

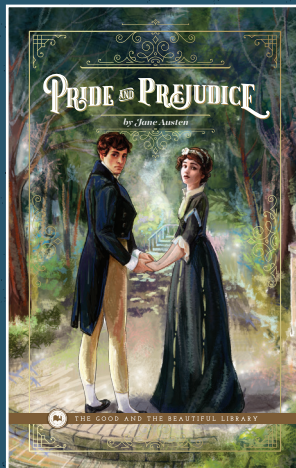


HIGH SCHOOL HONORS

# BOOK & STUDY

## • PRIDE AND PREJUDICE •

*by Jane Austen*



•  
○ THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL ○

## ABOUT THE BOOK STUDY

### What are Honors Book Studies?

The Good and the Beautiful Honors Book Studies are student-directed consumable booklets that accompany select books from The Good and the Beautiful Library. Each Honors Book Study is designed to help students explore the book's themes and messages, appreciate the literary value of the book, and learn new vocabulary and writing skills that correlate with the book. To complete an Honors Book Study, the student simply reads and follows the instructions in the booklet while reading the corresponding book. The Honors Book Studies are intended to be completed independently, or they can be completed in a group, class, or book club setting.

### What are the goals of the Honors Book Studies?

There are three main goals of the Honors Book Studies: to help the student learn to **analyze**, **appreciate**, and **gain inspiration** from good and beautiful literature.

### How many Honors Book Studies should be completed?

Students can complete as few or as many of the Honors Book Studies as desired. Honors Book Studies are not designed to take the place of the High School Language Arts courses; they are designed to be used in addition to the courses for those students who work at a faster pace and can use more challenging work. The reading books for the Honors Book Studies are more challenging than the required reading books for the High School Language Arts courses. Honors Book Studies can be completed in any order.

### What materials are needed?

To complete this book study, you will need the following items:

- This book study booklet
- *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, available through The Good and the Beautiful Library
- A computer or laptop with a basic word processing program, such as Word or Google Docs
- A pencil or pen and a journal or notebook

## AT-A-GLANCE

### Author Study

- Biography of Jane Austen

### Vocabulary

- Challenging vocabulary words in *Pride and Prejudice* (see pages 4–6)

### Literary Analysis

- Study the themes and messages in *Pride and Prejudice*
- Analyze the literary value of *Pride and Prejudice*

### Writing

- Reading and analyzing a response paper
- Writing a response paper
- Reading and analyzing an analysis paper
- Writing an analysis paper
- General writing instruction and practice

## Author Study

### WHO WAS JANE AUSTEN?

Jane Austen was born on December 16, 1775, in Steventon, Hampshire, England, where her father was the rector of the parish. The second youngest of eight children, Austen had only one sister, Cassandra, with whom she enjoyed a close and loving relationship throughout her life. Besides a few years at boarding schools, Austen received her education at home. She had complete access to her father's extensive home library, and he provided her and her sister with paper and writing materials, which were not cheap or easy to come by in those days.

From an early age, Austen wrote poems, plays, and stories to amuse herself and her family. She loved to laugh at herself and at the people around her. As such, her early works were often silly and overly dramatic, similar to the comedic plays her family would perform together in their barn. As early as age 18, however, Austen's frivolous scribbles began evolving into more serious, full-length novels. By 1799, at the age of 24, she had completed manuscripts for *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Northanger Abbey*.

*"I think I may boast myself to be, with all possible vanity, the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress."*

—Jane Austen

Unfortunately, Austen did not enjoy literary success for very long. Her first book was not published until 1811 (*Sense and Sensibility*), six years before she died, and none of her books bore her name in her lifetime. They were "By a Lady" or "By the author of *Sense and Sensibility*." She made a respectable profit from most of her books, however, and since she never married, her income helped run the meager household she shared with her mother and sister.

More than 50 years after her death, Austen's nephew James Edward Austen-Leigh published her first biography—*A Memoir of Jane Austen*. The book created a renewed interest in Austen and contributed to the increased sales of her novels, an interest which continues to this day.

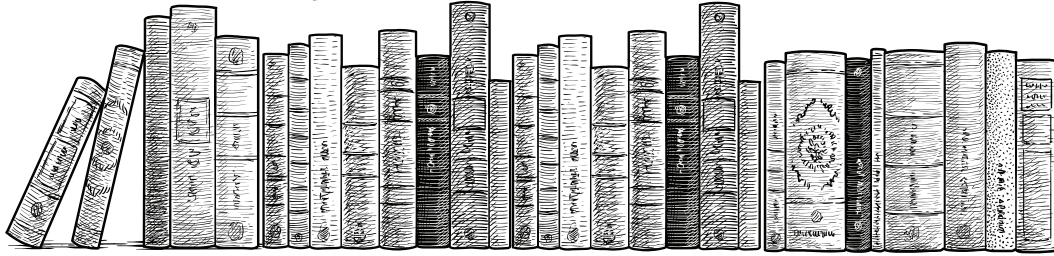


In the first chapter, Austen-Leigh writes a moving tribute to his aunt that confirms generations of readers' suspicions that Jane really was as funny and delightful as she seems in her books. He says, "Of events her life was singularly barren: few changes and no great crisis ever broke the smooth current of its course. Even her fame may be said to have been posthumous: it did not attain to any vigorous life till she had ceased to exist. Her talents did not introduce her to the notice of other writers, or connect her with the literary world, or in any degree pierce through the obscurity of her domestic retirement. I have therefore scarcely any materials for a detailed life of my aunt; but I have a distinct recollection of her person and character; and perhaps many may take an interest in a delineation, if any such can be drawn, of that prolific mind whence sprung the Dashwoods and Bennets, the Bertrams and Woodhouses, the Thorpes and Musgroves, who have been admitted as familiar guests to the firesides of so many families, and are known there as individually and intimately as if they were living neighbours. Many may care to know whether the moral rectitude, the correct taste, and the warm affections with which she invested her ideal characters, were really existing in the native source whence those ideas flowed, and were actually exhibited



## VOCABULARY WORDS

*“Words do two major things: They provide food for the mind and create light for understanding and awareness.” —Jim Rohn*



**abode** [a - BODE]: a habitation or home

*My uncle welcomed us to his abode when we pulled into the driveway.*

**acquiescence** [ak - we - ES - ence]: a passive and seemingly content submission

*Peter gave his acquiescence, but I still felt nervous borrowing his new car.*

**amiable** [AY - mee - uh - bul]: having or displaying friendly, sociable, or good-natured qualities

*She is the most amiable woman; she makes friends wherever she goes!*

**avarice** [AV - uh - ris]: an extreme desire of gaining and possessing wealth; greediness

*Years of avarice turned Ebenezer Scrooge into a rich but lonely old man.*

**benevolent** [be - NEV - uh - lent]: having a tendency to do good or kind acts; well-meaning

*Scrooge learns to be benevolent and generous to those around him.*

**candor** [CAN - dor] (British spelling is “candour”): the quality of being open and honest; frankness; sincerity

*Anne displays great candor, but sometimes she hurts others’ feelings by being too blunt.*

**caprice** [kuh - PREES]: a sudden change of opinion or mood; a whim

*When the wedding march began to play, an unexpected caprice seized the bride, and she ran out of the church.*

**censure** [SEN - shur]: the act of blaming or finding fault and condemning as wrong

*The newspapers strongly censured the senator who had lied under oath.*

**condescend** [con - duh - SEND]: to descend from the privileges of superior rank or dignity, to do some act to an inferior

*The queen condescended to get out of her carriage and talk to the commoners.*

**conjecture** [con - JEK - shur]: to guess or form an opinion on slight evidence

*I conjecture that we will have clear skies for our picnic tomorrow.*

**countenance** [COUNT - uh - nance]: the appearance of the face

*She could see goodness shining out of the kind man’s countenance.*

**deign** [DANE]: to do something reluctantly that one considers to be beneath one’s dignity; to stoop

*The king did not deign to address the public, sending all messages through his advisors.*

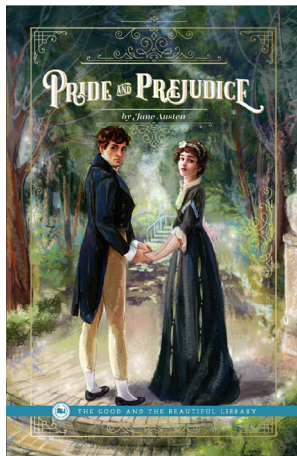


# SECTION 1

## Chapters 1–12

### Introduction

Welcome to the *Pride and Prejudice* Honors Book Study! You will use this book study as a guide while you read *Pride and Prejudice*, a story full of sly humor and loving, though sometimes frustrating, family relationships.



