

# Persuasion

Jane Austen

## A Before Reading

- 1 What do you know about Jane Austen and her writing? Fill in the table with any ideas.

Jane Austen	
When did she live?	
Where was she from?	
What other books did she write?	
What sort of people and stories did she write about?	

Now read pages 4–6 of the book to check your ideas.

- 2 The story describes the life of rich people (or 'polite society') in the early nineteenth century. Life was very different and there were many rules for what you should and should not do. Try to complete the sentences (a–g) with your own ideas about life at this time in polite society. Part of an example answer is in the first sentence.
- Women spent their time ... *at home or visiting friends, playing music, ...*
  - When someone died, they left their money to ...
  - Most people did not work, but some men (younger sons) became ...
  - It was important for a young woman to ...
  - When people met someone they knew at home or outside, they usually ...
  - People travelled by ...
  - Women could not ...

Check your ideas as you read.



## B While Reading

- 3 a The title of the book is *Persuasion* and there are many examples of persuasion in the story. As you read, keep a record of any examples of persuasion. Who persuades (or tries to persuade) who, and to do what? The first one is an example.

Who?	Persuades who?	To do what?
<i>Lady Russell</i>	<i>Sir Walter</i>	<i>To save money (although he does not follow her advice, choosing instead to go to Bath).</i>

- b Are you a persuasive person? Are you easily persuaded? Can you give any examples of persuasion in your own life? Write a short paragraph.

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- 4 a There are many differences between the three Elliot sisters. As you read, choose the best descriptions for each daughter and write them in the table. One description is done for you.

the most similar to her mother    the most important to Sir Walter    the best-looking  
 the most interested in beauty    the best listener    the closest to Mrs Clay  
 the closest to Lady Russell    the eldest    the cleverest    the strongest mind  
 the most vain    the most often ill    the youngest    the most sensible

 <p>Anne</p>	
 <p>Elizabeth</p>	<i>the eldest</i>
 <p>Mary</p>	

Now write a paragraph comparing the three sisters and explaining your choices of description.

- b Do you think sons and daughters are usually more similar to one of their parents, or a mix of both parents? Do you think that being the eldest, youngest or middle child changes a person's character? Write a paragraph giving your own opinion. Include the Elliot sisters and your own experience as examples.
- 5 'Anne wanted to tell Lady Russell the truth about Mr Elliot as soon as possible. Before she left Mrs Smith, she asked her if she was happy for Anne to tell her friend everything.' (page 62).

Imagine and write the conversation that Anne later had with Lady Russell, explaining what she now knew about Mr Elliot. Start the conversation like this:

**Anne:** *I went to see my good friend Mrs Smith today and she told me some very interesting things about Mr William Elliot.*

**Lady Russell:** *What exactly did she say, Anne?*

**Anne:** ...

## C After Reading

- 6 a 'I would like a woman with a strong mind and a gentle character ... That is the kind of woman I want.' (Captain Wentworth, page 25).

The list below shows what some men and women in the story look for in their marriage partner. Do you think they are still important in a partner? Put a cross ('X') in the relevant column to show your own opinion of how important each is today.

	Very important	Quite important	Not important
A strong mind			
A gentle character			
Beauty			
Money and property			
A good family background			
A young look			
Polite manners			
Not having married before			
A title (eg Sir, Lady)			

- b Sir Walter and Lady Russell stopped Anne from marrying Wentworth when she was nineteen. Do you think that it is a good idea for parents to help in the choice of a marriage partner for their son and daughter? Can they disagree? Write a paragraph explaining your opinion.
- 7 Imagine you are a director making a film version of *Persuasion*. Choose three characters from the story and say which famous actor or actress you think should play each one and why.

Character	Actor/Actress	Why you chose this actor/actress