delaney Dunster

## CAST

(in speaking order)

**MRS. BENNET** Michelle Hand  
**MR. BENNET** Michael James Reed\*  
**LYDIA BENNET** Sydney Leiser  
**JANE BENNET** Rebecca Haden\*  
**MARY BENNET** Maison Kelly  
**ELIZABETH BENNET** Katie Kleiger\*  
**CHARLOTTE LUCAS** Rebeca Miller\*  
**MR. BINGLEY** Grayson DeJesus\*  
**CAROLINE BINGLEY** Jennie Greenberry\*  
**MR. DARCY** Nick Rehberger\*  
**MR. WICKHAM** Stephen Michael Spencer\*  
**HALL/LADY CATHERINE DE BOURGH** Lizan Mitchell\*  
**HOPKINS/MR. GARDINER** Eric Dean White\*  
**MR. COLLINS** Blake Segal\*  
**MRS. GARDINER** Rayme Cornell\*  
**MRS. REYNOLDS** Teresa Doggett  
**COLONEL FORSTER** Gerry Love  
**ENSEMBLE** Kayla Braxton, Maya J. Christian,  
 Lydia-Renee Darling, Will Davis,  
 Tony Merritt II, JR Pruski,  
 Michael Tran, Taylor Tveten



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Financial assistance for this theatre has been provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency; the Arts and Education Council of Greater St. Louis; and the St. Louis Regional Arts Commission.

**At The Rep, we know that life moves fast—okay, really fast. But we also know that some things are worth slowing down for. We believe that live theatre is one of those pit stops worth making and are excited that you are going to stop by for a show.**

To help make the most of your experience, we have put together a guide that will give you everything you need to know to get at the top of your theatergoing game—fast. You'll find character descriptions, a plot summary, biographical information, historical context, and other bits and pieces.

## The Teacher's Lounge

In an effort to make our educational materials accessible to students and easy for educators to incorporate into the classroom, our study guide is written in a student-oriented format. We hope that you will circulate this guide among your students in the weeks preceding your visit to The Rep, encouraging them to browse it before and after class and as time allows, using it as a launch point for both pre- and post-performance discussions. You may also want to visit our website, [www.repstl.org](http://www.repstl.org), for additional information including behind-the-scenes information. Any materials, either from this guide or from our website may be reproduced for use in the classroom. As always, we appreciate your making live theatre a part of your classroom experience and welcome your feedback and questions.

## How to be the best audience ever!

### Take your seat

An usher will seat your class as a group, and often we have a full house with no seats to spare, so be sure to stick with your school until you have been shown your section in the theatre.

### Silence is Golden

Before the performance begins, be sure to turn off your cell phone and watch alarms. If you need to talk or text during intermission, don't forget to click off before the show resumes.

### Break Time

This performance includes one intermission, at which time you can visit the restrooms in the lobby.

### Snack Time

There is no food or drink permitted inside the theatre, so make sure you finish your snacks in the lobby before you enter the house.

### Now Hear This

Just as you can see and hear the actors, they can see and hear you. Any talking, even whispering, can be heard by those around you and those onstage, so please wait until the show is over to chat.

### No Paparazzi Please

The theatre is a camera-free zone. Flash photography interrupts the action onstage and is prohibited by Actors' Equity Association rules. You can sneak a peek at production photos on The Rep's website at [repstl.org](http://repstl.org).

### Take a Bow

Let the actors know you respect their work by responding to the curtain call at the end of the performance. Show your appreciation for a job well done through applause.

## THANKS FOR BEING A GREAT AUDIENCE!

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## Rep Education Department

**Director of Education**

Marsha Coplon

**Associate Director of Education**

Sarah Brandt

**Education Programs Associate**

Brian Coats

## Who's Who?

**Mr. Bennet**, a man of moderate means with four young daughters, survives his household through dry wit and a penchant for reading.

His wife, **Mrs. Bennet**, an easily emotional woman, spends every moment of her life trying to find a husband for each of her daughters.

