约克文学作品辅导丛书

YORK NOTES ON

EMMA

爱玛

Jane Austen

LONGMAN LITERATURE GUIDES

YORK NOTES

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Jane Austen

EMMA

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《约克文学作品辅导丛书》介绍

《约克文学作品辅导丛书》(York Notes)系 Longman 集团有限公司(英国)出版。本丛书覆盖了世界各国历代文学名著，原意是辅导英国中学生准备文学课的高级会考或供英国大学生自学参考。因此，它很适合我国高校英语专业学生研读文学作品时参考。

丛书由 A. N. Jeffares 和 S. Bushrui 两位教授任总编。每册的编写者大都是研究有关作家的专家学者，他们又都有在大学讲授文学的经验，比较了解学生理解上的难点。本丛书自问世以来，始终畅销不衰，被使用者普遍认为是英美出版的同类书中质量较高的一种。

丛书每一册都按统一格式对一部作品进行介绍和分析。每一册都有下列五个部分。

① 导言。主要介绍：作者生平，作品产生的社会、历史背景，有关的文学传统或文艺思潮等。

② 内容提要。一般分为两部分：a. 全书的内容概述；b. 每章的内容提要及难词、难句注释，如方言、典故、圣经或文学作品的引语、有关社会文化习俗等。注释恰到好处，对于读懂原作很有帮助。

③ 评论。结合作品的特点，对结构、人物塑造、叙述角度、语言风格、主题思想等进行分析和评论。论述深入浅出，分析力求客观，意在挖掘作品内涵和展示其艺术性。

④ 学习提示。提出学习要点、重要引语和思考题(附参考答案或答案要点)。

⑤ 进一步研读指导。介绍该作品的最佳版本；版本中是否有重大改动；列出供进一步研读的参考书目(包括作者传记、研究有关作品的专著和评论文章等)。

总之，丛书既提供必要的背景知识，又注意启发学生思考；既重视在吃透作品的基础上进行分析，又对进一步研究提供具体指导；因此是一套理想的英语文学辅导材料。

北京师范大学外文系教授　钱　瑗

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Part 1

Introduction

Life of Jane Austen (1775–1817)

Jane Austen was born in December 1775, seventh of the eight children of George Austen, a Church of England clergyman, and his wife Cassandra, the daughter of another clergyman; both families had many Church and university connections. The Austens, a happy, well-educated and affectionate family, lived at the rectory in the parish of Steventon in Hampshire from 1764 to 1801 when George Austen retired. Two of Jane Austen's brothers, of whom one had previously been a banker, became clergymen; another inherited land in Kent and Hampshire. Two had distinguished careers in the British Navy, one becoming Commander of the Fleet, the other Commander-in-Chief of the East India Station. As was usual at the time, the daughters did not have careers, but stayed at home, except for visits to friends. Jane and her sister Cassandra went to small boarding schools when very young, but after the age of eleven were educated at home. They read widely in eighteenth-century fiction, played the piano and learnt Italian and French. Jane and Cassandra were devoted to each other throughout Jane's life, and much of our information about her life and opinions comes from her letters written to Cassandra whenever either was away. Jane Austen went to stay for long periods with friends in the counties of Hampshire, Kent, Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Surrey, and also in London. At home, the Austens were popular in their neighbourhood, and accepted by some aristocratic families and 'landed gentry'; they attended many balls, parties and entertainments.

Jane Austen began to write stories and sketches for her family at the age of twelve. By 1795 she had written a comic *History of the World*; an unfinished novel, *Catharine*; and two epistolary novels, *Lady Susan* and *Elinor and Marianne*, which she was later to rewrite as *Sense and Sensibility*. In 1797 she started *First Impressions*, the first draft of *Pride and Prejudice*, and in 1798 *Susan*, which was published after her death as *Northanger Abbey*.

