

Jane Austen

EMMA

Emma Woodhouse is beautiful, rich, intelligent and a snob. She says she'll never marry, but loves matchmaking and is determined to find a suitable husband for her friend Harriet Smith. However, her imagination often leads her to make mistakes, creating problems for both herself and the people around her. Jane Austen describes the social values of her time and the novel is full of comical moments as Emma causes one disaster after another. However, the beauty of this novel is how the author manages to make the reader love Emma as much as she did.

In this reader you will find:

- Information about Jane Austen's life and times
- Glossary of difficult words
- Comprehension and extension activities, including B2 First style activities
- Exit test

Tags

Classic Literature Marriage and Social Status
The Power of Imagination Romance

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Classic

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Book brief

- 1 *Emma* by Jane Austen is a comedy of manners in which Austen gives us an ironic insight into the customs and values of the British upper social class during the Regency Period.
- 2 The novel is set in the fictional small country village of Highbury in Surrey, England, in the early 19th century.
- 3 It tells the story of proud Emma Woodhouse and her fear of facing up to her own true feelings.
- 4 Emma's lack of understanding of her own feelings leads her to misunderstand those around her and to interfere harmfully in the lives of others, especially concerning her friend, Harriet.
- 5 Main themes include marriage, social status, and trusting too much in one's imagination.

Jane Austen

Emma

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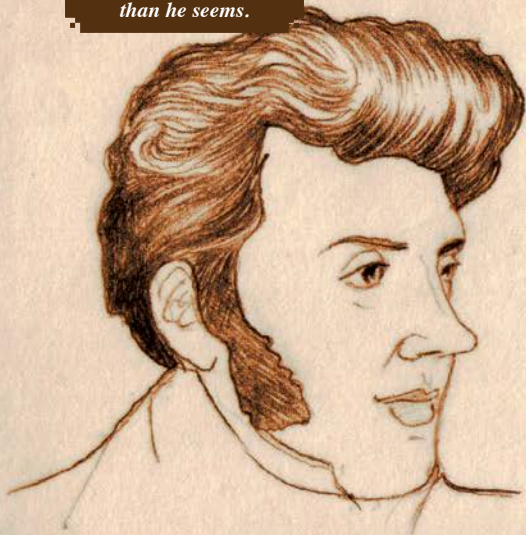
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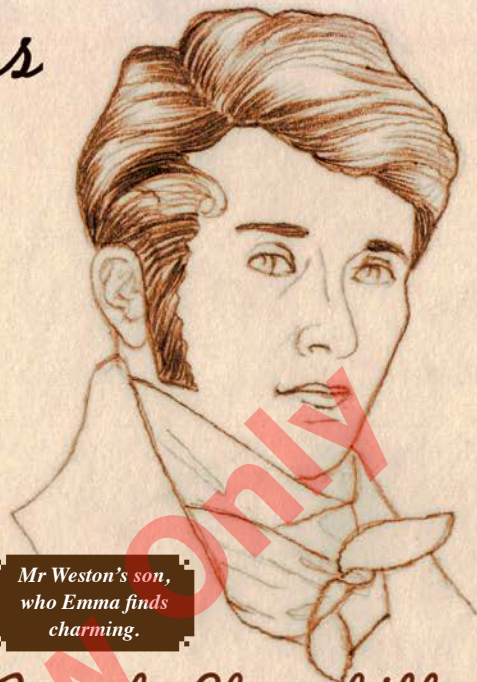
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Main Characters