**Jane**, the eldest Bennet sister, is a reserved woman with a kind heart.

Her younger sister, **Elizabeth**, has a playfully witty nature that sometimes leads her to make prejudicial first impressions.

**Lydia**, the third Bennet child, is a highly sociable teenager who willingly flirts her way into trouble.

The youngest Bennet sister, **Mary**, is a fairly serious young girl who prefers the company of her pianoforte.

**Mr. Charles Bingley** is a very rich, eligible bachelor who has just moved into the area.

His sister, **Miss Caroline Bingley**, is a haughty and elegant woman who has a great disinterest in making connections with her brother's new neighbors.

**Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy**, Bingley's best friend, is an incredibly rich gentleman who has a detached nature that puts him at odds with Elizabeth.

Elizabeth's friend, **Charlotte Lucas**, has few prospects for her future and is forced to make a tough decision.



2005 Film Adaptation of *Pride & Prejudice*.

**Mr. Collins**, the cousin of Mr. Bennet, is next in line to own the Bennet estate, much to the annoyance of the entire Bennet family.

**Lady Catherine de Bourgh** is Mr. Darcy's wealthy aunt who causes a bit of trouble for Darcy and Elizabeth.

**Mr. Wickham**, a militiaman and acquaintance from Darcy's past, arrives in town and catches the eye of a few Bennet sisters.

**Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner**, Elizabeth's uncle and aunt, invite her along on a trip through the English countryside.

## Austen-tatious Language

**Let:** rent

**Encumbered:** restrict or burden (someone or something) in such a way that free action or movement is difficult.

**Over-scrupulous:** overly precise or exact

**Assembly:** a company of persons gathered for entertainment

**Regiment:** a permanent unit of an army typically commanded by a colonel and divided into several companies, squadrons, or batteries and often into two battalions

**Spinster:** an unmarried woman, typically an older woman beyond the usual age for marriage.

**Impertinent:** rude

**Efficacy:** the ability to produce a desired or intended result; effectiveness, success

**In vogue:** the latest fashion; in the current fashion or style

**Insipidity:** the quality of being drab or boring

**Destitute:** penniless or poor

**Apothecary:** a person who prepares and sells medicines and drugs

**Follies:** foolish acts or ideas

**Patroness:** a woman who supports an artist, writer, museum, cause, charity, institution or special event with money, gifts, efforts or endorsements

**Affability:** friendliness

**Rectory:** the home of a clergyman who is in charge of a parish

**Manifold:** many, numerous

**Taciturn:** quiet or uncommunicative; saying very little

**Proficient:** skilled

**Parsonage:** a church house provided for a member of the clergy

**Imprudent:** rash or unwise

**Melancholy:** great sadness, often with no cause

## What's the Story?

### WARNING: SPOILERS AHEAD

As the play begins, Longbourn, the Bennet household, is in its usual state of chaotic excitement: Mary is at the pianoforte; her sisters, Jane, Elizabeth and Lydia, are coming and going; Mr. Bennet is deeply focused on his newspaper and Mrs. Bennet is in hysterics. Mr. Bingley, a wealthy, young bachelor, has just moved into Netherfield Park, a nearby estate, and Mrs. Bennet is mad with interest and gossip. She fully intends to match Mr. Bingley with one of her daughters, but she needs her husband to visit him in order to make introductions. Mr. Bennet, always keen to play with his wife's emotions, refuses, bidding her to go in his stead to make the introductions, but then reveals that he has already visited Mr. Bingley. Mrs. Bennet, in a state of over-excitement, begins to prepare her daughters for the next dance, where Mr. Bingley will be in attendance.

Later, the dance is in full swing, and we hear the girls lamenting over the lack of men and the surplus of women. Mr. Bingley arrives, along with his sister, Miss Caroline Bingley, and his friend, Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy. Mr. Bennet quickly makes introductions, and Mr. Bingley invites Jane, the eldest, to dance. After a rude encounter, Mrs. Bennet decides that she does not like Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth agrees, especially after she overhears him saying that she is not attractive enough for his tastes. The dance

continues, and Jane and Mr. Bingley make it clear to their family and friends of their interest in one another.