The goal of The Good and the Beautiful Book Studies is to strengthen both your mind and your heart. This book study is broken into six sections. Complete each section as you read the corresponding chapters in the book. Using the book study as a guide will give you a greater appreciation for the rich language, meaningful messages, and well-developed characters in the story.

Mark off the Section 1 activities below as you complete each one **in order**. When all four are completed, you are ready to begin Section 2.

- ☐ Complete the Vocabulary activity in this section.
- ☐ Read “Why Great Literature Endures” (pages 9–10).
- ☐ Read chapters 1 through 12 of *Pride and Prejudice*.
- ☐ Complete the Short Answer Questions in this section.

### Vocabulary

Write the correct word in the blank using the word bank on the following page. Use the vocabulary key on pages 4–6 when needed.

1. The actress would not \_\_\_\_\_ to get out of her limo and speak to the adoring crowd.

2. I lost my purse in the \_\_\_\_\_ of everyone leaving after the concert.
3. Parents like to \_\_\_\_\_ about what their children will be when they grow up.
4. The teacher’s stern \_\_\_\_\_ kept his students in line.
5. The woman’s easy and pleasant \_\_\_\_\_ made everyone like her.
6. George is an \_\_\_\_\_ man who is kind to everyone he meets.
7. The nicely dressed man was too \_\_\_\_\_ to sit on the ground at the picnic with everyone else.
8. Lily is so \_\_\_\_\_ that she actually told a perfect stranger that he needed a haircut!
9. It is \_\_\_\_\_ of you to always correct your friends’ grammar in conversation.
10. I’m sorry, what did you say? I was lost in a \_\_\_\_\_.
11. She was too \_\_\_\_\_ to bother doing the dishes.
12. Do you think the author will \_\_\_\_\_ to attend our book club?
13. Albert Einstein was the most \_\_\_\_\_ physicist of the twentieth century.
14. This \_\_\_\_\_ young woman saved my life today!
15. It is your \_\_\_\_\_ responsibility to obey your parents’ wishes.

## Literary Analysis



Analyzing literature can be an eye-opening experience, especially as you compare widely popular books of low literary value with “good and beautiful” books. As you learned in the last section, too often books are chosen by entertainment value alone, but with good analytical skills, you will be able to draw conclusions for yourself on whether a book is worth reading.

There are several categories to consider when analyzing a book:

- *entertainment value*
- *moral value*
- *educational value*
- *literary value*

It is very common for *entertainment value* to be placed high on the list of importance. However, being entertained is not the greatest purpose for literature. It’s also important to recognize that a book can be entertaining in many different ways. There is the instantly gratifying, constantly thrilling type of entertainment, more like a video game; then there is entertainment that makes you work for it, diving deep into beautiful descriptions, complex characters, and profound insights, more like taking a long walk in the woods while looking for a rare type of flower. When you are not used to the latter type of entertainment, it may take some time and persistence to come to fully appreciate and enjoy it. If you persist, your mind and heart will become more cultivated to a deeper, more fulfilling type of entertainment.

In Section 1, you read about *moral value* of literature. The importance of the moral value in books cannot be exaggerated. List some of the moral messages you have already discovered in *Pride and Prejudice*:

---



---



---



---



---

*Educational value* is how much the reader learns from the book. Historical fiction, for example, is frequently used to educate the reader on a certain time, geographical area, person, and/or event through a story. Not all historical fiction is equally educational, though. Accuracy and detail play a big part in the educational value of a book.

Finally, the *literary value* is determined by how well-written a book is. This can be analyzed by paying attention to the sentence structures, literary devices, descriptive writing, and the author’s ability to create believable characters and engage the reader in the story.

Jane Austen’s works have tremendous literary value. The way she subtly wields her extensive vocabulary; her use of irony, humor, and other literary devices; and her ability to engage the reader in a complicated social environment with multifaceted characters all combine to create masterpieces.

One important rule in good writing is “Show, Don’t Tell,” which means you should try to immerse your audience in the world of your writing through descriptive language and compelling scenes instead of just giving a list of facts. For example, Austen doesn’t just tell us that Caroline Bingley is a self-centered, tedious person who loves to hear herself talk. Instead, she gives us multiple scenes wherein Caroline taunts Mr. Darcy about his admiration for Elizabeth:

*He listened to her with perfect indifference while she chose to entertain herself in this manner; and as his composure convinced her that all was safe, her wit flowed long.*

That simple phrase, “her wit flowed long,” says so much about Caroline Bingley in so few words. As Shakespeare wrote, “Brevity is the soul of wit,” so any wit that flows long isn’t really wit at all; it’s just a lot of hot air.

Let’s analyze other examples of “Show, Don’t Tell” in *Pride and Prejudice*:

### Pages 1–3:

Think back to the very first scene of the book: the conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet about the Bingleys’ arrival at Netherfield Park. It is full of quick, clever quips on Mr. Bennet’s side:

*“I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying whichever he chooses of the girls;”*

and lengthy, fretful exhortations on Mrs. Bennet’s side:

*“Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children*

*in such a way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion for my poor nerves."*

We learn so much about who Mr. and Mrs. Bennet are from this brief conversation and get a feel for their personalities and motivations, far more than if Austen had spent time describing what they looked like and how they were dressed. What impressions do you get about Mr. and Mrs. Bennet's marriage from this first conversation?

---



---



---

**Page 71:**

*[T]he agreeable manner in which he immediately fell into conversation, though it was only on its being a wet night, made her feel that the commonest, dullest, most threadbare topic might be rendered interesting by the skill of the speaker.*

What do we learn about Mr. Wickham from this first encounter? What do we learn about Elizabeth's feelings toward him? Austen could have written, "Mr. Wickham was an interesting speaker, and Elizabeth enjoyed listening to him," telling us instead of showing. Why is it better to "show" like Austen does, instead of just "tell"?

---



---



---

**Page 92:**

*She concluded with many good wishes that Lady Lucas might soon be equally fortunate, though evidently and triumphantly believing there was no chance of it.*

What do we learn about Mrs. Bennet's character from this quote? How could Austen have written a similar line, but in a way that was "telling" instead of "showing"?

---



---



---

Wordy, redundant, or overly flowery writing is not good, but using a variety of sentence lengths and a variety of the following sentence structures helps avoid choppy and predictability. However, using more complex sentence structures exercises your brain, giving reading the benefits of increased memory, focus, and attention span.

- **Simple Sentence:** consists of only one clause
- **Compound Sentence:** consists of two or more independent clauses
- **Complex Sentence:** has at least one independent clause, plus at least one dependent clause
- **Compound-Complex Sentence:** contains more than one independent clause and at least one dependent clause



## Themes and Messages

Consider what Elizabeth says to her sister Jane on page 329: “If you were to give me forty such men, I never could be so happy as you. Till I have your disposition, your goodness, I never can have your happiness.”

It should be clear, now that you have finished *Pride and Prejudice*, that Austen cares a lot about character, about our inner qualities. In the above quote and throughout the book, she teaches us that true happiness comes from being a good person and doing what is right. As we finish this book study, something must be said of the unhappy fate of Lydia and Mr. Wickham.

You learned in Section 2 about why marriage is such a prominent theme in Austen’s books: marriage affected every aspect of a woman’s life in Austen’s time. It is also true of Austen’s time that families were much more closely connected in their fates—if one member was dishonored,

the whole family would feel the effects of the shame. By running away with Wickham and living with him before their marriage, Lydia throws shame on her whole family and significantly decreases her sisters’ chances of marrying well and achieving financial security later in life.



Ponder the following questions and, if possible, discuss them with a parent, teacher, or group.

