

The context of *Emma*: research task

This research task will develop your understanding of the time in which *Emma* was written and enhance your appreciation of the novel.

Use the internet to find the answers to the following questions. Some questions will need a one sentence answer while others require a longer response.

Austen and her characters

Write a one paragraph biography of Jane Austen, including the dates and titles of her major novels.

Aside from her major works, Austen completed works known as the *Juvenilia*. Write a brief description of the *Juvenilia*. Try to explain any similarities and differences between them and the style of her major works.

Several of Austen's novels contain weak father figures. Which of Austen's novels contain these weak fathers and what are their respective follies?

How does Emma differ from the female protagonists in Austen's other novels?

Emma is an example of a comedy of manners. What is the definition of a comedy of manners?

The 19th century

1. How important was social class? Explain your response.
2. How were young women educated? What were they expected to study?
3. How was property and wealth passed down through a family?
4. Which jobs were available to women? What was the best way for an early nineteenth-century woman to secure her future?
5. How were some attitudes towards marriage different to today?
6. What were the attitudes towards illegitimacy?
7. What was a ball? What did it consist of? What role did dance play in early nineteenth-century England as a whole?
8. The Industrial Revolution:
 - a. What and when was it?
 - b. What did the landed gentry think of the *nouveau riche*?
 - c. What was life like for the urban poor?
9. What advances were made in medical knowledge?
10. Provide an overview of the British Empire, including information about Britain's role in the slave trade until its eventual abolishment.
11. Research the following two wars that were taking place at the time of writing:
 - a. The American War of Independence.
 - b. The Napoleonic Wars.
 - c. Which famous battle took place when *Emma* was being written?
12. *Emma* is dedicated to the Prince Regent, why is this dedication surprising? Read the dedication and comment on anything you notice about its tone.

While you read, look for references to the information from your research.

Why are some issues referred to more than others?

Why do you think some important issues are not mentioned at all?