Another ball begins, this time a more wild, private affair. The militia has moved into town, and many men in uniform are seen about. Jane and Bingley continue their connection, and Lydia is incredibly taken with the officers. Charlotte Lucas meets Mr. Wickham, a militiaman, and introduces him to Lydia, but after spotting Darcy, he makes a hasty exit. Elizabeth finds Charlotte and complains that Darcy has been following her all night, which Charlotte takes to mean he is interested. Elizabeth disagrees, but comments that she is happy to see Jane so in love. Mr. Darcy approaches, startling Elizabeth. They chat, and he invites her to dance, but she denies him and exits.

Back at Longbourn, Mr. and Mrs. Bennet discuss the relationship of Jane and Mr. Bingley, which Mrs. Bennet is hopeful will lead to marriage. The Longbourn estate is to go to Mr. Collins, and the Bennet girls will be left with next-to-nothing if they do not marry well. Jane receives an invitation from Caroline Bingley to dine at Netherfield. Mrs. Bennet sends her on horseback, plotting a scheme to get Jane and Mr. Bingley to spend more time together. Jane, on her way, gets caught in the rain and develops a



2005 Film Adaptation of *Pride & Prejudice*.

cold. She is forced to remain at Netherfield for multiple days. Elizabeth comes to stay with her. At Longbourn, Mr. Bennet receives word that his cousin, Mr. Collins, will be visiting. At Netherfield, Elizabeth and Darcy engage in a battle of character, but are interrupted by the arrival of Mrs. Bennet, Lydia and Mary, who have come to take Jane home.

Mr. Collins arrives at the Bennet house. He speaks often of his patroness, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, who he greatly admires. He shares with Mr. and Mrs. Bennet that he plans to marry one of the Bennet sisters. Three militiamen arrive, including Mr. Wickham. He and Elizabeth make a connection. Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy arrive to check on Jane, but leave immediately when Darcy sees Mr. Wickham. Before leaving, Mr. Bingley announces that he will throw a ball. When left alone, Elizabeth and Mr. Wickham discuss Darcy. Mr. Wickham reveals that he has known Darcy since childhood and that Darcy slighted him, taking away his inheritance and leaving him with nothing. Elizabeth uses this information to confirm her dislike of Mr. Darcy.



2005 Film Adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*

Soon after, Mr. Collins finds some alone time with Elizabeth and proposes to her. She refuses him. Mrs. Bennet is incredibly upset, but Mr. Bennet supports Elizabeth's decision. At the Netherfield ball, Elizabeth tries to avoid Darcy. The other Bennets are roaming around, acting quite untamed. Charlotte Lucas reveals to Elizabeth that she is engaged to Mr. Collins. Elizabeth is surprised, but distracted by her family's embarrassing actions. Darcy gives Mary some sheet music to play and invites Elizabeth to dance; both actions are a shock to her. They dance. There is a connection between them, but Elizabeth struggles to understand his motives. Act One ends in a burst of great chaotic energy.

As Act Two begins, Elizabeth is visiting Mr. Collins and Charlotte at their new home. Mr. Collins is very excited, as they have all just been invited to tea at the Rosings estate with Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Elizabeth reveals that Jane is in London with her aunt and uncle, and that Mr. Bingley left Netherfield and returned to London following the ball. It is mentioned that Mr. Bingley may never return to Netherfield, which has greatly broken Jane's heart.

At Rosings, Mr. Collins introduces Elizabeth to Lady Catherine, who in turn introduces Elizabeth to her nephew, Mr. Darcy. Elizabeth is shocked to see him there; while she knew that he was a relation of Lady Catherine, she did not know he was at Rosings. Lady Catherine interrogates Elizabeth about her skill set (pianoforte, drawing and other expected skills of women); the elder woman is very judgmental, but Elizabeth takes it in stride. Lady Catherine invites her to play music, and though Elizabeth initially refuses, she eventually gives in. Darcy joins her at the pianoforte and they talk, discovering that they will both be at Rosings for a number of weeks.

