

# K-12

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## Topic: 1

### Excerpt from Emma

by Jane Austen

Questions 1 -5 pertain to the following excerpt

Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or her.

She was the youngest of the daughters of a most affectionate, indulgent father; and had, in consequence of her sister's marriage, been mistress of his house from a very early period. Her mother had died too long ago for her to have more than an indistinct remembrance of her caresses; and her place had been supplied by an excellent woman as governess, who had fallen little short of a mother in affection. Sixteen years had Miss Taylor been in Mr. Woodhouse's family, less as a governess than a friend, very fond of both daughters, but particularly of Emma. Then it was more the intimacy of sisters. Even before Miss Taylor had ceased to hold the nominal office of governess, the mildness of her temper had hardly allowed her to impose any restraint; and the shadow of authority being now long passed away, they had been living together as friend and friend very mutually attached, and Emma doing just what she liked; highly esteeming Miss Taylor's judgment but directed chiefly by her own.

The real evils, indeed, of Emma's situation where the power of having rather too much her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself: these were the disadvantages which threatened her many enjoyments. The danger, however, was at present so unperceived, that they did not by any means rank as misfortunes with her.

Sorrow came—a gentle sorrow—but not at all in the shape of any disagreeable consciousness—Miss Taylor married. It was Miss Taylor's loss which first brought grief. It was on the wedding-day of this beloved friend that Emma first sat in mournful thought of any continuance. The wedding over, and the bride-people gone, her father and herself were left to dine together, with no prospect of a third to cheer a long evening. Her father composed himself to sleep after dinner, as usual, and she had then only to sit and think of what she had lost.

The event had every promise of happiness for her friend. Mr. Weston was a man of unexceptionable character, easy fortune, suitable age, and pleasant manners: and there was some satisfaction in considering with what self-denying, generous friendship she had always wished and promoted the match; but it was a black morning's work for her. The want of Miss Taylor would be felt every hour of every day. She recalled her past kindness—the kindness, the affection of sixteen years—how she had taught and how she had played with her from five years old—how she had devoted all her powers to attach and amuse her in health—and how nursed her through the various illnesses of childhood. A large debt of gratitude was owing here...the equal footing and perfect unreserved which had soon followed Isabella's marriage, on their being left to each other, was yet a dearer, tendered recollection. She had been a friend and companion such as few possessed: intelligent, well-informed, useful, gentle, knowing all the ways of the family, interested in all its

concerns, and peculiarly interested in herself, in every pleasure, every scheme of hers—one to whom she could speak every thought as it arose, and who had such an affection for her as could never find fault.

How was she to bear the change?—It was true that her friend was going only half a mile from them: but Emma was aware that great must be the difference between a Mrs. Weston, only half a mile from them, and a Miss Taylor in the house; and with all her advantages, natural and domestic, she was now in great danger of suffering from intellectual solitude. She dearly loved her father, but he was no companion for her. He could not meet her in conversation, rational or playful.

The evil of the actual disparity in their ages (and Mr. Woodhouse had not married early) was much increased by his constitution and habits; for having been a valetudinarian all his life, without activity of mind or body, he was a much older man in ways than in years: and though everywhere beloved for the friendliness of his heart and his amiable temper, his talents could not have recommended him at any time.

Her sister, though comparatively but little removed by matrimony, being settled in London, only sixteen miles off, was much beyond her daily reach; and many a long October and November evening must be struggled through at Hart field, before Christmas brought the next visit from Isabella and her husband, and their little children, to fill the house, and give her pleasant society again.

### Question: 1

How does Miss Taylor's marriage affect Emma?

- A. Miss Taylor's marriage disrupts the comfort Emma had enjoyed all her life.
- B. Emma is happy her friend is marrying a wonderful man.
- C. Emma regards the change as a challenge and opportunity for intellectual growth.
- D. Miss Taylor's marriage makes Emma think about getting married herself.