1. On page 291, Elizabeth reflects on “how little of permanent happiness could belong to a couple who were only brought together because their passions were stronger than their virtue.” Do Lydia and Wickham get “punished” for their wrong behavior? In what way?
2. What does Lydia’s elopement reveal about Mr. and Mrs. Bennet? Do you think either of them are permanently changed by the event?
3. “He owed a good deal in town, but his debts of honour were still more formidable.” What do we learn about Regency-Era society from this quote? What else does the book have to say on the subject of “honour”?

## Writing an Analysis Paper

Now that you have read and analyzed an analysis paper on *Pride and Prejudice*, it’s your turn to write one.

Choose one of the following topics for your paper, or choose your own topic:

- Jane Austen originally titled this book *First Impressions*. What are some of the “first impressions” that happen in the book, and how do those impressions change over the course of the novel?
- What does *Pride and Prejudice* teach us about marriage in the Regency Era specifically and in general? Do you think Austen had a positive or a negative view of marriage?
- Evaluate the literary or moral value of *Pride and Prejudice*. Use examples that you have highlighted throughout the book.

Use the example analysis paper and the following checklist to make sure your paper contains all of the necessary elements of an analysis paper:



- ☐ There is an attention-grabbing opening.
- ☐ Title and author are listed in the opening paragraph.
- ☐ Your thesis statement is in the opening paragraph.
- ☐ There are at least three body paragraphs.
- ☐ Each body paragraph has a topic sentence and sticks to the main idea of the topic sentence.
- ☐ Transitions are used between paragraphs and topics.
- ☐ The concluding paragraph wraps up the text without repeating exactly what has already been stated.
- ☐ The final word count is at least 750 words.

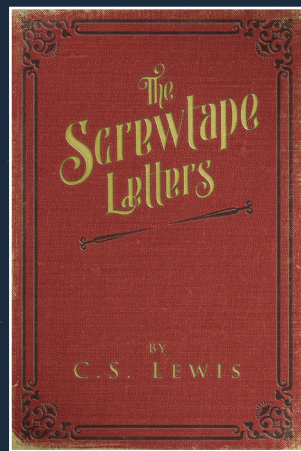


HIGH SCHOOL HONORS

# BOOK STUDY

## THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

by C.S. Lewis



◊ THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL ◊

## ABOUT THE BOOK STUDY

### What are Honors Book Studies?

The Good and the Beautiful Honors Book Studies are student-directed consumable booklets that accompany select books from The Good and the Beautiful Library or other wonderful and inspiring books. Each Honors Book Study is designed to help students explore the book's themes and messages, appreciate the literary value of the book, and learn new vocabulary and writing skills that correlate with the book. To complete an Honors Book Study, the student simply reads and follows the instructions in the booklet while reading the corresponding book. The Honors Book Studies are intended to be completed independently, or they can be completed in a group, class, or book club setting.

### What are the goals of the Honors Book Studies?

There are three main goals of the Honors Book Studies: to help the student learn to **analyze**, **appreciate**, and **gain inspiration** from good and beautiful literature.

### How many Honors Book Studies should be completed?

Students can complete as few or as many of the Honors Book Studies as desired. Honors Book Studies are not designed to take the place of the High School Language Arts courses; they are designed to be used in addition to the courses for those students who work at a faster pace and can use more challenging work. The reading books for the Honors Book Studies are more challenging than the required reading books for the High School Language Arts courses and can be completed in any order.

### What materials are needed?

To complete this book study, you will need the following items:

- This book study booklet
- *The Screwtape Letters* by C. S. Lewis
- A computer or laptop with a basic word processing program, such as Word or Google Docs
- A pencil or pen and a journal or notebook
- A Bible

## AT-A-GLANCE

### Author Study

- Biography of C. S. Lewis

### Vocabulary

- Challenging vocabulary words in *The Screwtape Letters* (see pages 4–6)

### Literary Analysis

- Study the themes and messages in *The Screwtape Letters*
- Analyze select quotations from *The Screwtape Letters*

### Writing

- Personal Notebook Response questions
- Scriptural Connection questions
- Writing a “Screwtape Letter”

### Group Discussion

- Extra discussion questions for those completing this book study with a group



## Author Study

### C. S. LEWIS: A SOLDIER IN GOD'S ARMY

Clive Staples Lewis, known to his friends and family simply as “Jack,” was born in Belfast, Ireland, on November 29, 1898. From a young age, Lewis had a deep love of books and storytelling. He and his older brother, Warren, spent their childhood writing and illustrating tales about “Boxen,” an imaginary land of their own creation. Boxen, populated by talking animals, had a rich and complicated history, political system, and socioeconomic structure all its own. Undoubtedly, the seeds for Lewis’s popular fantasy series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, were sown during those early creative years. Sadly, the boys’ mother died when Lewis was 10, and the brothers were sent off to separate boarding schools. The next few years were difficult and lonely ones for Lewis, but he and his brother remained close friends throughout their lives.

Soon after beginning his studies at the University of Oxford, Lewis was drafted into the army. At the young age of 19, he was sent to the front lines in France, where he witnessed the horrors of World War I and trench warfare. He was much more fortunate than many, however. In April of 1918, he was wounded by a shell that killed two of his comrades and sent back to England to receive treatment. By the time he had recovered, the war was over, and Lewis returned to Oxford to finish his studies in Greek, Latin, and English literature.

Lewis excelled at Oxford and after graduation stayed on first as a tutor in philosophy and then as a member of the English Literature faculty. In the introduction to their biography on Lewis, his friends Roger Lancelyn Green and Walter Hooper wrote, “To write the biography of a man of genius as many-sided as C. S. Lewis is a daunting task ... His ideal biographer would have to be at once a Classical and English scholar, a theologian, a philosopher, an expert on fantasy, science fiction and children’s books—and no one but Lewis himself possessed all these qualifications in sufficient degree.” It is evident that Lewis’s intellect

was deep and wide reaching, and based on the number of books, speeches, and letters he left behind, it seems as though his pen hardly ever rested.

Nearly every week for over a decade, Lewis gathered with a group of literary-minded friends at The Eagle and Child, a pub in Oxford. The group, which included Lewis’s dear friend J. R. R. Tolkien, became known as “The Inklings.” During these informal meetings, members would discuss wide-ranging topics and read aloud from their works in progress. It was to this group that Tolkien first read the manuscript that would become *The Lord of the Rings*. Lewis shared several of his manuscripts with the group too, including those that became *The Screwtape Letters*, *The Great Divorce*, and *Out of the Silent Planet*, the first novel in his science fiction trilogy. Those lively, friendly gatherings were some of Lewis’s favorite times, and

they are where he first received the encouragement and criticism he needed to hone his writing and ideas. About the Inklings, Lewis wrote, “Is any pleasure on earth as great as a circle of Christian friends by a good fire?”



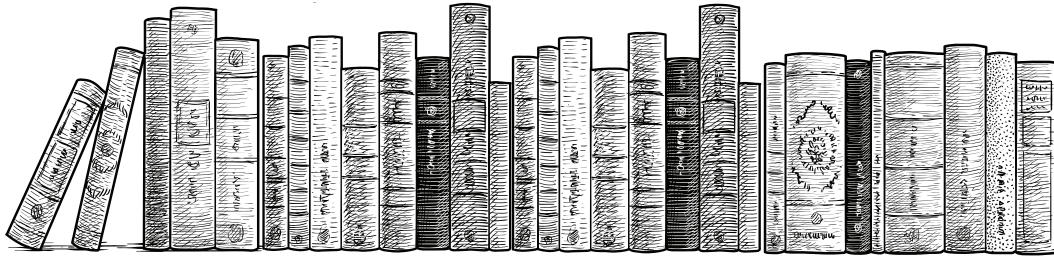
Though he wrote numerous books, essays, and speeches on theology and is remembered as one of Christianity’s most stalwart defenders, Lewis spent many years of his life as an atheist. After losing his mother at a young age, spending his formative years friendless and in a school he hated, and then watching the horrors of WWI from the front lines, it is little wonder that Lewis abandoned his childhood faith and belief in a loving Heavenly Father. However, Lewis’s fervent desire

to believe and his own good sense would not allow him to completely walk away from the question of God’s existence. He says about that time in his early 20s, “I was at that time living like many atheists: in a whirl of contradictions. I maintained that God did not exist. I was also very angry with God for not existing.” These contradictions tormented Lewis, as much as he tried to affect indifference about his atheism.