In 1801 the Austen family moved to Bath, a fashionable resort in the south-west of England, famous for its healing spa waters. Jane Austen is reputed to have had a romance in 1802; she parted from her lover, who died in 1803. She had a proposal in 1803 from a wealthy Hampshire landowner; she accepted, but retracted her acceptance the following

morning. She never married, but had a full social life with many friends and a large family circle, having numerous nieces and nephews to whom she was very close—in particular her niece Anna, an aspiring novelist with whom she corresponded. After a break in writing from 1801 to 1804, she began *The Watsons*, a novel which she never finished, probably because of the death of her father in 1805.

In 1806 Jane Austen, her sister Cassandra, and their mother moved to Southampton, a large sea-port on the Hampshire coastline, and in 1809 to the village of Chawton, also in Hampshire. It was at Chawton Cottage that she did most of her finished writing. In November 1811 her first published novel, *Sense and Sensibility*, appeared, and was very successful. *Pride and Prejudice* was published in January 1813, *Mansfield Park* in May 1814 and *Emma* in very early 1816. She finished *Persuasion* in July 1816, and began *Sanditon* in 1817, but after two months became too ill to finish it. Her health continued to decline until July of that year when she died, aged only forty-two, and after only five years as a publishing writer. *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* were published in 1818. So the six great novels for which she is remembered all appeared within seven years. They were all published anonymously, and written in secret, though it became know that she was the author, and she was officially requested, against her own wishes, to dedicate *Emma* to the Prince Regent.

Historical background

The period of Jane Austen's life (1775–1817) was one of great disruption in world affairs. The French Revolution of 1789 was the starting-point for similar revolutionary movements in many other countries; and although Great Britain did not have a comparable revolution, she was actively engaged in wars and insurrections all over the world. In 1793 France declared war on her, and from then until just before Jane Austen's death, the two countries were almost continually at war under their great commanders, Napoleon and Wellington. Napoleon was crowned Emperor of France in 1804, and defeated the Austrians in 1805; also in 1805 Admiral Nelson defeated the French fleet at Trafalgar. From 1808 to 1814, Britain was also fighting the Peninsular war against the French in Spain and Portugal. The wars against Napoleon culminated in the battle of Waterloo in 1815 when Wellington and the British, with the help of Blücher and the Prussians, defeated the French under Napoleon; Louis XVIII was restored to the throne of France, and Napoleon was exiled to St Helena.

The Napoleonic wars were not the only military concerns of the British: in 1798 the Irish Rebellion had to be put down; two years later the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland was passed, making

Ireland part of Great Britain. From 1799 onwards, Britain was also fighting the Mahratta wars in India. The American War of Independence had come to an end in 1784, with Britain's loss of America as a colony: the newly independent country declared war on Britain in 1812, the war continuing until 1814. Britain had many lesser engagements elsewhere: in 1807 Wellington wrote to the Prime Minister that he was 'ready to set out for any part of the world at a moment's notice', and indeed in that year alone, British forces had engagements in Brazil, Egypt, Sweden and Venezuela.

At home, George III had been king since 1760; in 1810 he became ill and insane and the Regency Bill of 1811 declared his son (later George IV) ruler in his place. As Prince Regent he was politically untrustworthy, as a man he was gross and licentious, but he was remarkable as a leader in fashion and taste. He was pre-eminent in establishing the very distinctive style of his age in architecture, landscape, dress and pastimes. Architecture, after the regular classicism of the preceding age, became ornate and fanciful ('Regency Gothic'), or elaborately 'rustic', or oriental, like the Brighton Pavilion, built for the Prince Regent, with its domes, minarets and Chinese furniture and decorations. With his friend 'Beau' Brummell he set an extremely elegant style of dress for men; not multicoloured and dandyish, but dark and severe; women wore neo-Classical clothes, typically a white muslin dress, simple and flowing, with a high feather headress or turban for grand occasions, or the more usual bonnet for every day. The Prince Regent popularised the idea of staying at seaside resorts such as Weymouth and Brighton, or at fashionable spas such as Bath, all of which appear in Jane Austen's novels. Other places of entertainment with which Jane Austen was familiar through her visits to London included the many theatres; Ranelagh Gardens and Vauxhall Gardens, pleasure gardens for strolling, recreation and refreshment; Almack's Club, the summit of London 'Society', for dancing; Astley's Royal Amphitheatre, for equestrian performances (mentioned in *Emma*, Chapter 54); and a host of other diversions such as music and firework displays on the River Thames.

