Moral judgements

1. ‘Writers often use humour in order to make moral judgements.’ To what extent do you agree with this statement?

2. ‘What reinforces a sense of comic triviality in Pride and Prejudice is its depiction of a society which considers manners to be as important as morals.’ Explore in some detail the extent to which you agree with this statement.

3. ‘It is difficult for the reader to consider Pride and Prejudice as being primarily comic; the situations it conveys are often too painful and the overall tone is too clearly one of serious moral teaching.’ Explore in some detail the extent to which you agree with this claim.

4. ‘In Pride and Prejudice it is often difficult to establish the moral viewpoint of the narrator.’ Discuss in some detail the extent to which you agree with this claim.

Individuals and society

1. ‘Although Pride and Prejudice contains much that is comic, its real subject is the serious issue of an individual’s search for his or her true home in the society being portrayed.’ Explore in some detail the extent to which you agree with this claim.

2. ‘It is the small, seemingly trivial social detail that exposes a writer’s attitude to the society he or she portrays.’ In the light of this statement, explore Austen’s attitude to the society she portrays.

3. ‘What characterises Pride and Prejudice as comic is Austen’s presentation of personal human relationships as being essentially optimistic within the confines of the society being portrayed.’ Explore in some detail the extent to which you agree with this critical assertion.

4. ‘Far from criticising her society, Austen shows in Pride and Prejudice that she upholds the structure of society and strongly supports the social conventions of the time.’ To what extent does this view fit with your reading of the novel?

5. ‘It is through the impact of outsiders such as Mr Bingley and Mr Wickham that Jane Austen gives the reader insight into the society which she creates in Pride and Prejudice.’ Examine the presentation of two or more ‘outsiders’ in the light of this statement.

6. ‘Pride and Prejudice invites the modern reader to judge its characters as much by the environment in which they live, work and play as by what they say and what they do.’ Explore in some detail the extent to which you agree with this claim.

7. ‘In Pride and Prejudice Austen presents a picture of an inward-looking community, limited in outlook, which crushes imagination and individuality.’ To what extent does this view fit with your reading of the novel?

Family

1. ‘To Elizabeth it appeared that had her family made an agreement to expose themselves as much as they could during the evening, it would have been impossible for them to play their parts with more spirit, or finer success.’ To what extent does Austen make use of the relationships between family members?

2. ‘Family relationships are central to the novel; they are the foundations upon which Austen builds her presentation of society.’ In the light of this statement, explore Austen’s presentation of family relationships in Pride and Prejudice.
Practice questions

Relationships and themes

1. ‘The apparent light-heartedness of *Pride and Prejudice* is usually the result of two factors: the diverse range of relationships portrayed in the novel and the fact that these relationships may or may not be relevant to the central concerns of the novel.’ Explore in some detail the extent to which you agree with this claim.

2. ‘It is not so much personal relationships which preoccupy Austen but rather personal conduct and behaviour.’ Examine Austen’s portrayal of two or more appropriate characters in light of this proposition.

Author/reader relationship

1. A critic has commented about *Pride and Prejudice* that ‘there seems to be an impulse on the part of the narrator to tease the reader’. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Attitudes to marriage and money

1. ‘Is he married or single?’
   
   “Oh single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!”
   
   ‘Jane Austen strongly emphasises the links between romance and finance: her attitude is always practical.’ Considering the quotation and the critical view, explore the varying ways in which Austen presents the significance of money in the light of her characters.

2. ‘What Austen celebrates above all in *Pride and Prejudice* is rational marriage as the foundation of a stable society.’ What is your response to this judgement?

Attitudes to being single

1. ‘In her creation and presentation of society in *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen reveals her preoccupation with the role and status of single women.’ To what extent do you agree with this statement?

2. ‘*Pride and Prejudice* is about nothing more than young women finding husbands. Austen reveals that there is no other way in which they can be valued.’ To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Dynamics of male-female relationships

1. ‘Early in *Pride and Prejudice*, Darcy cruelly remarks that Elizabeth is “tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me.” Although Elizabeth turns this into a joke, the comment is brutally revealing about the power of relationships between men and women which lie beneath the surface of social interaction.’ In the light of this comment, discuss the presentations of ‘power of relationships between men and women’ in your two texts.

2. ‘The women in *Pride and Prejudice* do not want freedom or independence: they are happy to be guided by men.’ Examine Austen’s presentation of two or more female characters in the light of this statement.

3. ‘Although women appear to be secondary to men in the society of the novel, in fact it is the women who have greater control.’ To what extent do you agree with this view of Austen’s presentation of men and women?
Practice questions

Class

1. ‘To the comic novelist, all characters are potentially absurd, but those who are most absurd and more prone to comic dismissal are those who are untrue to their social class.’ Explore in some detail the extent to which you agree with this statement.

2. ‘Lady Catherine will not think the worse of you for being simply dressed. She likes to have the distinction of rank preserved.’ Examine Austen’s presentation of inter-class relationships and distinctions between different social groups in *Pride and Prejudice*.

3. ‘In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen creates a society in which tensions arise as all know their place, yet do not always act appropriately.’ To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Money

1. ‘Austen presents her sharpest personal and social observations through her depiction of those who have or do not have money.’ Examine Austen’s presentation of money and its significance in the light of this statement.

Education

1. ‘Indirectly, and yet always entertainingly, Austen invites her readers to consider the importance of education in its widest sense.’ In the light of this statement, examine Austen’s presentation of ‘education’ in *Pride and Prejudice*.

2. “Do your sisters play and sing? ... Do you draw?” ‘In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen exposes the limitations of the role of women in her society.’ Considering the quotation and the critical view, to what extent do you agree with this statement?

Comedy

1. ‘Austen examines serious topics in *Pride and Prejudice* yet her comedy never ceases to delight us.’ To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Ironic and narrative technique

1. ‘Irony is central to the meaning and effects of *Pride and Prejudice*.’ How far and in what ways do you find this to be the case?

2. ‘It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.’ Examine Austen’s use of irony and other narrative techniques within the novel.