*The village churchman,
he's more ambitious
than he seems.*

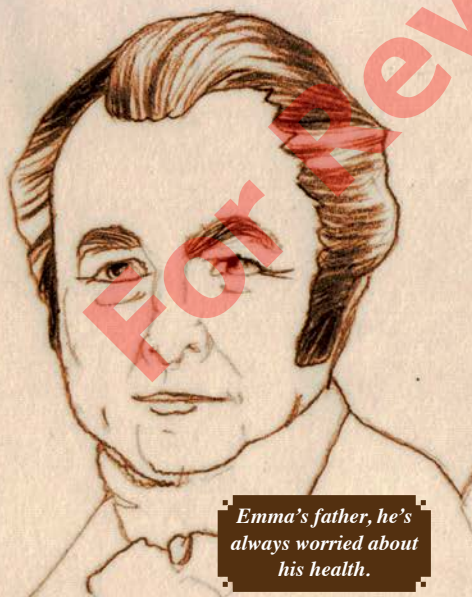


Philip Elton



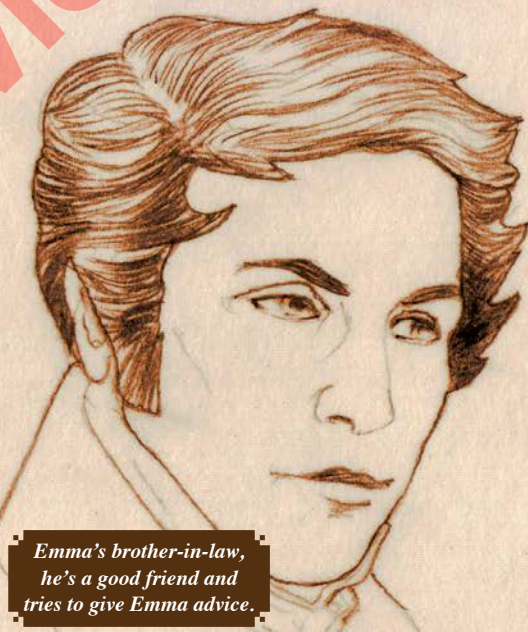
*Mr Weston's son,
who Emma finds
charming.*

Frank Churchill



*Emma's father, he's
always worried about
his health.*

Mr Woodhouse



*Emma's brother-in-law,
he's a good friend and
tries to give Emma advice.*

George Knightley



Miss Bates' beautiful niece,
she has no fortune so must
find a job and leave home.

Jane Fairfax



Emma's new friend, she's
greatly influenced by Emma's
advice in love matters.

Harriet Smith



A kindhearted
unmarried woman
and Jane's aunt.

Miss Hatty Bates



Young, rich and clever, she's convinced she'll
never marry but thinks she's good at helping
others to fall in love with each other.

Emma Woodhouse

Before you Read

Grammar B2 First

- 1 Think of the best word to fill each gap in this text about Emma.

Emma Woodhouse belongs (1) the wealthy society of the village of Highbury, (2) she lives with her father in a beautiful house called Hartfield. Although convinced that she herself will never fall (3) love, Emma adores matchmaking and often lets her imagination interfere (4) her good sense. Apart (5) being beautiful, she's also (6) intelligent, young lady and almost always manages (7) convince people to do what she wants even if it's sometimes not the best solution for them.



Vocabulary

- 2 These words all appear in Chapter 1 in one form or another. Check the meaning of any new words in your dictionary and complete the table below.

Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
luxury		1	2
proposal	3	4	
elegance		5	6
7		beautiful	8
9	marry	10	
11		sad	12
13		14	proudly

Listening B2 First

-  2  **Listen to the start of Chapter 1 and choose the best answer (A, B or C).**

- 1 Emma's sister...
- A ☐ had lived in the small town of Highbury until she got married.
 - B ☐ was younger than her sister, Emma.
 - C ☐ had got married when she was twenty-one.
- 2 What do we learn about Emma?
- A ☐ She's pretty but not very intelligent.
 - B ☐ She can still remember her mother well and misses her.
 - C ☐ She now lives alone with her father at Hartfield.
- 3 Miss Taylor...
- A ☐ had been with Emma since she was sixteen.
 - B ☐ was like a sister to Emma.
 - C ☐ kept Emma under control.
- 4 Emma...
- A ☐ didn't have a very high opinion of herself.
 - B ☐ realised that some aspects of her character could cause trouble.
 - C ☐ had a strong character and usually did as she pleased.
- 5 How did Emma feel after Miss Taylor's marriage?
- A ☐ Upset and angry with herself for not stopping the marriage.
 - B ☐ Sad but proud of herself because she believed she'd played a part in the matchmaking.
 - C ☐ Angry that Miss Taylor had chosen an unsuitable man to marry.
- 6 What do we learn about Emma's father?
- A ☐ He'd be great company for Emma now that Miss Taylor had gone.
 - B ☐ He kept active and fit and recommended that the rest of the family did the same.
 - C ☐ He seemed older than he was and was always anxious about his health.