Jane Austen's letters are full of details about such 'background' on the international and the national level. Her naval brothers were actively engaged in the Napoleonic wars, she had friends and relatives concerned in the Indian uprisings, in the war with America, in the West Indies, even killed in the French Revolution, and all of these places and matters are mentioned in her letters. So are the clothes that she and other people wore. But her novels are not intended to be histories or fashion plates; in them one becomes aware of 'background' only according to the characters' awareness of it. She will not, for example, give a top-to-toe description of a woman's dress, but from Mrs Elton's own words we gather that she has a taste for white and silver poplin, pearls and

trimmings (*Emma*, Chapter 35). Because Emma herself is suddenly vividly conscious of the landscape of Mr Knightley's estate, we receive a remarkably clear impression of it (*Emma*, Chapter 42). But unless it was necessary for such purposes, Jane Austen, writing for her contemporaries, avoided self-conscious background and 'current affairs'. She has been criticised for writing at the time of the Napoleonic wars without mentioning them—except in so far as military preparations bring a regiment of militia to Meryton to provide dancing partners for the Bennet sisters in *Pride and Prejudice*. She was, however, intensively and exclusively concerned with the regiment's effect upon the social life of Meryton and the Bennets, and not at all with its effect upon the (unspecified) enemy. She was not eager to load her novels with topical references to events which, however historically important, did not impinge very much on daily life in provincial England, her special domain.

Literary background

Chronologically, Jane Austen's work stands between the neo-Classical formality of the eighteenth century and the effusive, emotional Romanticism of the nineteenth century. It stands at the point where the 'Age of Reason' becomes the 'Age of Sensibility'. But she belongs to no 'school' of writers, and indeed the more her manner, style, or content resembles that of currently popular novelists, the more likely she is to be mocking them. The progress of the novel in England at the end of the eighteenth century did not correspond very closely to the pattern of other kinds of literature, and Jane Austen's style is very much more in tune with that of the poets and non-fictional prose writers of the mid-eighteenth century, the Augustan age. Although Jane Austen read the work of contemporary Romantic poets such as Robert Burns (1759–96), Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832) and Lord Byron (1788–1824), her style and content have much more in common with those of earlier poets such as Alexander Pope (1688–1744), or of essayists and critics such as Joseph Addison (1672–1719) or Samuel Johnson (1709–84). Their extreme formality of style, their balanced sentences, the carefully constructed sequence of their theses are still visible in her prose; their advocation of moderation in all things, their morality, their satirical detachment are echoed in her manner.

The English novel, at the time that Jane Austen was writing, was still in the exciting grip of the Gothic. The Gothic romance was introduced to English literature by Horace Walpole (1717–97) with *The Castle of Otranto* (1765); it rejoiced, or rather agonised, in picturesque horror, magic, superstition, murder and love, against a backdrop of sinister forests and gloomy medieval castles. There are some variations in

background, all suitably exotic (William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786) was set in the mysterious east, Mrs Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) in sixteenth-century France and Italy); and abbeys and monasteries abounded (Mrs Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797), Matthew Gregory Lewis's *The Monk* (1795)). These and many others brought the supernatural, diabolism, terror and romance to the library tables of the fashionable.

Another vein of novel-writing was pursued by contemporary women writers, notably Fanny Burney (1752–1840) and Maria Edgeworth (1767–1849). Both wrote novels of 'manners'. Fanny Burney's *Evelina* (1778), written in letter form, shows the introduction of a young girl into London society; Maria Edgeworth's *Helen* and *Belinda* also show leisured society (at a more aristocratic level than that in Jane Austen's novels), but are neither as original nor as good as her *Castle Rackrent* (1800) which describes Irish life over several generations, recounted by a peasant, Thady Quirk, in his own dialect. This third vein, the regional one, was to continue well into the nineteenth century. Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832), who had published Scottish ballads *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802–3), wrote his first novel, *Waverley*, in 1814, and for the rest of Jane Austen's lifetime continued to write romantic and highly coloured fiction with a Scottish historical setting.

