

Emma Essay Topics

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In-Class Writing

Writing Project 1

Time: 40 minutes. No books

Directions Select one of the topics below and write an organized essay. Use examples from the novel to support your analysis.

- Describe the status of women as Austen portrays them.
- Analyze the purposes of marriage in Austen's society.

Writing Project 2

Time: 35 minutes. Open Book: Turn to Volume II, Chapter 22

Directions Briefly summarize Elton's courtship of Augusta Hawkins and analyze how the style and tone of the passage explain Austen's attitude towards the Elton marriage.

Homework

Writing Project 1—Character Imitation

Length: 1/2 to 1 page

Directions: Choose one of the following topics or develop one of your own situations and write in the "voice" of an Austen character.

- Miss Bates reporting the marriage of Jane Fairfax to Frank Churchill based on a letter she just received from Enscombe
- Mrs. Elton writing to Mrs. Suckling describing a dinner at Hartfield
- Mr. Woodhouse talking to Mrs. Goddard about Emma's marriage to George Knightley
- Frank Churchill talking to you at Weymouth

Writing Project 2

Length: 3 pages

Directions Choose one of the following or create a topic for approval.

- ☞ Examine the young women who act as foils against which we measure Emma's character: Harriet Smith, Jane Fairfax, and Augusta Elton. How do these foils both reveal Emma's flaws and demonstrate their limits?
- ☞ Choose *one* scene from *Emma* where we meet Highbury society; for example, the Crown Ball, the Box Hill picnic, the Donwell Abbey strawberry picking party. How does Austen integrate the social and the moral issues?
- ☞ Select one of the scenes where we meet Highbury society and examine the way Austen uses irony and foreshadowing in developing character, theme, plot.
- ☞ *Emma* is filled with riddles, games, puzzles: Why? Who is the best player? Select two to three significant examples and draw some conclusions about the symbolism of games in this novel.
- ☞ England in 1817 is a patriarchy. Discuss the fathers and sons in *Emma*. Does Austen follow convention?
- ☞ Why is Jane Fairfax necessary to the plot and theme of the novel?
- ☞ Reread the monologues of Miss Bates. How does Austen's word choice, imagery, and organization of details reveal Miss Bates's character and moral judgment? Alternative questions: How do Miss Bates's monologues bury clues about the Frank/Jane courtship?
- ☞ Compare Emma Woodhouse and Frank Churchill in their manipulation of friends and situations.
- ☞ Letters and reports of receiving letters add to the complexity of plotting in *Emma* and present the reader with alternative stories to Emma's. How do these letters influence the reader's perceptions of the characters?
- ☞ In Volume III, chapter 47, Emma gains self-knowledge. Has her moral education diminished her?
- ☞ In Volume I, chapter 10, Emma tells her friend Harriet:
I have none of the usual inducements of women to marry. Fortune I do not want; employment I do not want; consequence I do not want; I believe few married women are half as much mistress of their husband's house as I am of Hartfield; and never, never could I expect to be so truly beloved and important.

Is Emma right? Will her "resources" keep her from sharing Miss Bates's destiny?
- ☞ Compare the relationship of Emma Woodhouse and George Knightley to that of Jane Fairfax and Frank Churchill.
- ☞ Choose a short scene when at least two characters interact, for example, Harriet's sharing Robert Martin's letter of proposal with Emma. Write a well-organized essay in which you contrast the characters at the opening and at the closing of this scene; then analyze why and how the change occurred.