**Answer: A**

Explanation:

Emma's life had been marked by the comfort of consistency, a close relationship with Miss Taylor, and the knowledge she tended to get her own way. Miss Taylor's marriage upsets that comfort and consistency because a major aspect of Emma's life will change. Emma is afraid her intellect will be stifled without Miss Taylor, so she does not approach the change as an opportunity for possible intellectual growth.

### Question: 2

This question has two parts. Answer Part A, and then answer Part B.

Part A: As used in the first paragraph, what does the word "vex" mean?

- A. interest
- B. little

- C. support
- D. displease

**Answer: D**

Explanation:

The author uses words such as comfortable and happy to describe Emma's first twenty-one years. During this time, little vexed her. Based on this context, you can conclude that vex has the opposite meaning of words such as comfortable and happy. The answer choice most different from these positive words is displease.

Part B: What word from the excerpt gives you the best hint to the answer in Part A?

- 1) Distress
- 2) Fulfill
- 3) Existence
- 4) Frustrate

**Answer: 1**

Explanation:

In the excerpt it says "distress or vex" which tells you that the meaning of "vex" is similar to the meaning of distress.

### Question: 3

Based on this excerpt, Emma can be described as

- A. unfortunate.
- B. devious.
- C. selfish.
- D. studious.

**Answer: C**

Explanation:

The author states that Emma possesses the "power of having rather too much her own way," and instead of feeling happy for her recently married friend, she feels sorry for herself. These descriptions characterize Emma as selfish. Emma may consider herself unfortunate following Miss Taylor's marriage, but a lifetime of privilege and having her own way hardly makes her an unfortunate character. While Emma may indeed prove to be devious, this excerpt offers no evidence of deviousness. Although Emma seems to value intellectual interaction, nothing in the excerpt implies that she is particularly studious.

### Question: 4

How do themes of class and maturity interact in this excerpt?

- A. Emma's upper-class background gives her greater access to education, thereby making her more interested in intellectual stimulation than a less mature person might be.
- B. The privilege that comes with an upper-class background can prevent a person from having the necessary skills for dealing with change in a mature way.
- C. Emma's first twenty-one years were so happy because she enjoyed a privileged, upper-class lifestyle, and that happiness made her a more mature person.
- D. Having people constantly take care of her has prevented Emma from developing feelings of kindness and love for others.

**Answer: B**

Explanation:

A product of upper-class privilege, Emma has grown accustomed always to getting her way. When Miss Taylor's marriage disrupts this aspect of her life, Emma cannot deal with the situation in a mature fashion and instead sinks into self-pity and sorrow. Although Emma cannot enjoy Miss Taylor's happiness upon her wedding because Emma is so wrapped up in her own feelings, this does not mean she feels neither kindness nor love for her friend.

### Question: 5

Why does the author describe Miss Taylor's wedding as a n)lack morning's work"?

- A. Emma has to work to pretend she is happy about the wedding.
- B. The day of Miss Taylor's wedding is a bad day for Emma.
- C. Emma worked hard to organize the wedding.
- D. The wedding party dresses in black

**Answer: B**

Explanation:

The color black is often used figuratively to suggest badness. Emma is sad about Miss Taylor's wedding, and enduring the event has become nothing more than "black work" to her. Perhaps she pretends she is happy about the wedding, but no evidence in this excerpt suggests this conclusion. In addition, no evidence in the excerpt suggests that Emma organized the wedding. The author does not use "tack" as a literal color in this excerpt and no evidence in the excerpt suggests the wedding party wears black clothing.

**Topic: 2**

**Excerpt from the Federalist No. 1**

**By Alexander Hamilton**

**To the People of the State of New York:**

Questions 6-10 pertain to the following excerpt

AFTER an unequivocal experience of the inefficacy of the subsisting federal

government, you are called upon to deliberate on a new Constitution for the United States of America. The subject speaks its own importance: comprehending in its consequences nothing less than the existence of the UNION, the safety and welfare of the parts of which it is composed, the fate of an empire in many respects the most interesting in the world. It has been frequently remarked that it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force. If there be any truth in the remark, the crisis at which we are arrived may with propriety be regarded as the era in which that decision is to be made; and a wrong election of the part we shall act may, in this view, deserve to be considered as the general misfortune of mankind.

