BASED ON THE BELOVED CLASSIC BY JANE AUSTEN

ANYA TAYLOR-JOY IS

LOVE KNOWS BEST.

DIRECTED BY AUTUMN DE WILDE

IN CINEMAS VALENTINE'S DAY
About the film.

Jane Austen’s beloved comedy about finding your equal and earning your happy ending, is reimagined in this delicious new film adaptation of **EMMA**, in UK cinemas February 14th.

Handsome, clever, and rich, Emma Woodhouse (Anya Taylor-Joy) is a restless queen bee without rivals in her sleepy little town. In this glittering satire of social class and the pain of growing up, Emma must adventure through misguided matches and romantic missteps to find the love that has been there all along.

Directed by Autumn de Wilde, the film also stars Bill Nighy, Miranda Hart, Johnny Flynn, Mia Goth, Josh O’Connor and Callum Turner. Featuring striking costume design by Alexandra Byrne and a sparkling screenplay by Booker prize-winning author Eleanor Catton, **EMMA** is an uproarious take on an all-time classic.

About this resource.

You can use this resource to plan a film club activity for your group around the cinema release of **EMMA**. You’ll find the full story on Jane Austen, suggestions for making your event special, and discussion questions to get you talking.

Please use whichever parts of this resource you feel are appropriate for your group. Make sure you have read through the questions and activities in advance, and have everything you need.
Today, Jane Austen holds a hallowed place as one of the most revered and beloved novelists in the English language. But she came from humble beginnings.

Born in 1775, she grew up in a large, close-knit family who were respectable but far from rich. The young Jane lived in a rural Hampshire vicarage where reading and intellectual pursuits were encouraged. Jane and her sister Cassandra were so close that when Cassandra went away to school, Jane went with her, even though she was only seven.

The sisters had to come home after a few years when the family couldn’t afford their school fees anymore, and Jane began to write poems, plays and short stories. To entertain family and friends, she would sometimes read aloud from her work.

Since writing wasn’t considered a respectable profession for a woman, Jane couldn’t publish under her own name. But thanks to her brother negotiating on her behalf, she was able to publish four books anonymously in her lifetime – *Emma*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park*. Three others (*Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion* and *Lady Susan*) would be published posthumously.

Jane died at the early age of 41 in 1817 from suspected blood cancer. She never really became famous during her own lifetime, though her books were popular in high society. By the Nineteenth Century, though, her genius was more widely recognised, with critics comparing her to Shakespeare and Homer. Today, her work is studied by academics and school students, read for pleasure by people around the world – and of course, adapted for the screen.
Emma arrived on shelves in 1815, featuring a heroine who Jane declared that 'no-one but myself will much like'. But readers did warm to Emma Woodhouse, and have done ever since. The book has been continuously in print since 1880. In 2014, a rare first edition went on sale for nearly £100,000 – quite a jump from the £450 that Jane was paid by her publisher.

Over the years Emma has been translated into countless languages and appeared in imaginative versions including a Manga comic and a Bollywood musical. And now, EMMA brings the story to life in a whole new way thanks to the unique perspective of director Autumn de Wilde, best-known for her music videos and live concert documentaries for bands including The Flaming Lips and Arcade Fire. 'I met Autumn, and I realised, 'You’re the person to do this,' says Johnny Flynn, who plays Mr Knightley. 'Her vision for it was so complete and so perfect and I knew that it would be a very fresh take on it.'

According to Mia Goth, who plays Harriet, the director is 'a comedian at heart. She's got such a great sense of humour.' This helped to bring Jane Austen’s comic sensibilities to the fore. 'Autumn really wanted to poke fun at the ridiculousness of the time; how inappropriate the clothes and the social etiquette were, and how there were so many boundaries and regulations.'

She says that having a woman at the helm meant that 'all the female characters felt very fleshed out. Even smaller characters like Jane Fairfax and Miss Bates.' Behind the camera, EMMA showcases a collaboration of female creative talent that Jane Austen, made to publish anonymously, could only have imagined, including the distinctive work of Oscar- and Bafta-winning costume designer Alexandra Byrne.

'Everyone will go into this movie and be able to take something unique from it,' says Goth. 'It's a feelgood movie, and you’ll walk away from this film feeling joyful and hopeful. And in this climate that we’re in right now, we could all use a little bit of that!'
Hosting your event.

