# Student resource booklet

## Connecting phase – English Advanced Module B

**Module case study** – Year 12 Module B – Critical Study of Literature

**Case study text** – Jane Austen, ‘Emma’, Penguin Classics, 2015, ISBN: 9780141439587

**Technology focus** – Microsoft Teams (support outlined in student resource booklet) for student group work activity

### Resource one – Module B syllabus description

In this module, students develop detailed analytical and critical knowledge, understanding and appreciation of a substantial literary text. Through increasingly informed and personal responses to the text in its entirety, students understand the distinctive qualities of the text, notions of textual integrity and significance.

Students study one prescribed text. Central to this study is the close analysis of the text’s construction, content and language to develop students’ own rich interpretation of the text, basing their judgements on detailed evidence drawn from their research and reading. In doing so, they evaluate notions of context with regard to the text’s composition and reception; investigate and evaluate the perspectives of others; and explore the ideas in the text, further strengthening their informed personal perspective.

Students have opportunities to appreciate and express views about the aesthetic and imaginative aspects of the text by composing creative and critical texts of their own. Through reading, viewing or listening they critically analyse, evaluate and comment on the text’s specific language features and form. They express complex ideas precisely and cohesively using appropriate register, structure and modality. They draft, appraise and refine their own texts, applying the conventions of syntax, spelling and grammar appropriately.

Opportunities for students to engage deeply with the text as a responder and composer further develops personal and intellectual connections with the text, enabling them to express their considered perspective of its value and meaning.

[English Advanced Stage 6 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/stage-6-english/english-advanced-2017) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2017.

### Resource two – the character of Emma

Analysis and discussion questions

1. What does it mean that Emma is described as an imaginist? What does this description identify as the key feature of Emma’s characteristics?
2. Matchmaking and marriage are central for Emma as a character and to ‘Emma’ the novel. Discuss.
3. How does the novel present Emma as a member of the leisured and monied gentry? What comment is Austen making on the social structure which was highly stratified, based on lineage and inherited wealth through Emma’s character and relationships?
4. Is Emma presented as a fully empowered woman? Explain.
5. Who actually rules at Hartfield – Mr Woodhouse or Emma? What is this saying about Austen’s attitude towards women’s roles in society?
6. Emma’s father does not criticize her, but Knightley does, often scolding her as though she were a child. What does he criticize her about?
7. There are glaring gaps between Emma’s perceptions of events and the events themselves. What examples can they give and what do these tell us about her?
8. Is ‘Emma’ a bildungsroman, a novel of personal education? Does Emma develop and learn?
9. How do we feel about Emma? What are her positive qualities? Is she flawed? How? If she is, what are Austen’s intentions in making her so?

### Resource three – overview of reading

Here is an overview of ideas from one source.

Reactions to Emma have varied dramatically. In the introduction to Edgar F. Shannon, Jr’s article, ‘Emma: Character and Construction” a few of those reactions are identified: “Lord David Cecil describes Emma as an “engaging, dear, delicious, idiotic heroine”. Marvin Mudrick sees her as a “disagreeable, even sinister creature. A latent Lesbian, unwilling to commit her emotions, and devoid of tenderness.” Emma attains at the end of the novel simply “relief and temporary awareness”. The transcendent irony of the book for Mudrick is the author’s having shown an apparently reformed Emma, whereas actually she remains imperious and ruthless. Joseph M. Duffy Jnr describes the novel as concerned with “the awakening of a normal, intelligent young woman to the possibilities of physical love”. Austen herself has said Emma is a heroine that “no one but myself will like.” How have different audiences responded to Emma? Have those responses changed over time and why or why not?

Shannon, Edgar F. “Emma: Character and Construction.” *PMLA*, vol. 71, no. 4, 1956, pp. 637–650. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/460635. Accessed 11 May 2020.

### Resource four – character group activity

Characters – Knightley, Harriet, Mr Elton, Mrs Elton, Mr Weston, Mrs Weston, Mr Woodhouse, Frank Churchill, Jane Fairfax, John and Isabella.

In groups, research the character you have been allocated in terms of the following:

* personality
* relationships
* views/opinions of others
* other characters’ views/opinions of them
* aspects of 19th century English society they illustrate, for example class, gender roles
* themes or concepts they illustrate
* critical incidents in which they are involved, for example:
* Mr Weston’s dinner party
* the ball at the Crown
* the expeditions to Donwell and Box Hill
* the Coles’ dinner party
* reader’s response to the character – personal response? Is that response a result of Austen’s representation? Impact of context? Reception in different times and contexts?

Make sure that you explore the beginning, middle and end of the novel. You will be required to present the group’s analysis via a written report (Word document) or in some form of presentation (Sway or PowerPoint). You will also be required to include specific page references and language techniques to share with the class. Your analysis will be photocopied/shared and given out so that everyone has the benefit of your close examination of the characters in ‘Emma’.

A note to the teacher/students about Teams:

Teams is considered ‘best practice’ for this group focused activity because:

* The teacher can easily set up and monitor the groups through the channel function.
* Students can discuss their ideas in a Teams meeting (initiated and controlled by the teacher) and share their screen to facilitate that discussion.
* The teacher can move between channels and meetings easily to monitor the work, answer questions and encourage deeper connections.

### Resource 5 – ‘Perfect match’ activity

For the ‘Perfect Match!’ activity:

* in the online space, the expanding discussion can be again managed through Teams. The teacher can create channels for pairs of students to break off to for sharing their perfect matches. Next, students could nominate for a particular focus area, for example gender roles, and through a new channel, share and defend their choices.
* the teacher, or nominated student/s, can take notes on the discussion and defended choices. These notes are then shared with the rest of the class through Microsoft Teams or another platform.
* Note the importance of the teacher encouraging the thinking required to make ‘connections’ through the process, and providing extensive writing opportunities for students to note their developing critical thinking on this topic.