This idea will add the inducements of philanthropy to those of patriotism, to heighten the solicitude which all considerate and good men must feel for the event. Happy will it be if our choice should be directed by a judicious estimate of our true interests, unperplexed and unbiased by considerations not connected with the public good. But this is a thing more ardently to be wished than seriously to be expected. The plan offered to our deliberations affects too many particular interests, innovates upon too many local institutions, not to involve in its discussion a variety of objects foreign to its merits, and of views, passions and prejudices little favorable to the discovery of truth.

Among the most formidable of the obstacles which the new Constitution will have to encounter may readily be distinguished the obvious interest of a certain class of men in every State to resist all changes which may hazard a diminution of the power, emolument, and consequence of the offices they hold under the State establishments; and the perverted ambition of another class of men, who will either hope to aggrandize themselves by the confusions of their country, or will flatter themselves with fairer prospects of elevation from the subdivision of the empire into several partial confederacies than from its union under one government. It is not, however, my design to dwell upon observations of this nature. I am well aware that it would be disingenuous to resolve indiscriminately the opposition of any set of men (merely because their situations might subject them to suspicion) into interested or ambitious views. Candor will oblige us to admit that even such men may be actuated by upright intentions: and it cannot be doubted that much of the opposition which has made its appearance, or may hereafter make its appearance, will spring from sources, blameless at least, if not respectable—the honest errors of minds led astray by preconceived jealousies and fears. So numerous indeed and so powerful are the causes which serve to give a false bias to the judgment, that we, upon many occasions, see wise and good men on the wrong as well as on the right side of questions of the first magnitude to society. This circumstance, if duly attended to, would furnish a lesson of moderation to those who are ever so much persuaded of their being in the right in any controversy. And a further reason for caution, in this respect, might be drawn from the reflection that we are not always sure that those who advocate the truth are influenced by purer principles than their antagonists. Ambition, avarice, personal animosity, party opposition, and many other motives not more laudable than these, are apt to operate as well upon those who support as those who oppose the right side of a

question. Were there not even these inducements to moderation, nothing could be more ill-judged than that intolerant spirit which has, at all times, characterized political parties. For in politics, as in religion, it is equally absurd to aim at making proselytes by fire and sword. Heresies in either can rarely be cured by persecution. And yet, however just these sentiments will be allowed to be, we have already sufficient indications that it will happen in this as in all former cases of great national discussion. A torrent of angry and malignant passions will be let loose. To judge from the conduct of the opposite parties, we shall be led to conclude that they will mutually hope to evince the justness of their opinions, and to increase the number of their converts by the loudness of their declamations and the bitterness of their invectives. An enlightened zeal for the energy and efficiency of government will be stigmatized as the offspring of a temper fond of despotic power and hostile to the principles of liberty. An over-scrupulous jealousy of danger to the rights of the people, which is more commonly the fault of the head than of the heart, will be represented as mere pretense and artifice, the stale bait for popularity at the expense of the public good. It will be forgotten, on the one hand, that jealousy is the usual concomitant of love, and that the noble enthusiasm of liberty is apt to be infected with a spirit of narrow and illiberal distrust. On the other hand, it will be equally forgotten that the vigor of government is essential to the security of liberty; that, in the contemplation of a sound and well-informed judgment, their interest can never be separated; and that a dangerous ambition more often lurks behind the specious mask of zeal for the rights of the people than under the forbidden appearance of zeal for the firmness and efficiency of government. History will teach us that the former has been found a much more certain road to the introduction of despotism than the latter, and that of those men who have overturned the liberties of republics, the greatest number have begun their career by paying an obsequious court to the people; commencing demagogues, and ending tyrants.