You could host your film discussion night at home, or in a public space if you’re expecting a large group. Try asking your local library if you could hold the event there!

The film puts the world of Regency England on the big screen. When your group gets together after going to the cinema, why not add to the fun with themed food and drink? You’ll easily find recipes and more ideas online.

- **Finger sandwiches** – An elegant teatime treat. Fillings could include cucumber or smoked salmon.
- **Pork pies** – Easier to find than pigeon pie, a favourite in Emma’s time.
- **Strawberries** – Picked at the fateful Box Hill picnic – or just bought from your local supermarket.
- **Apple tarts** – Miss Bates enjoys these at Hartfield.
- **Jelly** – Emma would have enjoyed a creamy white jelly known as ‘flummery’, but you could serve the ordinary kind, set in a fancy mould.
- **Mulled wine** – Or a non-alcoholic equivalent. The Westons would have served this at their Christmas party.
- **Tea** – By the Regency era, tea was already the most popular drink in England

**Quotable Quotes Quiz**

A bit of fun to break the ice - can you complete these famous Jane Austen quotes?

1. ‘It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a ___ man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a ____.’ – Pride and Prejudice
2. ‘The person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good ____, must be intolerably _____.’ – Northanger Abbey
3. ‘There is no charm equal to _____ of ____.’ – Emma
4. ‘A ____ _____ is the best recipe for happiness I ever heard of.’ – Mansfield Park
5. ‘Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of ____.’ – Pride and Prejudice
6. ‘It isn’t what we say or think that defines us, but what we ___.’ – Sense and Sensibility
Film talk.

This is your chance to chat together as a group about your reactions to *EMMA* as a cinematic experience before digging deeper into the themes.

• What was your initial reaction to the film? What were you expecting before you went in?
• Which character or scene did you find funniest, and why?
• What did you think of the sets and costumes? What did these visual elements add to the experience? How about the film’s music?
• How did you react to Anya Taylor-Joy’s performance as the title character? What qualities did she bring to the role?
• What sort of emotional journey did the film take you on? What emotions were you left with when the credits rolled?

Activity: A walk with Miss Woodhouse.

*EMMA* was shot in a variety of stunning locations around the UK – including sites in Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire. If you’re not too far away, why not take your group for a day trip and enjoy these beautiful places first-hand?

- **Firle Place** in Sussex stands in for Emma’s home, Hartfield.
- **Wilton House** in Salisbury is Mr Knightley’s home, Donwell Abbey.
- The village of **Lower Slaughter** in Cheltenham plays host to various scenes, including Highbury market square, Ford’s Haberdasher, and the exterior of the Crown Inn.
- **Leith Hill** in Dorking is Box Hill, the site of the picnic.
- **All Saints Church in St Paul’s Walden**, Hertfordshire plays Highbury Parish Church.
Discussion questions.

1. How did you feel about the film's love stories? Which scene was the most romantic, and why?
2. According to EMMA, what makes a good romantic partnership? Does the story have any wisdom to offer about the search for real love?
3. According to the film, what makes for a good friendship – or a bad one? In your opinion, how can we create friendships which bring out the best in us and in others?
4. When – if at all – can criticism be a helpful part of friendships and relationships? Would you want a friend as honest as Mr Knightley, and why or why not?
5. Why do Emma and others in the story place so much value on social status? What judgments does it cause them to make about others and themselves?
6. What does status obsession look like in today’s world? Do you think society has become less judgmental since the era portrayed in the film, or more so?
7. Would your own life look different if you didn’t worry about status and popularity? How might the world be different if we were able to treat everyone as equals?
8. Why do you think makes EMMA such an enduring and popular story, and what does it have to say to us today? What have you personally taken away from the film?

Activity: Jane Austen challenge.

• If your group has enjoyed talking about EMMA as a film, why not keep your conversation going? You can order print or audiobook versions of Jane Austen’s other works from your local library.
• Challenge yourselves to meet seven times to talk about each of her completed books – Emma, Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice, Northanger Abbey, Persuasion and Lady Susan. You could also enjoy the screen adaptations of these stories together.
• Which book ranked as your favourite and why? Which was the funniest, or the most emotionally touching? Why do readers still love Jane Austen today?
• Share your group’s activities online and encourage others to join you. #JaneAustenChallenge
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