Darcy visits Elizabeth at Mr. Collins's parsonage. Elizabeth has just received a letter from Jane telling her that she has yet to see Mr. Bingley in London, and that he is going to give up Netherfield Park. Charlotte and Mr. Collins return, and Darcy departs. Charlotte is convinced that Darcy is in love with Elizabeth, but Elizabeth isn't so sure.

Days later, Mr. Collins reveals to Elizabeth that Darcy recently saved a friend from entering into an unfortunate marriage. Elizabeth deduces that Darcy has separated Jane and Mr. Bingley. She decides to stay home while Charlotte and Mr. Collins dine at Rosings. Darcy arrives unexpectedly. He tells Elizabeth that he loves her (against his better judgment) and wishes to marry her. Elizabeth rejects him, citing his actions to separate Jane from Mr. Bingley, as well as his betrayal of Mr. Wickham. Darcy leaves in anger.

The next morning, Elizabeth is set to leave. Darcy returns to explain the two offensive actions that Elizabeth laid against him the day before. First, he explains that he did not think that Jane loved Bingley the way that Bingley loved her, so he separated them to save Bingley from marrying into a family that seemed to only want his money. Second, he explains that Mr. Wickham received inheritance money upon Darcy's father's death, but that

he spent it all and returned penniless. Mr. Wickham convinced Darcy's little sister, who was only 15 years old at the time, to elope with him. Darcy was able to stop the elopement, as Wickham only wanted the money that would come with the marriage. After speaking, Darcy leaves. Elizabeth comes to regret her previous actions towards him.

Elizabeth returns home to Longbourn. Jane has returned from London as well. Lydia tells everyone that the militiamen are going to Brighton and that she has her father's permission to go there for the summer. Elizabeth begs her father to reconsider, but he will not. Soon after, Elizabeth is invited on a tour of the English countryside with her aunt and uncle. They are planning to visit Pemberley, Mr. Darcy's estate. While Elizabeth is initially unsure, she eventually agrees to join them.



At Pemberley, Elizabeth and the Gardiners (her aunt and uncle) are given a tour of the estate. Left alone in one of the rooms, Elizabeth is suddenly face-to-face with Darcy, who was not scheduled to return until the next day. Darcy invites Elizabeth to meet his little sister, but before she can do so, her uncle returns with some terrible news: Lydia has run off with Mr. Wickham, and Elizabeth must return home. Darcy, bothered by the news, calls for his carriage.

Three weeks later, there is another ball. It is revealed that Mr. Wickham and Lydia have married, and that Mr. Gardiner has paid for it. Lydia and Wickham arrive, and Lydia reveals to Elizabeth that Darcy was at the wedding, but that it's supposed to be a secret. It becomes apparent to Elizabeth that Darcy paid Wickham to marry Lydia to save her, and the rest of her family, from ruin. Mary tells Elizabeth that Darcy and Bingley have just arrived at the ball. Jane and Bingley dance, while Darcy avoids the rest of the Bennet family.

Suddenly, Lady Catherine de Bourgh arrives, wishing to speak to Elizabeth. She demands that Elizabeth deny a rumor of her possible marriage to Darcy. Elizabeth evades answering, instead claiming that Lady Catherine's arrival only supports the rumor. According to Lady Catherine, Darcy is intended for her daughter, so he cannot marry Elizabeth. Elizabeth refuses to promise never to enter into an engagement with Darcy, which infuriates Lady Catherine. She storms off to find Darcy. Jane comes back and tells her family that Bingley has proposed. In the celebration, Elizabeth is left alone. Darcy finds her, and proposes to her again. The play ends with Mr. and Mrs. Bennet celebrating their daughters' matches, and everyone joining the dance.