Friendship

- ▶ 2 Emma Woodhouse, beautiful, rich and clever, at twenty-one had been mistress of Hartfield, her loving father's house ever since her older sister, Isabella, had married and gone to live in London, sixteen miles away from the small town of Highbury. Emma's mother had died so long ago that Emma could hardly remember her gentle touch, but an excellent woman called Miss Taylor who'd looked after Emma since she was five had filled her mother's place. During these sixteen years, Emma and Miss Taylor had become as close as sisters and Emma could do what she liked even if she valued Miss Taylor's judgement. Indeed, the real evils of Emma's situation were the power of having rather too much of her own way, and the habit of thinking a little too well of herself. However, at present she was unaware of the dangers of this side of her character.

The day of Miss Taylor's marriage was the first time that Emma had felt any real kind of sadness in her life. In the evening, when everybody had gone, Emma was left alone to think sadly of what she'd lost, while her father slept peacefully in his armchair. At the same time though, she was happy for Miss Taylor who'd married Mr Weston, a man with no faults, of suitable age, reasonably wealthy and with good manners. Emma was also proud of the fact that she'd always encouraged this match, proof of her generous friendship. However, she missed her gentle, intelligent friend. Miss Taylor was now Mrs Weston and from

Then and even now, most women in Britain take their husband's surname when they get married.

now on would live half a mile from them. Emma dearly loved her father, but he was no companion for her. The age difference between them seemed even greater due to the fact that Mr Woodhouse acted like a man much older than his actual years and did very little except worry about his health and that of those dear to him.

3 The Woodhouses were the most important family in Highbury, and although Emma knew many people – her father was always kind to everybody – none of them could take Miss Taylor's place. Emma sighed at this thought, but then her father woke up and she had to seem cheerful. He was a nervous man, easily depressed, who hated seeing the people he was fond of leave. Marriages meant change, so he found them very upsetting and even after seven years, he still wasn't used to the fact that his daughter Isabella was married. He was gently selfish and convinced that Miss Taylor would have been a great deal happier if she'd stayed at Hartfield.

While Emma was trying to keep her father cheerful, a visitor arrived. It was Mr George Knightley, a sensible man of about thirty-seven years old, and a very close family friend also because his younger brother, John was Isabella's husband. He lived about a mile from Highbury at Donwell Abbey and often came to visit at Hartfield. Mr Knightley had just come back from visiting his brother in London and cheerfully answered all Mr Woodhouse's questions about 'poor Isabella'. When asked about the wedding, all Mr Woodhouse could say was:

'Ah! Poor Miss Taylor! It's a sad business.'

'Well, it must be better to have only one to please, than two,' said Mr Knightley.

'Especially when *one* of those two has too much imagination and causes trouble,' said Emma smiling.

Mr Knightley and Emma often joked with each other. In fact, he was one of the few people who openly criticised Emma. Emma sometimes

didn't like this but she knew her father would be even more upset than her at the thought that somebody might not find her perfect, so she chose to comment no further on what Mr Knightley had said and continued:

'It was a delightful wedding and I'm especially pleased because I made the match myself. Everybody said Mr Weston would never marry again but they were wrong. I love matchmaking, not for myself of course, for other people. It's highly amusing!'

Mr Knightley didn't like the fact that Emma interfered with other people's lives and told her so, while her father who, as usual, had only understood half of the conversation, simply said:

'Please my dear Emma, don't make any more matches, they break up family circles.'

'Only one more, papa,' said Emma. 'Only for, the vicar*, Mr Elton. He's been here for a year – it'd be a shame to have him single any longer.'

'Invite him to dinner, Emma, but leave him to choose his own wife,' said Mr. Knightley. 'I'm sure a man of twenty-seven can take care of himself.'

Emma said nothing, but was still determined to carry out her plan.

That night as she lay in bed, she thought about Miss Taylor – she must get used to calling her Mrs Weston now – and Mr Weston. She was so proud that this matchmaking had worked out so well.