Several factors played an important role in Lewis’s conversion. Perhaps most influential was his friendship with J. R. R. Tolkien, a devout Catholic, and other Christians at Oxford. Lewis had many late-night discussions with these faithful men, and though he tried to correct what he saw as their mistaken logic, he realized over time that they were chipping away at all his arguments for atheism. And that is another important factor in Lewis’s conversion—

## VOCABULARY WORDS

“Be sure you know the meaning (or meanings)  
of every word you use.” —C. S. Lewis



**acquiesce** [ak-wee-ESS]: to agree to or comply with

*Mom and Dad did not often acquiesce to our pleas for more screen time.*

**asphyxiate** [as-FIK-see-ate]: to kill or make unconscious through lack of air

*Not wanting to asphyxiate themselves, scuba divers keep a close eye on their oxygen gauges.*

**attrition** [uh-TRI-shun]: the state of being worn or weakened by continual attack

*Attrition of the grinding gears caused the machine to eventually break down.*

**chattel** [CHA-tul]: an item of personal property; slave

*The practice of treating humans as chattel is a blight on our nation's history.*

**corporeal** [kor-POR-ee-ul]: having a material body; physical as opposed to spiritual

*In Greek mythology, the gods often take corporeal form as humans or animals.*

**coterie** [KOH-tur-ee]: a fashionable, often exclusive, group of people with common interests or goals

*Sharon met weekly with a coterie of her fellow artists to share and discuss their work.*

**demure** [duh-MYUR]: reserved, sober, and modest or affectedly so; coy

*I wore my most demure gray pantsuit to the job interview.*

**dossier** [DAW-see-ay]: a file containing documents and detailed information about a specific person or subject

*After years of treatments, my medical dossier could fill a whole filing cabinet.*

**exploitation** [ek-sploy-TAY-shun]: the act of using someone unfairly in order to profit from them

*The exploitation of child labor thankfully ended in the United States in the 1930s.*

**expurgated** [EK-spur-gay-ted]: purged or cleansed from anything offensive, harmful, or incorrect

*His letters were expurgated of all profane phrases before being published.*

**fidelity** [fuh-DEL-uh-tee]: faithfulness; careful and exact observance of duty

*Many abolitionists displayed an admirable fidelity to the cause of freedom.*

**foment** [foh-MENT]: to encourage the growth of by agitation, excitement; to incite

*The gang was accused of fomenting violence and was sentenced to prison.*

# Section 1

## Letters 1-5

### Introduction

Welcome to *The Screwtape Letters* Honors Book Study. You will use this book study as a guide to learning and personal reflection while you read *The Screwtape Letters*, a book written from the perspective of Hell but with the intention of bringing us all closer to Heaven.

The goal of The Good and the Beautiful Book Studies is to strengthen both your mind and your heart. This book study is broken into six sections. Complete each section as you read the corresponding letters in the book. Using the book study will give you a greater appreciation for the complex arguments, scriptural insight, and opportunities for personal growth in the story.

### Assignments

*Mark off the Section 1 activities below as you complete each one in order. When all are completed, you are ready to begin Section 2. See the extra "Group Discussion Questions" page at the end of this book study if working as a group.*

- ☐ Read the "Author Study" (pages 2–3).
- ☐ Complete the Vocabulary activity.
- ☐ Read "Introduction to Etymology" and complete the Etymology Exploration activity.
- ☐ Read letters 1 through 5 of *The Screwtape Letters*.
- ☐ Complete the Quote Annotation/Explanation activity.
- ☐ Answer the Personal Notebook Response Question.
- ☐ Complete the Scriptural Connection activity.

### Vocabulary

*Write the correct word in the blank using the word bank. Use the vocabulary key on pages 4–6 when needed.*

1. Each day as I walk hungrily by the bakery, the treats in the window \_\_\_\_\_ me.
2. The school librarians \_\_\_\_\_ all the books with inappropriate material from the shelves.

3. Despite \_\_\_\_\_ obstacles, Tara overcame them all to gain an education and eventually become a history professor.
4. That little red berry may seem \_\_\_\_\_, but it could cause serious illness if ingested.
5. Though he was a \_\_\_\_\_ and refused to carry a gun, Desmond Doss still served in the army as a medic during World War II.
6. Mariah felt a \_\_\_\_\_ when she saw the beggar children and so stopped to help them.
7. Her beauty was only \_\_\_\_\_; on the inside she was selfish and hard-hearted.
8. God heard my \_\_\_\_\_ in prayer and answered it with a feeling of peace.

### Word Bank

expurgated  
innocuous  
myriad  
pacifist

qualm  
superficial  
supplication  
tantalize

### Introduction to Etymology

**Etymology** is a branch of linguistics that studies the history of words and their origins. Because our language has been heavily influenced over hundreds of years by many other languages, including Latin, Greek, French, and German, English etymology is a rich and fascinating field. By tracing the history of a word back through the years, we can discover where it came from and how its usage has morphed or even taken on new meanings.

Let's take the simple example of the word "butler." A butler is traditionally the highest-ranking manservant in a household. When you hear the word, you may think of a





## Personal Notebook Response Question

Read the prompt below and write a response (at least 200 words) in your personal notebook.

In letter 11, Screwtape classifies four different types of laughter. Write about a time when you felt true Joy, as Screwtape describes, and love for those around you. Have you ever witnessed his description of Flippancy, either in your own conversations or in those of people around you? How did that make you feel? How can you practice more Joy and less Flippancy in your life?

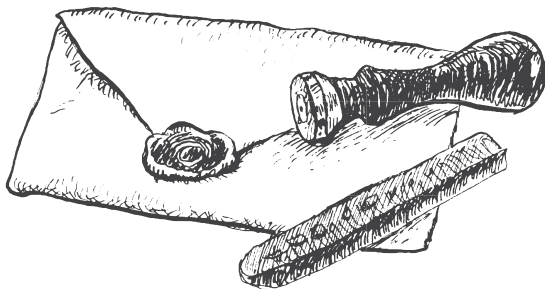


## Scriptural Connection

In the New Testament, look up and read 2 Corinthians chapter 12, verses 7 through 10. Ponder these verses and the information below, and then answer the questions in your personal notebook.

In letter 8, Screwtape tells Wormwood, “some of His special favourites have gone through longer and deeper troughs than anyone else.”

? How does this quote apply to Paul? How can understanding this truth help you when you are going through difficult trials?



## Section 3 Letters 12-16

### Assignments

Mark off the Section 3 activities below as you complete each one in order. See the extra “Group Discussion Questions” page at the end of this book study if working as a group.

- ☐ Complete the Vocabulary and Etymology Exploration activities.
- ☐ Read letters 12 through 16 of *The Screwtape Letters*.
- ☐ Complete the Quote Annotation/Explanation activity.
- ☐ Answer the Personal Notebook Response question.
- ☐ Complete the Scriptural Connection activity.

### Vocabulary

Write the correct word in the blank using the word bank. Then write your own sentence using each vocabulary word.

1. Stonewall Jackson was famous for his clever \_\_\_\_\_ to outwit the Union Army.
2. Virginia Woolf was part of a \_\_\_\_\_ of writers and thinkers known as the Bloomsbury Group.
3. The gas leak down in the mines nearly caused the miners to \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Look at those big, dark clouds; a thunderstorm is \_\_\_\_\_.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ in marriage is essential; spouses should be able to trust each other completely.