## Meet Jane Austen: Voice of the Regency

In much the same way that Charles Dickens has become known as the voice of the Victorian Era, Jane Austen has long been the established voice of England’s Regency Era. Through her six major novels, Austen was a leading interpreter and critic of the social class system or society structure of this period of history. Austen’s characters and their struggles have given scholars and historians great insight into the customs and societal conflicts of the time.

Austen was born in 1775 in a small English village, the daughter of an Oxford-educated clergyman. She was extremely close to her only sister, Cassandra—a relationship that clearly inspired the close relationship between Jane and Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*. Though educated briefly in Oxford, Austen’s health issues caused her to be home educated for a while, where she spent much of her time reading from her father’s extensive library. She was also encouraged to write and became aware of the world outside her home when she traveled to see her brother Henry in London. Another of her brothers lived in an estate, where Jane and Cassandra would visit and where, more than likely, she learned of the customs of the wealthy. These experiences inspired the settings and situations of the characters in her novels.

While Jane never married, she did have a rather brief engagement with a friend’s brother. However, she did not feel that she loved him, and remained unattached for the rest of her life. Themes of love and marriage can be found in all of Austen’s novels, particularly *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*. By the age of 23, Jane had written three of her six major novels.



At the age of 35, Austen began to publish her novels. *Sense and Sensibility* was published in 1811, *Pride and Prejudice* in 1813, *Mansfield Park* in 1814, and *Emma* in 1815. While she was alive, Austen was not what we would consider a successful novelist. It was only following her death in 1817, as well as the publication of her final two novels, that Austen began to become so well known for her stories. Today, there is no question that Jane Austen was the voice of her time.



## A Closer Look at the Regency Era

Like all of Jane Austen’s novels, *Pride and Prejudice* takes place during a period known as the Regency Era. Spanning roughly 42 years (1795–1837), the Regency Era marked a time of great accomplishment and refinement for the upper classes of English society. However, it was also a time marked by extreme social change and therefore had its own share of conflicts and difficulties.



### The Prince Regent

What is a regent? Since the United States of America does not have a monarchy, it is not a term that we use very often. A regent is someone who is assigned to take charge when the monarch is unfit to rule, typically due to age, absence or disability. The Regency Era is named as such because during this period England was ruled by the Prince Regent. Towards the end of his reign, King George III (you’ll recognize him as the ruling power against the American colonies during the American Revolution) was seen as too mentally unstable to act as King. In 1810, his eldest son, George, Prince of Wales, was granted the authority of Prince Regent, and ruled England as such until his father’s death in 1820. At that time, he ascended to the throne as King George IV. Due to this timeline, many place the Regency Era between 1810 and 1837, when Queen Victoria was crowned and the Victorian Era began. However, the influence of the Prince Regent was felt long before his official reign, so it is fitting to extend the period before his ascension.



### Elsewhere in Europe

When discussing the Regency Era in England, it is important to note the events of the French Revolution. Although it took place in France, the shocking upheaval of the centuries-old monarchy—at the time represented by King Louis XVI and his famous wife Marie Antoinette (a.k.a. Madame Déficit)—was felt throughout Europe and the rest of the world. A key cause was the growing national debt from France’s support of the American Revolution and high food prices due to drought. It was the lower classes that mostly felt the pains of impoverishment, while the monarchy seemed removed and even indifferent to its nation’s struggles. The Revolution eventually resulted in the abolishment of the monarchy, and the execution of King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette in 1793.

## A Closer Look at the Regency Era



### A Defined Social Structure

During the Regency Era, society was rigidly organized in a hierarchical class structure. Everyone was placed in one of the classes and there was little to no movement between them. A man's placement was determined by his wealth and the details of his land holdings. For the most part, this was based on inheritance, as most, if not all, wealth and titles were passed from father to son, or in the event of there being no sons, to the next male heir. For women, their placement was determined by the status of their father. They rarely inherited wealth and had few opportunities to make a living on their own, leaving them to make an advantageous marriage as a way to attain wealth. In Regency England, marriages were typically more of a financial agreement than a result of romance.