Many years before, Mr Weston, a warm-hearted, friendly man from Highbury had married Miss Churchill from Enscombe in Yorkshire, whose family was much wealthier than Mr Weston's. In fact, Miss Churchill's brother hadn't approved of the marriage and Mr Weston spent much more than he should have, to please his wife. Then after three years, his wife died leaving Mr Weston with their young son, Frank,

vicar person responsible for the local church, who does weddings etc.

and much poorer than he'd been before. Fortunately, Mr Churchill and his wife offered to look after the boy and Mr Weston accepted. Mr Weston then started his own business and over the last eighteen or twenty years had become so successful that he'd managed to buy a little estate*, Randalls, next to Highbury. Miss Taylor had been in his thoughts for some time, but he didn't propose to her until he'd bought Randalls. His son Frank still lived with the Churchills and when he came of age had changed his name to Mr Frank Churchill. Mr Weston, good-humoured by nature, didn't worry about this, was quite happy to see his son once a year in London, and talked about him proudly to the people of Highbury.

Now that Mr Weston was married, everybody was waiting for Mr Frank Churchill to visit, as they'd never seen him before. Mrs Weston received a beautiful letter from Mr Frank Churchill, which made her feel even more fortunate than before.

As for Mr Woodhouse, he still referred to Mrs Weston as 'poor Miss Taylor' despite her evident happiness and was glad for his stomach when all the wedding-cake had finally been eaten up. He did however enjoy company and Emma always organised for his friends to come and see him. These included Mr Knightley, the Westons and Mr Elton who adored the elegant society of Hartfield and the smiles of Mr Woodhouse's lovely daughter.

Three other ladies were often invited to Hartfield; Mrs and Miss Bates and Mrs Goddard. Mrs Bates was a very harmless, old lady, the widow* of a vicar, who lived in a simple way with her single daughter. Miss Bates, a middle-aged woman, though not beautiful, rich or clever, was popular with everybody due to her good, kind, happy nature. Her main concerns were looking after her mother and making a small income*

estate a large piece of land with a big house
widow a woman whose husband has died

income money received, for example, weekly or monthly usually for work done or from land owned etc.

go as far as possible. She was also a great talker and Mr Woodhouse enjoyed her harmless gossip. Mrs Goddard was the mistress of a boarding school* for girls. She was a plain, motherly kind of woman and treated the children well.

Emma was happy for her father when these ladies came to visit but she found their company a bit boring. Then one morning, she received a letter from Mrs Goddard asking if she could bring Miss Smith with her that evening. Emma was delighted because Harriet Smith was seventeen and Emma was keen to meet her because of her beauty.

Nobody knew much about Harriet Smith except that she was the natural daughter of somebody who paid for her to stay with Mrs Goddard even if she was no longer a student at the school. She was a very pretty girl, the type of beauty Emma particularly admired. She was short, plump* and fair, with blue eyes and looked as sweet as she really was. By the end of the evening, Emma was also pleased with Harriet's manners and was determined to get to know her better. Although Harriet wasn't clever, she was willing to talk and seemed so pleasantly grateful to be at Hartfield, that Emma thought she must have good sense and deserved encouragement in order not to waste her time with the inferior* society of Highbury.

Harriet had recently stayed with friends in the country, the Martins. Although they were good people, Emma was sure they weren't the best company for Harriet. The Martins rented a large farm on Mr Knightley's estate – Mr Knightley thought very highly of them – but Emma was convinced that they were too bad-mannered to be friends of a girl who needed just a little more knowledge and elegance to be

boarding school a school where students actually live as they're given their meals and a place to sleep

plump having a full rounded shape
inferior lower, second-class

perfect. Therefore, Emma thought it very kind of herself to be willing to teach Harriet all she needed to know to enter into good society. Miss Smith went away happily at the end of the evening, grateful for all the attention Miss Woodhouse had given her.

Emma lost no time in encouraging Harriet Smith to come to Hartfield very often. Harriet would be her new friend, not the same as Mrs Weston, but someone that Emma could be useful to. Harriet told Emma everything and was greatly influenced by Emma's opinion. The girl spoke enthusiastically about the time she'd spent with the Martins and at first Emma was quietly amused. Then she became worried when she realised that Mr Martin wasn't Mrs Martin's husband, but her twenty-four year old son, a young, single man, who might prove to be a danger to her poor little friend. Emma could see that Harriet found great pleasure in talking about Mr Martin and repeatedly said how good-humoured he was.