### Word Bank

asphyxiate  
coterie  
fidelity

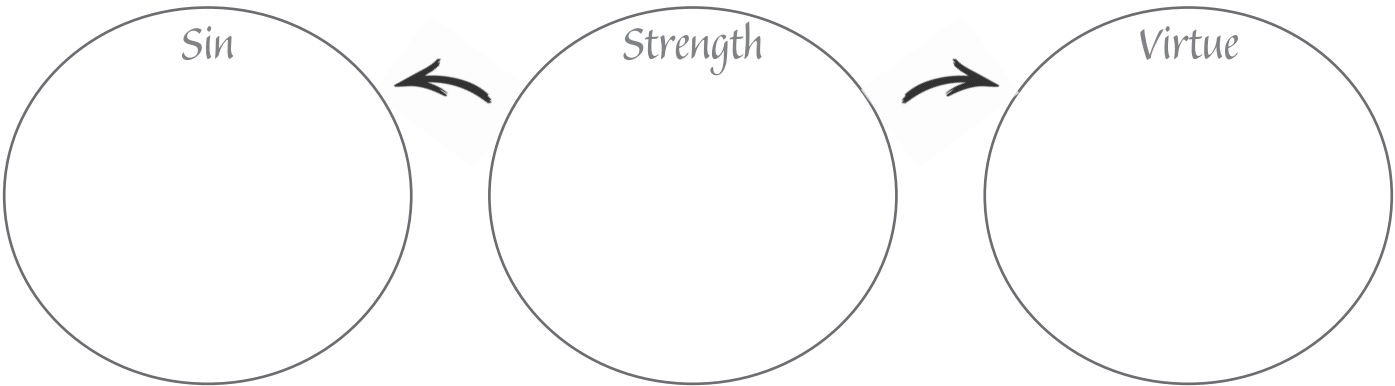
imminent  
stratagem

Strengths

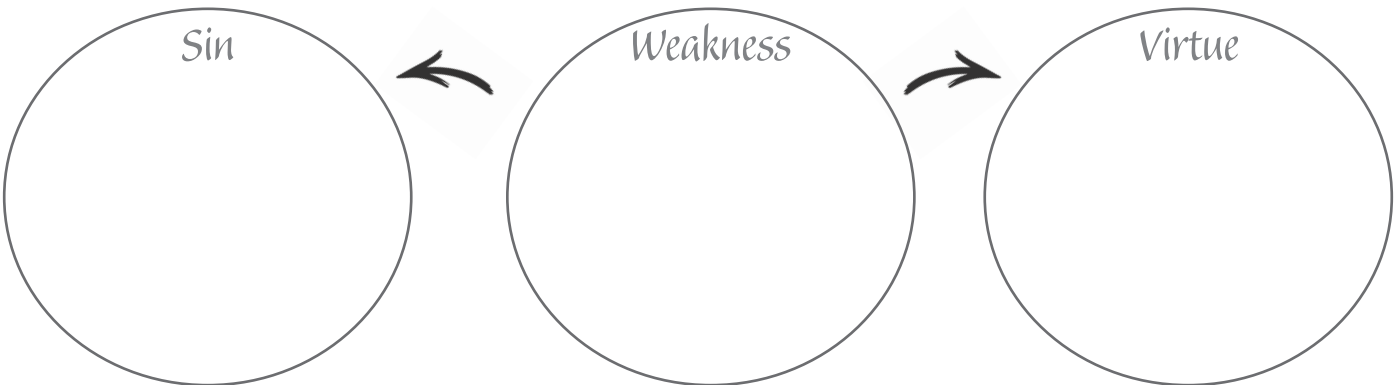
Weaknesses

Distractions

*Pick one of the strengths you listed. How could it become a sin? A virtue?*



*Pick one of the weaknesses you listed. How could it become a sin? A virtue?*



## Screwtape Letter Writing Assignment

Use the following prompts and guidelines to write your own version of a “Screwtape Letter.”

Now that you have spent many hours reading *The Screwtape Letters* and reflecting on its important lessons, it is your turn to mimic Screwtape’s style and write a letter of your own. Imagine that you are the patient Wormwood has been assigned to tempt. Look back through your personal notebook responses and your brainstorming session. What do you think Wormwood would say about you to his uncle? Which behaviors in your daily life would make Wormwood happy, and which would worry him?

Choose one of the following topics for your letter or make up your own topic:

- Pick one strength and one weakness from the lists you made and imagine Wormwood has told his uncle about them. How would Screwtape encourage Wormwood to turn each into a sin instead of allowing them to become ways for you to serve God and become more humble?

- Pick one of the distractions from the list you made. How would Screwtape advise Wormwood to use that distraction to distance you from God, and what could the eventual consequences be?
- Pick one of your favorite scriptures or scripture stories and turn it into the theme of your letter. (Look back through the “Scriptural Connection” activities for inspiration.)

Your letter should:

- Begin with “My dear Wormwood,” and end with “Your affectionate uncle Screwtape.”
- Be about *you*, “the Patient.”
- Use the inverted language Screwtape uses: “the Enemy” for God, “Our Father Below” for Satan, etc.
- Be at least 500 words.

## Optional Bonus Activities

The following activities could help you get more out of your *Screwtape Letters* experience and continue the good habits you’ve started:

- Pick a favorite quote (or several) from the book and turn it into an art project. Write it big on a piece of paper, color it, draw around it, and/or decorate it any way you want. When you’re done, put it somewhere you’ll see it every day as a reminder.
- Choose another book by C. S. Lewis to read, and look for themes and ideas similar to those you encountered in *The Screwtape Letters*. Some of his most popular theological books include *Mere Christianity*, *The Great Divorce*, and *The Problem of Pain*.
- If you enjoyed the “Etymology Exploration” sections of this book study, go off and do some more exploration

on your own! To get you started, the following is a list of words with interesting histories: assassin, clue, dunce, malaria, nimrod, robot, sandwich, tawdry.

- Do some extra research on C. S. Lewis’s group of writer friends, The Inklings. The most famous members include J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams, and Owen Barfield. Consider starting a similar group—a book club, a writers group, an art appreciation club ... Who would you invite? Where would you meet? What would you want to discuss?





## Group Discussion Guide

### Section 1

1. Some editions of *The Screwtape Letters* include the following two quotes after the dedication page:  
*“The best way to drive out the devil, if he will not yield to texts of Scripture, is to jeer and flout him, for he cannot bear scorn.”—Luther*  
*“The devil ... the prowde spirite ... cannot endure to be mocked.”—Thomas More*  
 How do these quotes set the tone for what you’re about to read? Why do you think Lewis included them?
2. In the Preface, Lewis states, “Readers are advised to remember that the devil is a liar.” Why do you think Lewis felt it was important to remind his readers about this fact? Do you think Screwtape is a persuasive voice? Do you ever find yourself believing him or agreeing with him at any point in the book?
3. When you read the Author Study, were you surprised to learn that Lewis had not always been a Christian? What can you learn from his conversion story?

### Section 2

1. Read the following quote from letter 10:  
*“In modern Christian writings, ... I see few of the old warnings about Worldly Vanities, the Choice of Friends, and the Value of Time. All that, your patient would probably classify as ‘Puritanism’—and may I remark in passing that the value we have given to that word is one of the really solid triumphs of the last hundred years? By it we rescue annually thousands of humans from temperance, chastity, and sobriety of life.”*

In the book, the devils are always trying to get humans to care more about the appearance of something than the thing itself, the “truth.” They don’t want us to think

in simple terms of right and wrong, good and evil, true and false. How do you see this in the world around you? What are some other Christian ideas or behaviors society has rejected or labeled negatively?

2. Look back through letter 9 and discuss with the group what Screwtape says about the nature of pleasure. What does he mean when he writes, “Never forget that when we are dealing with any pleasure in its healthy and normal and satisfying form, we are, in a sense, on the Enemy’s ground”? In what way is Evil, then, dependent on Good?

### Section 3

1. In letter 14, Screwtape writes the following:  
*“He wants each man, in the long run, to be able to recognise all creatures (even himself) as glorious and excellent things. He wants to kill their animal self-love as soon as possible; but it is His long-term policy, I fear, to restore to them a new kind of self-love—a charity and gratitude for all selves, including their own; when they have really learned to love their neighbours as themselves, they will be allowed to love themselves as their neighbours.”*

Who in your life has many “glorious and excellent” qualities? What do you admire about this person? How does focusing on a person’s good qualities help you love them more and recognize them as a child of God? And how can recognizing your own gifts and talents help you feel gratitude to God?