### Question: 6

How does the opening of this excerpt affect the writer's argument?

- A. By criticizing the United States Constitution explicitly, he is challenging readers to look at old institutions in new ways that may have positive effects on the federal government.
- B. By portraying the subsisting federal government as suffering from inefficacy, he is seeking to alienate overly patriotic readers.
- C. By saying that it is up to "the people of this country" to establish a "good government," he is suggesting that he expects input from his fellow Americans regarding how to improve the United States Constitution.
- D. By drawing attention to the "unequivocal" "inefficacy" of the subsisting federal government, Alexander Hamilton immediately explains why the federal government is in need of change.

**Answer: D**

Explanation:

By beginning his argument with an immediate criticism of the existing federal government, he immediately portrays it as a system in need of improvement. By presenting the government's

inefficacy in no uncertain terms, Hamilton assumes the reader will take his claim at face value and be convinced of his subsequent argument for improvements. Hamilton only criticizes the federal government explicitly; he does not criticize the Constitution.

### Question: 7

What effect does the author's use of first-person point of view have on his argument?

- A. It attempts to establish agreement between the reader and himself.
- B. It establishes an informal tone that makes him seem friendlier and more approachable.
- C. It forces the reader to feel responsibility for the federal government's problems.
- D. It implies the reader also needs to suggest methods for improving the federal government.

**Answer: A**

Explanation:

By addressing the reader directly and uniting himself with the reader by using words such as "we," Hamilton is establishing a sense of agreement between himself and the reader. By doing so he wants the reader to believe he and the reader share the same desires for and concerns about America. The first-person point of view does not necessarily establish a friendly or informal tone.

### Question: 8

Which of the following sentences from the excerpt exemplifies an attempt to sway the reader's opinion of the writer's opponents?

- A. And yet, however just these sentiments will be allowed to be, we have already sufficient indications that it will happen in this as in all former cases of great national discussion.
- B. For in politics, as in religion, it is equally absurd to aim at making proselytes by fire and sword.
- C. To judge from the conduct of the opposite parties, we shall be led to conclude that they will mutually hope to evince the justness of their opinions and to increase the number of their converts by the loudness of their declamations and the bitterness of their invectives.
- D. This idea will add the inducements of philanthropy to those of patriotism, to heighten the solicitude which all considerate and good men must feel for the event.

**Answer: C**

Explanation:

Alexander Hamilton describes his opponents as loud and bitter in this sentence. Such words suggest a lack of rationality, self-control, and kindness. This word usage almost represents an attempt to portray his political opponents as less than human. Hamilton is seeking to strengthen his argument by suggesting those who oppose his argument are angry and irrational.

### Question: 9



Why does the writer follow paragraph 3 by stating, "It is not, however, my design to dwell upon observations of this nature"?

- A. He regrets criticizing politicians currently holding office and wants the reader to focus on the less inflammatory details in his argument.
- B. He wants to give the impression that the purpose of his argument is not merely to criticize politicians who are currently holding office.
- C. He realizes he lacks the information to continue criticizing politicians currently holding office and cannot continue his argument.
- D. He believes that criticizing politicians currently holding office is a weak way to present his argument and will stop doing so.

**Answer: B**

Explanation:

In paragraph 3, Alexander Hamilton attacks politicians who fear any change resulting from the Constitution that might diminish their power. Although this attack may be central to his argument, Hamilton does not want to leave the reader with the bitter feeling that Hamilton's sole reason for writing is to attack his opponents. Ironically, he then continues his attacks for the remainder of the excerpt.

### Question: 10

As used in the final sentence of the excerpt, what does the word "obsequious" mean?

- A. submissive
- B. free
- C. revolutionary
- D. dominant

**Answer: A**

Explanation:

According to the writer, a tyrant would start by pretending to be submissive to the will of the people (that is, paying court to the people) to gain popularity, then abuse his or her newfound power. Based on this context, you can conclude that "obsequious" and "submissive" share the same meaning.

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