There are echoes of these three kinds of novel in Jane Austen's work. She makes fun of the Gothic novel and its conventions (especially in *Northanger Abbey*, a parody of the genre). Her close examination of social life has much in common with the novel of manners. And she could be said to be preserving in precise detail the manners and customs of provincial England, as other writers were preserving those of Scotland, Wales and Ireland. But June Austen differs from all her contemporaries in the subtlety of her characterisation, in the depth of her irony, and in the individual tone of her narration.

Jane Austen's novels

Jane Austen wrote to her niece Anna, who wished to become a novelist: 'three or four families in a country village is the very thing to work on'; she also described 'the little bit (two inches wide) of ivory on which I work with so fine a brush, as produces little effect after much labour'. The scale of three or four families is that of all Jane Austen's novels; the little bit of ivory is a good image for her intricately detailed work; but her admirers would say that she had laboured to great, not little, effect.

Jane Austen set her 'three or four families' in a rigid hierarchy within their country villages. At a time when the dividing lines between the aristocracy and the upper-middle class, and between the upper-middle class and people in business or 'trade', were becoming blurred, she chose

the middle class both as a small, encompassable social span, and as a varied one. Within it she showed a self-defined traditional order of birth, money and land which could only be upset at one's peril. She preaches the conventional pattern of life in the family and in society; the pattern of behaviour expected of one towards family, friends, acquaintances, admirers, superiors and inferiors. The lessons of her novels concern not morals, ethics or religion, but behaviour. One must learn how to behave towards other people; the individual must learn how to fit into society. One of the ways of seeing how to behave is to see clearly: in *Sense and Sensibility*, Marianne Dashwood must abandon her sensibility, or undue emotional sensitivity, before she can behave properly; in *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet must rid themselves, the one of his pride, the other of her prejudice, before they can behave appropriately towards each other and towards others. In *Emma*, the heroine must control her 'fancy', or fantasising imagination, before she can fit herself into what is really happening instead of trying to mould people around her imaginings.

People can be blinded to real life by the preconceptions they have acquired from popular literature; and one of the ways in which Jane Austen represents the realities of life is by pointing out how different it is from what romantic literature would have us believe. From her earliest stories Jane Austen poked fun at the novel of sensibility. *Love and Freindship*, which she wrote at fourteen, is a parody of the sensational romantic novel; much later she wrote a fake synopsis of a novel bringing in all the romantic subjects and backgrounds that her reading and her acquaintances had suggested to her ('Plan of a Novel according to hints from various quarters', about 1816). Marianne Dashwood's sensibility, Emma's fancy, Elizabeth Bennet's prejudice, are ultimately derived from literature. But Jane Austen's funniest and most scathing attack on contemporary literature is in *Northanger Abbey*, in which she turns the Gothic convention on its romantic head. Catherine Morland expects Northanger to be a 'real' Gothic abbey, and is taken aback to find that it is bright and modern instead of mouldering and grim. Her 'passion for ancient edifices' and her 'visions of romance' make her either blind to real life or disappointed in it. In the end, true love triumphs in a rather down-to-earth way and she marries Henry Tilney. Real life is found to be quite different from the expectations of the avid novel-reader. All of Jane Austen's novels end with the typical conclusion of the romantic novel, marriage for two or more of the main characters: the heroine of *Persuasion*, Anne Elliott, has been persuaded eight years ago to renounce her lover, Frederick Wentworth, who reappears on the scene at the beginning of the novel; she is reunited with him at the end of it. But Jane Austen's way of arriving at such last-chapter marriages is not romantic; it is achieved by sweeping away hypocrisy, literary notions,

romantic illusions, snobbery and prejudice of all kinds, to arrive at truth, sincerity and a happy union, not just with one's beloved, but with the society in which one finds oneself.