### Fashion and Frivolity

Although class systems were clear, it was thought crude to overtly flaunt wealth—a resounding sentiment after the French Revolution. A more simplistic elegance emerged. Towering wigs and powder gave way to Roman/Greek-style, high-waisted, columnar gowns for women and elegant linen trousers and overcoats with breeches and boots for men. However, that doesn't mean there wasn't still a lavish presentation of fashion—it wasn't uncommon for both men and women to change outfits several times throughout the day for different activities.



As in the play, dance was also a prominent part of the Regency Era. Early on in the era, country dance was popular (a kind of folk dancing), though later in the period popular dance began to transition to the waltz. The consciousness of dance in this era is often credited to Jane Austen, whose novels frequently include balls and parties. These dances often played an important role in societal introductions, as they provided people an opportunity to meet and converse in public, which could lead to further conversations, as we see in *Pride and Prejudice*.

## Read Between the Lines

### Pride and Prejudice

As the title states, both The Rep’s production and Jane Austen’s original novel concern themselves with the idea of great pride and great prejudice. Across many decades, Elizabeth has long been considered the embodiment of “prejudice,” while Darcy is the embodiment of “pride.” However, they are not the only two characters to exhibit these behaviors. Lady Catherine de Bourgh also shows prejudice against Elizabeth and her family, while Mr. Bennet shows great pride when he realizes he is indebted to Mr. Gardiner (and then Mr. Darcy). Each and every character is capable of feeling both emotions (Elizabeth certainly has a lot of her own prideful moments), and these emotions blind them in different ways.

**Consider what “pride” and “prejudice” mean to you. Are they conflicting emotions, or do they share any similarities? After seeing the performance, categorize the characters as either “prideful” or “prejudiced.” Do any characters fall into both categories? Why or why not? How do the ideas of “pride” and “prejudice” create obstacles for these characters? Are they able to overcome them?**

### Secrets and Misunderstandings

In the play, there is a lot of miscommunication due to secrets and misunderstandings that affect the characters and their journey towards their happy endings.

Oftentimes, these secrets and misunderstandings are related to the aforementioned “pride” and “prejudice” that many of the characters are feeling. Before they can deal with the miscommunications and share their secrets, they first have to overcome their ingrained pride and prejudices. **What are some of the major secrets that get in the way of the characters finding happiness? What causes a lot of the misunderstandings between the characters, and how do they address them? If there were no secrets or misunderstandings, how would that change the plot of the play? Does the play need them to work?**

### A Desire to Dance

Though certainly present in the original novel, Christopher Baker’s stage adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* places a significantly greater emphasis on social gatherings and dances of the period. Some scenes from the novel have been moved to take place during an assembly or private dance. In many ways, the structure of the dance scenes become a storytelling device. As mentioned in the “Closer Look at the Regency Period” section of this guide, dances were a way to make introductions and connect people in society. Characters in the play also mention how important it is to attend dances and meet people that they would never have the chance to meet otherwise.

**When watching the play, pay very close attention to the dance scenes. Setting aside the dialogue, do you see any non-verbal stories being told through dance? How so? Did you learn anything about the characters through the dance sequences that you wouldn’t have known without them? How does the choreography work as a method of storytelling? Do you feel that the play is stronger for including more dance scenes than the novel? Why or why not?**

## Dating, Love and Marriage: Then vs. Now

Even though *Pride and Prejudice* is a period play, many of its themes, like in most Jane Austen's novels, are still very relatable today—especially the ones that deal with dating (or “courting” back then). Doubtful? Well if you enjoyed *Clueless* or *Bridget Jones' Diary*, then doubt no more! Both movies were loosely based on two of Jane's novels: *Clueless* was inspired by *Emma* and *Bridget Jones' Diary* by *Pride and Prejudice*. It seems Jane Austen was the romantic comedy writer of her time due to her astute and insightful observations on the world of dating!