2. What do you think of the little glimpses Lewis provides into the devils’ experiences and way of life? For example, in letter 13, Screwtape talks about the “asphyxiating cloud” that prevented Wormwood from attacking his patient one day. Do you find these amusing? Enlightening? Unnerving? Do they add or detract from the rest of the book for you?



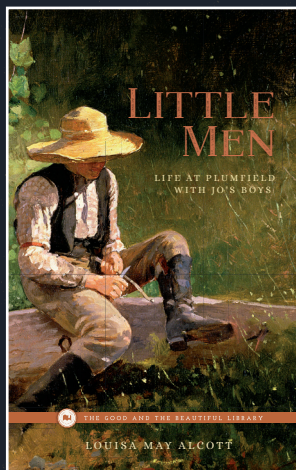
HIGH SCHOOL HONORS

# BOOK & STUDY

## LITTLE MEN

• LIFE AT PLUMFIELD WITH JO'S BOYS •

by Louisa May Alcott



◦ THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL ◦

# LITTLE MEN

## LIFE AT PLUMFIELD WITH JO'S BOYS

By Louisa May Alcott

HIGH SCHOOL HONORS BOOK STUDY

Created by Jenny Phillips and Maggie Felsch

© 2019 Jenny Phillips

[www.thegoodandthebeautiful.com](http://www.thegoodandthebeautiful.com)

## ABOUT THE BOOK STUDY

### What are Honors Book Studies?

The Good and the Beautiful Honors Book Studies are student-directed consumable booklets that accompany select books from The Good and the Beautiful Library. Each Honors Book Study is designed to help students explore the book's themes and messages, appreciate the literary value of the book, and learn new vocabulary and writing skills that correlate with the book. To complete an Honors Book Study, the student simply reads and follows the instructions in the booklet while reading the corresponding book. The Honors Book Studies are intended to be completed independently, or they can be completed in a group, class, or book club setting.

### What are the goals of the Honors Book Studies?

There are three main goals of the Honors Book Studies: to help the student learn to **analyze**, **appreciate**, and **gain inspiration** from good and beautiful literature.

### How many Honors Book Studies should be completed?

Students can complete as few or as many of the Honors Book Studies as desired. Honors Book Studies are not designed to take the place of the High School Language Arts courses; they are designed to be used in addition to the courses for those students who work at a faster pace and can use more challenging work. The reading books for the Honors Book Studies are more challenging than the required reading books for the High School Language Arts courses. Honors Book Studies can be completed in any order.

### What materials are needed?

To complete this book study, you will need the following items:

- This book study booklet
- *Little Men* by Louisa May Alcott
- A computer or laptop with a basic word processing program, such as Word or Google Docs
- A pencil or pen and a journal or notebook

## AT-A-GLANCE

### Vocabulary

- Challenging vocabulary words in *Little Men* (see pages 2–3)

### Correlated Literature Study

- Overview of other works by Louisa May Alcott
- Study of characters in Louisa May Alcott books

### Literary Analysis

- Study the themes and messages in *Little Men*
- Analyze the literary value of *Little Men*

### Author Study

- Biography of Louisa May Alcott

### Writing

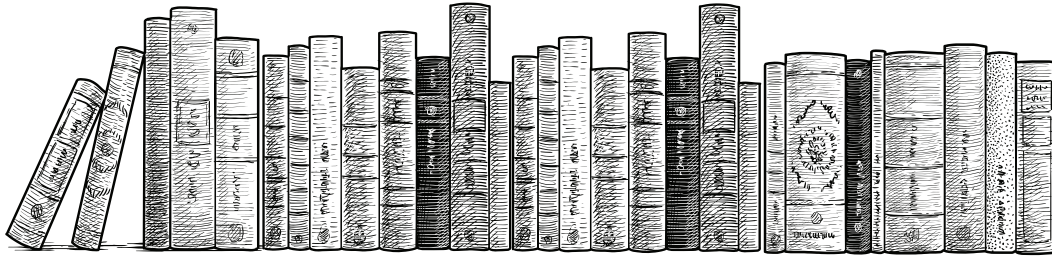
- Reading and analyzing response papers
- Writing a response paper
- General writing instruction and practice



## VOCABULARY WORDS

"Your understanding of what you read and hear is, to a very large degree, determined by your vocabulary, so improve your vocabulary daily."

-Zig Ziglar



**Abdicate** [AB - dih - cate]: to relinquish or give up a responsibility or duty

*The queen decided to abdicate her throne.*

**Alacrity** [uh - LACK - rih - tee]: brisk and cheerful readiness

*She accepted the invitation with alacrity.*

**Assuage** [us - SWAGE]: to relieve or soothe an unpleasant feeling

*He composed a beautiful song to help assuage his grief.*

**Beguile** [be - GUILLE]: to charm or captivate someone, sometimes in a deceiving way

*The performer used flattery to beguile the crowd.*

**Carouse** [cuh - ROUZE]: to party with alcoholic drink and usually a great amount of noise

*The drunken group caroused all night.*

**Condole** [cuhn - DOLE]: to express sympathy and grieve with someone

*When my friend's father passed away, I brought flowers in an effort to condole her.*

**Congenial** [cuhn - JEE - nee - yole]: agreeable; pleasant; personable; friendly; amiable

*Everyone was drawn to his congenial personality.*

**Droll** [drole]: humorous or entertaining in a dry way

*He kept me laughing with his droll humor.*

**Effervescence** [eff - fer - VEHS - sents]: enthusiasm and vivacity; bubbles or fizz in a liquid

*His effervescence was contagious, creating a stir in all of us.*

**Expatriate** [ex - PAY - she - ate]: speak or write at length or in detail

*I plan to expatriate on this important topic during my presentation.*

**Ferule** [FEH - rule]: a rod, cane, or flat piece of wood for punishing children

*He felt a sharp crack across his hand from his teacher's ferule.*

**Filial** [FILL - ee - ul]: a child's duty to his or her parents

*He determined to tend the stables out of filial duty to his father.*

**Ignominious** [ig - nuh - MIN - ee - us]: deserving or causing public disgrace or shame; humiliating

*They suffered an ignominious defeat.*

**Impetuous** [im - PET - choo - us]: moving or acting quickly, without thought or care; hasty; impulsive

*The whole town bore the consequence of his impetuous decision.*

**Indolent** [IN - doe - lent]: wanting to avoid activity or exertion; lazy

*I just don't understand his newly indolent behavior.*

**Insidid** [in - SIP - id]: lacking in flavor; lacking in vigor or interest

*We soon grew bored with his insipid reenactment.*

**Languish** [LANE - gwish or LAN - gwish]: to lose vitality; grow weak or feeble

*Being locked in the cell with no books and nothing to do caused him to languish.*

**Maudlin** [MOD - lin]: self-pityingly sentimental; tearfully sentimental

*We wept at the maudlin story of the orphan twins.*

**Menagerie** [meh - NADGE - er - ee]: a collection of wild animals kept in captivity for exhibition; a strange or diverse collection

*She had quite a menagerie of stuffed animals on her bed.*

**Nosegay** [NOSE - gay]: a small bouquet of flowers; boutonniere

*She pinned the lovely nosegay to her dress as a sweet ornament.*

**Palaver** [puh - LAV - er]: prolonged and idle discussion; to talk at length

*I quickly grew tired of the palaver between the two men.*

**Pathos** [PAY - thos]: a communication technique that evokes pity, sadness, or a similar emotional response

*The movie about endangered animals used pathos to gain sympathy.*

**Placid** [PLASS - id]: not easily upset or excited; calm; tranquil

*I love to sit and write in my journal in this beautiful, placid meadow.*

**Propriety** [pro - PRY - ih - tee]: behavior that is accepted as socially or morally correct and proper

*She behaved at the ball with great propriety.*

**Rebuff** [ree - BUFF]: (verb) to reject someone or something in an abrupt or ungracious manner; (noun) an abrupt or ungracious refusal or rejection; snub