A note on the text

Emma was begun on 21 January 1814 and finished on 29 March 1815. It was published in three volumes in 1816 by John Murray, London. Two thousand copies were printed, of which 1,250 were sold within the year. The second edition appeared in 1833, and the novel was frequently reprinted during the nineteenth century, with an illustrated edition in 1896. One great edition of *Emma* is in the Oxford University Press series of the novels of Jane Austen, edited, with notes and appendices, by R. W. Chapman, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1923; reprinted twelve times up to 1978. *Emma* also appeared in the Oxford English Novels Series, edited by David Lodge, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1971. Although the last two are both one-volume editions, they keep to the three-volume scheme, with chapter numbers and pagination corresponding to those of the original three volumes.

The text used in these notes is that of the Penguin edition, edited by Ronald Blythe, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1966; reprinted thirteen times up to 1978. Here the chapter numbers are sequential, in one volume. The Penguin edition's Chapters 1–18 correspond to Volume I, Chapters I-XVIII, of the three-volume edition; Penguin Chapters 19–36 to Volume II, Chapters I-XVIII; Penguin Chapters 37–55 to Volume III, Chapters I-XIX.

Part 2

Summaries
of EMMA

A general summary

Emma has two interconnecting plots. The 'outward' plot is concerned with the comings and goings, advances and reverses of a small circle of moderately well-born people in a provincial town, Highbury. The 'inward' plot is concerned with the mind of the novel's heroine, Emma Woodhouse. The outward plot tells the love stories of three couples, whose weddings are the culmination of the novel: Emma herself and Mr Knightley; Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax; Harriet Smith and Robert Martin. The inward plot traces the development of Emma's mind from ill-founded self-satisfaction, through several humiliations, to self-knowledge and good sense. The two plots are very closely linked, partly because almost all the 'action' takes place around Emma, but principally because much of it is initiated by her. Her manipulation of the characters around her affects their stories, and also demonstrates her state of mind: her 'fancy', or imaginary perception of what a situation is or might be, leads her and them into many false positions.

The characters whom we first meet around Emma are her indulgent but demanding father; her former governess Mrs Weston and her new husband; and Mr George Knightley, a neighbouring landowner. We later meet her sister Isabella and her husband John, who is Mr Knightley's brother, and other neighbours, including Mrs and Miss Bates and Mr and Mrs Cole. Emma determines to find a wife for Mr Elton, the vicar. When she meets Harriet Smith, who is pretty but not very intelligent, and socially inferior to herself, she decides to befriend her, to 'bring her on', and to marry her to Mr Elton.

Despite Mr Knightley's warnings, Emma brings them together a great deal at her house, Hartfield. She makes Harriet refuse the proposal of marriage she receives from Robert Martin, a tenant farmer on Mr Knightley's estate, whom she does not think grand enough for her protégée. Mr Knightley, who thinks the two ideally matched in rank and education, angrily criticises Emma for interfering, and tells her that Mr Elton will never marry Harriet, who has neither wealth nor rank. They quarrel.

Emma believes her scheme is successful. Mr Elton's constant visits to them, his interest in a portrait she paints of Harriet, the charade or puzzle-poem that he brings them, all make her think that he admires

Harriet—though he does not propose marriage when Emma contrives to leave them alone together. Emma and Mr Knightley make up their quarrel, but she still justifies herself for turning Harriet away from Robert Martin. At a party given by the Westons at their house, Randalls, Mr John Knightley warns Emma that Mr Elton is interested in her, and that her manner towards him is too encouraging. She says he is quite mistaken: her own opinion of Mr Elton is that he is ridiculous and pretentious.

Snow cuts the party short, and Emma find herself returning in a carriage alone with Mr Elton who surprises and distresses her by declaring that he loves her, and cares nothing for Harriet. When she repeatedly repulses him he accuses her of having led him on; both are furious. This scene induces Emma's first period of humiliation: her first inkling that she may have been wrong, that she has misread all the signs, that she has misled Harriet. She despises Mr Elton for his proposal, which she puts down to her wealth and position, but acknowledges that she has appeared too encouraging. She resolves never to matchmake again, and feels great shame for having raised Harriet's expectations, though she still feels that she was right to make her refuse Robert Martin's proposal. Mr Elton goes to Bath. Emma has to tell Harriet what has happened and destroy the hopes that she has built up, though she cannot destroy Harriet's admiration for Mr Elton.