'What does Mr Martin look like?' asked Emma.

'Oh! Not handsome – not at all handsome,' said Harriet. 'I thought him very plain at first, but I don't think he's so plain now. But, haven't you ever seen him?'

'I may have seen him, but without having any idea of his name,' said Emma. 'A young farmer is the very last sort of person to raise my curiosity.'

'To be sure,' said Harriet quickly. 'Oh! Yes, it's not likely you should ever have noticed him.'

They met Mr Martin the very next day while they were out walking. Emma thought he looked tidy enough and seemed sensible but he definitely didn't have the manners of a gentleman. Harriet was anxious to know Emma's opinion of him and as soon as he was gone said:

Reading Comprehension

1 Match the person to the adjectives you think describe them best from what you've read in Chapter 1.

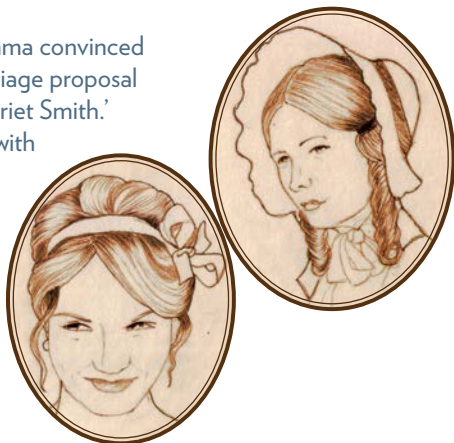
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 ☐ Emma Woodhouse | a single, plain and rude |
| 2 ☐ Mr Woodhouse | b young, sweet and grateful |
| 3 ☐ Harriet Smith | c sensible, honest and well-mannered |
| 4 ☐ Mr Knightley | d elderly, nervous and loving |
| 5 ☐ Mr Weston | e middle-aged, kind and popular |
| 6 ☐ Mr Robert Martin | f cheerful, helpful and gentle |
| 7 ☐ Miss Bates | g beautiful, rich and clever |
| 8 ☐ Mr Elton | h warm-hearted, friendly and good-humoured |

Speaking

21st Century Skills

2 In Chapter 1, Jane Austen describes the friendship between Emma Woodhouse and Harriet Smith. Discuss the following with a partner.

- 1 When Mrs Goddard asks to bring Harriet Smith to Hartfield, we learn that Emma is interested in meeting the girl 'because of her beauty'. How much do you think we're influenced by appearance in our relationships?
- 2 Emma says: 'Harriet would be her new friend, someone that she could be useful to.' Do you think that this friendship can last? Why? / Why not?
- 3 When Mr Knightley finds out that Emma convinced Harriet to refuse Robert Martin's marriage proposal he says: 'You've been no friend to Harriet Smith.' How much do you agree or disagree with this statement?
- 4 Can a relationship work if your friend has totally different interests from you or comes from a different background?



Grammar

3 Complete the sentences with the right alternative.

- 1 Emma Woodhouse was very *interested/keen* on matchmaking.
- 2 When she was a child, Miss Taylor used to *care/look* after Emma.
- 3 Emma didn't like Robert Martin *due/because* of his total lack of manners.
- 4 Mr Knightley *agreed/approved* of Robert Martin's plan to marry Harriet Smith.
- 5 Mr Woodhouse didn't like matchmaking because it broke *up/down* family circles.
- 6 Talking about Robert Martin, Emma said that a young farmer was the last sort of person to *rise/raise* her curiosity.
- 7 Emma told Harriet she *ought/should* to refuse Robert Martin's marriage proposal.

Pre-Reading Activity • Chapter Two

Listening B2 First

4 Listen to the start of Chapter 2 and complete the text with the words you hear.

Emma and Mr Knightley didn't meet for ages after they'd argued about Robert Martin and when they eventually saw each other Emma realised that he hadn't (1) her yet. Emma was sad about Mr Knightley's behaviour but she didn't (2) her actions. Harriet's picture was now above the (3) and Mr Elton's (4) every time he saw it, made Harriet happy. Emma was (5) as well and was (6) that Harriet now thought that Mr Elton was much (7) than Mr Martin.