*I tried to not let my feelings be hurt by his rebuff.*

**Recompense** [REH - kum - pents]: (verb) to compensate or make amends for a loss; (noun) compensation

*I hope the recompense for your loss was enough.*

**Remonstrance** [reh - MON - strunts]: an earnest protest or objection

*We decided to stop the show after their remonstrance.*

**Reprieve** [ruh - PREEVE]: (verb) to cancel or postpone punishment; (noun) a cancellation or postponement of punishment

*He was sentenced to jail but was granted a last-minute reprieve.*

**Sanguinary** [SANE - gwin - air - ee]: involving or causing extreme bloodshed

*The battle was a sanguinary struggle.*

**Souse** [rhymes with HOUSE]: to soak in or drench with liquid

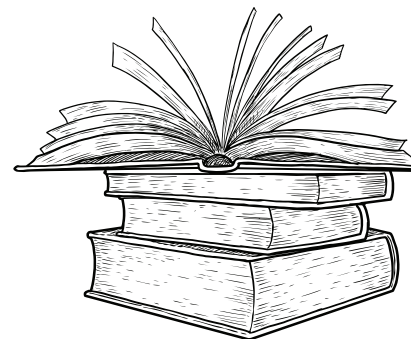
*First, souse the vegetables in broth.*

**Taciturn** [TASS - ih - tern]: reserved or uncommunicative in speech; saying little

*When I tried to speak with her, she was very taciturn. I didn't know the reason behind her taciturnity.*

"You can't build up a vocabulary if you never meet any new words. And to meet them you must read. The more you read the better."

-Rudolf Flesch

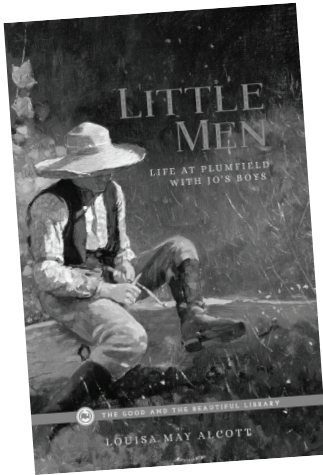


# SECTION 1

## Chapters I–IX

### Introduction

Welcome to the *Little Men* Honors Book Study! You will use this book study as a guide while you read *Little Men*, a story full of wisdom, joy, sorrow, and laughable antics.



The goal of The Good and the Beautiful Book Studies is to strengthen both your mind and your heart. This book study is broken into three sections. Complete each section as you read the corresponding chapters in the book. Using the book study as a guide will give you a greater appreciation for the rich language, meaningful messages, and well-developed characters in the story.

Mark off the Section 1 activities below as you complete each one. When all four are completed, you are ready to begin Section 2.

- ☐ Complete the Vocabulary activity in this section.
- ☐ Read the Correlated Literature portion of this section.
- ☐ Read the article “Discerning the Value of Literature” in this section.
- ☐ Read Chapters 1 through 9 of *Little Men*.

### Vocabulary

Circle the correct word below. Use the vocabulary key on pages 2–3 when needed.

1. The queen decided to ABDICATE | REBUFF her throne because of turmoil in the kingdom.
2. He felt a sharp crack across his hand from his teacher’s FERULE | SOUSE.
3. The movie about endangered animals used much PLACID | PATHOS to gain sympathy.
4. She accepted the invitation with ALACRITY | TACITURN.
5. He determined to tend the stables on his own out of NOSEGAY | FILIAL duty to his father.
6. I love to sit and write in my journal in this SANGUINARY | PLACID meadow.
7. He composed a beautiful song on his piano to help ASSUAGE | BEGUILE his grief.
8. The team suffered an IGNOMINIOUS | EXPATiate loss.
9. I expect you to use REBUFF | PROPRIETY at dinner.
10. The performer used flattery to CONDOLE | BEGUILE the crowd.
11. His hasty decision was rather IMPETUOUS | ASSUAGE.
12. Rather than thank him, the fancy lady chose to LANGUISH | REBUFF his flattering compliments.
13. It’s much more beneficial and wise to study than to CAROUSE | PROPRIETY your college years away.
14. As he worked hard, he got tired of the INDOLENT | PALAVER employees who didn’t pull their weight.
15. The pasta was beautiful, but unfortunately, it was also rather IMPETUOUS | INSIPID.
16. My greatest goal is to RECOMPENSE | REBUFF you for the loss I caused.



## Correlated Literature

Part of understanding literature is understanding the background of the book and the author. You will learn more about the author of *Little Men*, Louisa May Alcott, in Section 3. In this section, you will learn some background information about *Little Men* and its beloved characters.

Before *Little Men* was published in 1871, the more widely known story *Little Women* by the same author was published in 1868. It was also followed in 1886 by Alcott's novel *Jo's Boys, and How They Turned Out*. All three books have many of the same characters. *Little Men* can be read without having read *Little Women* first, but it is helpful to understand who some of the characters are.



1969 illustration of *Little Women* by May Alcott

*Little Women* follows the lives of four sisters—Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy March. The novel is based loosely on the lives of Louisa May Alcott and her three sisters, classifying the book as a **semi-autobiography**.

In particular, Josephine “Jo” March is a principal character in both books. In *Little Women*, Jo has a fiery temper and strong will. She works to control her temper with the help of her mother, sisters, and friends. Jo loves literature, both reading and writing.

During part of the story, Jo cares for her Great-Aunt March, a rich, elderly widow living in a mansion called Plumfield.

For a long while, Jo rejects the idea of romance and marriage because she doesn't want to break up the wonderful home life and relationships she has with her sisters. Toward the end of the book, however, a German professor, Friedrich “Fritz” Bhaer, proposes to Jo, and she accepts. When her Great-Aunt March dies, she leaves Plumfield to Jo. She and Professor Bhaer turn the house into a school for boys. They have two sons of their own, Robin “Rob” Bhaer and Theodore “Teddy” Bhaer.

You may enjoy watching the 2018 PBS production of *Little Women* (available on Amazon Prime at the time of this publication).

Here are some other important characters to know before starting *Little Men*:

**Theodore “Laurie/Teddy” Laurence** is Jo's brother-in-law (Amy's husband) and good friend. Jo is the only one allowed to call him “Teddy.” Most of his friends and family call him “Laurie.” He is a fun-loving, wealthy young man and is very generous when it comes to the needs of the school and its students. He makes frequent visits to the school, usually taking his daughter Bess with him.

**Bess “Goldilocks/Princess” Laurence** is Laurie and Amy's daughter, who is well loved by all the boys and girls at Plumfield. She is affectionately called “Goldilocks” and “Princess.”

**Asia** is the irritable but tender-hearted cook at Plumfield.

**Silas** is the jovial farmhand at Plumfield.

**Meg Brooke** is Jo's oldest sister, married to John Brooke; she is Daisy, Demi, and Josie's mother.

**Nat** is a twelve-year-old orphan who lived as a street musician until his father's death. He is brought to live at Plumfield.

**Dan** is a neglected fourteen-year-old orphan, who is brought to Plumfield by Nat.

**Nan** is the only unrelated girl brought into the school.

**John “Demi” Brooke and Margaret “Daisy” Brooke** are John and Meg Brooke's ten-year-old twins who are schooled at Plumfield.

**Tommy, Emil, Franz, Ned, Jack, George “Stuffey”, Dick, Billy, and Adolphus “Dolly”** are all boys who live at Plumfield and are schooled by the Bhaers.



## Discerning the Value of Literature

by Jenny Phillips



In my intense pursuit of seeking out the best literature, I have read thousands of books. Of all these books, *Little Men* is on my list of top-ten favorite books of all time. Why? The language is so skillfully and beautifully written that it was a deeply enjoyable and satisfying read for me. In addition, the many profound messages in the book also sank deep into my heart and made me a better person. With this being said, it was not a book that kept me up late into the night feverishly reading on the edge of my seat. In fact, it took me a while to read the entire book. Often in our world today, people judge how “good” a book is by how hard it is to put down. Certainly, books of the greatest value should be engaging, but they do not have to be instantly and constantly thrilling to be engaging, and the entertainment value of a book is only one measure of a book’s overall value. One of the main purposes of this book study is to help you learn, through reading and analyzing *Little Men*, how to recognize and appreciate books of great value.