Jane Fairfax, an orphaned granddaughter of Mrs Bates, comes to stay with the Bateses. She has been brought up by a Colonel and Mrs Campbell with their own daughter, now Mrs Dixon. Emma admires her elegance and her accomplished piano-playing and singing, but does not seek her friendship as Mr Knightley thinks she should. Emma is repelled by Miss Fairfax's cold, reserved manner and her tedious relations; Mr Knightley sees that the two young women are of equal education and rank, although Emma is rich and Miss Fairfax is poor. Emma begins to speculate about Jane Fairfax's relationship with the Campbell's son-in-law, Mr Dixon.

News comes that Mr Elton is to be married to a well-to-do lady he has met at Bath. Harriet's shock is blunted by her agitation at meeting Robert Martin and his sisters, who invite her to visit them; Emma ensures that the visit is as short as possible by calling for Harriet herself.

Everyone in Highbury has heard a great deal about Mr Weston's son by his first marriage, now called Frank Churchill, who has been brought up by his uncle and aunt, Mr and Mrs Churchill. His letters are admired: a visit has been promised and postponed many times. At last he arrives; Emma finds him pleasant and charming, and as they walk and talk she feels they have established an instant rapport. It has already crossed her mind that they might be a suitable match for each other. He visits all his father's friends, including Jane Fairfax, whom he has met some months

before at Weymouth with the Campbells. Emma questions him closely about Mr Dixon.

Her suspicions about Mr Dixon are increased when an unknown admirer sends Jane Fairfax a piano. Mrs Weston, however, suspects that the sender is Mr Knightley, and that he might marry Miss Fairfax, a prospect which displeases Emma. Frank Churchill criticises Jane Fairfax to Emma, who tells him her suspicions about Mr Dixon: the next day she feels that she has done wrong in gossiping to him. Frank Churchill, who often visits the Bateses, not only encourages Emma in her suspicions but hints about them to Miss Fairfax. He suggests that a ball be held in Highbury, and plans are made, but it is postponed when he has to leave because Mrs Churchill is ill. Before he goes Emma thinks he is on the point of proposing marriage to her: she avoids what she thinks is to be the declaration, and reflects afterwards that he is very much in love with her, but that she is not much in love with him. She now conceives the idea that he should marry Harriet.

Mr Elton returns with his bride, who is treated with all the ceremony attendant upon a newly married woman. She is extremely vulgar, boastful and opinionated. Mr Knightley, on Emma's enquiry, makes it clear that he does not intend to marry Jane Fairfax, but he points out that Emma should have become her friend, and not left her at the mercy of the over-familiar Mrs Elton. Because of her poverty, Jane Fairfax will eventually have to become a governess; Mrs Elton is officiously determined to find her a position immediately. Emma's suspicions about Jane Fairfax are heightened when she hears that she has been seen walking in the rain to the post office—Emma concludes that she has been receiving letters from Mr Dixon.

The long-awaited ball takes place. Frank Churchill is extremely attentive to Emma. Mr Elton openly refuses to dance with Harriet Smith, and Mr Knightley saves her from embarrassment by dancing with her. Emma compares Mr Knightley's manner and appearance favourably with those of all the other men present, and they dance and talk spiritedly together.

The next day, Harriet is set upon by gipsies, and is rescued by Frank Churchill. Emma, seeing them thrown together in this way, thinks how splendid it would be if they married. This time, she resolves not to interfere. Harriet burns her mementoes of Mr Elton. She confesses that she admires someone else whom Emma takes to be Frank Churchill; Emma encourages her to think that she can marry somebody who is her social superior.

Mr Knightley comes to the conclusion that there is a 'private understanding' between Jane Fairfax and Frank Churchill, and that the latter is therefore double-dealing by paying attentions to Emma. He warns Emma of this but she ridicules and denies the possibility. While