First, let's look at what's changed since the 1800s:

- Arranged marriages are very rare today in Western society.
- Hopefully, someone you're dating would meet your family at some point, but it's not likely you would go for a formal visit that includes sitting with the entire family.
- Because life expectancy was much shorter then, many young men and women married when they were teenagers, but that's rarely expected now.
- Because many people married for financial reasons back then, there was usually no need for a long courtship—if there even was one! People today usually date a few years before getting married.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, marriage and relationships are the by-product of social considerations and a lot of meddling on the part of family and friends (like Mrs. Bennet, Lady Catherine and Darcy). Though love seems to win out in the end, courting during the Regency Era was more about social standing and a random hand of fate guiding you to the right match. While we'd like to think we're past all of that nonsense, how far have we really come?

The first thing to consider is the role of women in the process of wooing. As you may recall from the play, women of the Regency Era usually play a very passive role in dating. All contact is initiated by the man and pressed forward by the man. That is to say, the guy has to ask the girl out, and keep asking her out if he wants things to progress. While women seem to have a voice in the matter, examples like Charlotte Lucas show that women were typically forced to snatch up the best offer (by social standards, not love) for fear that a better offer may not come along, leaving them alone for the rest of their lives. This is what makes Elizabeth Bennet such a noteworthy character for her time: she refuses to settle for a match

that she knows will not make her happy, regardless of the possible consequences in the future.

It could be said that some of the same standards still apply in today's world, as men are typically called upon to initiate and further relationships. However, society has warmed up to the notion of women being empowered in the process. In fact, it's not uncommon for women to boldly take the driver's seat in initiating contact with a partner. And with the growing encouragement for women to be independent and successful in their given trade, remaining unmarried is becoming less of a social stigma and more of conscious choice.

Methods of connection have also changed pretty drastically since the 1800s. Then, for a man and a woman to meet, they would have to be introduced by a third party acquainted with both. This often happened at social gatherings, like dances. From there, they might continue their connection with tea (though of course, the invitation must come from the man). Correspondence through writing would play a role as well.

Today, dating apps have completely streamlined the dating process. No longer do interested parties have to wait to be introduced. Men and women can both show their interest and continue their connection, if they desire to. There is much more freedom in dating today, and oftentimes without the worry of social standing or financial contribution.

You're in high school now—probably old enough to have a relationship of your own. Thankfully you don't have to worry like the Bennet sisters about who someone's family is or how much money they have. How have you navigated the complicated world of dating? Have you taken the reins and pursued that guy or girl who's caught your eye? What do you take into consideration when choosing a match?

## Further Reading

If you enjoyed The Rep’s production of *Pride and Prejudice*, make sure to check out these other titles with similar themes and interests!



**Becoming Jane**  
Directed by Julian Jarrold

Interested in learning more about the mind behind *Pride and Prejudice* or *Sense and Sensibility*? Revisit Jane Austen’s early life in this 2007 film, starring Anne Hathaway.



**Bridget Jones’s Diary**  
by Helen Fielding

Read this modern and hilarious take on Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, which was later turned into an Award-winning film starting Renee Zellweger and Colin Firth.



**Little Women**  
by Louisa May Alcott

This book, originally published in 1868, follows the story of strong-willed women breaking out of their social classes and finding love in the process, not so unlike Jane Austen’s greatest heroines.



**Pride and Prejudice (1995)**  
Directed by Simon Langton

This popular six-part BBC miniseries faithfully adapts Jane Austen’s novel and stars Colin Firth and Jennifer Ehle as Darcy and Elizabeth, respectively.



**Pride and Prejudice (2005)**  
Directed by Joe Wright

Another popular adaptation, this film brings the novel to life and stars Keira Knightley and Matthew Macfadyen.



**Pride and Prejudice and Zombies**  
by Jane Austen and Seth Grahame-Smith

This parody mash-up novel combines the original novel with elements of modern zombie fiction, turning Darcy, Elizabeth and the other Bennet sisters into skilled zombie-fighters.