### The Moral Value of Books

The Bible gives a valuable standard by which we can judge the moral value of books:

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” (Philippians 4:8 KJV)

*Little Men* is packed with messages that are pure and lovely. Here are some of them:

- appreciation for music
- compassion
- creativity and imagination
- family unity
- friendship
- gratitude

- high regard for motherhood, fatherhood, and family
- honesty
- kindness
- love of education
- love of nature
- loyalty
- manners and politeness
- mercy and forgiveness
- optimism and cheerfulness
- patience
- persistence and perseverance
- repentance
- respect for authority/parents
- responsibility
- tenderness and gentleness
- thoughtfulness

When judging the moral value of a book, consider that a book can have both bad and good themes and messages. This can be confusing when judging the overall morality of a book. Most books that contain immoral messages *also* contain a small or large amount of moral messages. If you add an immoral message to moral messages, the book still contains immoral material. If you have a bowl of horse manure and put juicy, ripe strawberries and fresh cream on top, it is still horse manure underneath, and it is still gross and not good to eat.

Another important matter to consider when judging the moral value of books is that just because a book has, perhaps, all good *themes and messages*, does not mean it is a moral book. For example, one recent best-selling book has the profound message that “love conquers all.” The main character stays moral and tries to combat evil. However, the reader is offered a lot of horse manure to eat along the way—profanity, sexually provocative scenes (not made to look acceptable, but still provocative), and many pages of disturbing graphic violence that can desensitize the reader to that level of violence.

*Little Men* has the same overall, deeply profound message of “love conquers all.” However, to get to that message, the reader is not dragged through profanity, immorality, or graphic violence.

Yes, an immoral book can have positive messages and even impact us in good ways, but immoral books will also

always impact us in negative ways as well. On the other hand, a completely moral book can have the same positive impacts (and I argue even *stronger* impacts), but without *any* negative impacts.

### The Literary Value of Books

Here are some ways to judge the literary value of a book:

- Complexity and variety of sentence structures (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex)
- Skilled use of poetic devices
- Use of rich descriptive and sensory language (writing that describes sound, touch, taste, sight, smell, and emotion)
- Elevated, varied, and wide-ranging vocabulary
- Skilled characterization: well-developed characters who are complex, believable, and interesting, rather than shallow, flat, and superficial; they show character grown and give insight into human nature, history, places, and cultures
- Skilled plot development, not based on being quick-paced, thrilling, or instantly entertaining, but rather on being complex, creative, compelling, well-developed, interesting, mind-expanding, insightful, and meaningful

Books with high literary value tend to be more challenging to read and might not keep you reading feverishly through the night like fast-paced easy reads might; that is not the aim of the best books.

Imagine walking on a flat and smoothly paved path with jugglers, fire swallowers, and folk dancers entertaining you as you go. That would be easy and fun. Now imagine hiking on a sometimes rugged and challenging dirt path, passing through vast deserts, isolated beaches, and windswept prairies. Ascending into the mountains, the path at times becomes rocky and requires you to clamber over large boulders. You push forward up steep trails that weave rewardingly through spectacular scenery. Your heart beats faster, your muscles burn, and you breathe in the fresh mountain air. The smell of pine, the crisp coolness of higher elevations, and the looming peak above you keep you going. Finally, after much exertion and hard work, you arrive at the peak and are presented with breathtaking, stunning views you have never experienced.

Reading classics may be hard and take extra time and

effort, but the greatest rewards in life usually come through effort and tackling something difficult. Confucius said, "All good things are difficult to achieve."

Reading books of high literary and moral value does more than improve reading proficiency, writing skills, vocabulary, attention span, and academic skills. It helps develop character traits such as persistence; it deepens feelings of empathy and understanding; it increases knowledge of people, places, ideas, and cultures; it reveals high principles and model examples; and it provides a rich and rewarding experience. Christian author C. S. Lewis wrote: "Our leisure, even our play, is a matter of serious concern. There is no neutral ground in the universe: every square inch, every split second, is claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan."

It can be challenging to choose good literature when you have not read a book and don't know what is in it. Here are some resources for finding out more about the content in books:

### The Good and the Beautiful Book List

- includes reviews and information on hundreds of recommended books with high literary and moral value; books are listed by reading level
- a list of books that did not make the list with explanations of why is also available
- [www.thegoodandthebeautiful.com](http://www.thegoodandthebeautiful.com)

### Squeaky Clean Reviews

- book reviews with a Christian focus
- summarizes plot, morality, violence, drug and alcohol content, sexual content, and profanity in books
- [www.squeakycleanreviews.com](http://www.squeakycleanreviews.com)

## Assignment

As you read *Little Men*, do so with two colors of highlighters. Highlight phrases, sentences, or passages that stand out to you for their moral value in one color. In the other color, highlight phrases, sentences, or passages that stand out to you for their literary value.

*Group Tip: Share and discuss highlighted passages at the beginning of each class.*



## Themes and Messages

Chapter 14 of *Little Men* is titled “Damon and Pythias,” a reference to a Greek legend. In the legend, Damon and Pythias were loyal friends. Pythias was accused of treason against the tyrannical King Dionysius and sentenced to death. Pythias asked for permission to return to his home one final time to say goodbye to his family and make sure all his affairs were in order. The king, of course, thought that Pythias would not return and refused the request.

Damon heard of his friend’s plight, and he asked to be held as a hostage so Pythias could return home. The king told Damon that if Pythias did not return in time for the execution, Damon would be executed in his stead. Damon agreed to the conditions, and Pythias was released.

King Dionysius thought that Pythias would not return and that Damon was a fool. Indeed, the day came for Pythias’ return, and the king called the executioner to kill Damon, but Pythias appeared just in time! He apologized to his friend for taking so long and explained that, on his return to relieve his friend from captivity, pirates had captured his ship and thrown him overboard. He had swum ashore and hurried to the palace as fast as he could.

The king was so amazed and touched by the loyal friendship of Damon and Pythias that he pardoned both men and set them free.

Like the story of Damon and Pythias, Chapter 14 of *Little Men* touches deeply on two important topics: loyal friendship and honesty.

Read the following excerpt:

Nat felt the difference in the way they spoke of Demi and himself, and would have given all he had or ever hoped to have to be so trusted; for he had learned how easy it is to lose the confidence of others, how very, very

hard to win it back, and truth became to him a precious thing since he had suffered from neglecting it.

Professor Bhaer set a wonderful example of how to deal with a dishonest child. Read again the following passages that demonstrate how Professor Bhaer spoke to the children when it appeared there was a thief and a liar among them:

“Take your seats,” he said; and, when all were in their places, he added slowly, as his eye went from face to face

with a grieved look, that was harder to bear than a storm of words,

“Now, boys, I shall ask each one of you a single question, and I want an honest answer. I am not going to try to frighten, bribe, or surprise the truth out of you, for every one of you have got a conscience, and know

what it is for. Now is the time to undo the wrong done to Tommy, and set yourselves right before us all. I can forgive the yielding to sudden temptation much easier than I can deceit. Don’t add a lie to the theft, but confess frankly, and we will all try to help you make us forget and forgive.”

And a little later:

“I am very sorry, Nat, but evidences are against you, and your old fault makes us more ready to doubt you than we should be if we could trust you as we do some of the boys, who never fib. But mind, my child, I do not charge you with this theft; I shall not punish you for it till I am perfectly sure, nor ask anything more about it. I shall leave it for you to settle with your own conscience. If you are guilty, come to me at any hour of the day or night and confess it, and I will forgive and help you to amend. If you are innocent, the truth will appear sooner or later, and the instant it does, I will be the first to beg your pardon for doubting you, and will so gladly do my best to clear your character before us all.”

Continue to watch for themes and moral messages as you read *Little Men*.





Group Discussion: If completing this unit as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. Why do you think Louisa May Alcott titled Chapter 14 "Damon and Pythias"?
2. Who are the two characters that she relates to Damon and Pythias?
3. How important is trust to you? What would you give to have others trust you? How can you earn and keep trust?
4. What have you learned from Nat, Dan, and Professor Bhaer?

## Example Response Paper

A response paper discusses your reaction to a text. A response paper is not a summary of the text; it is your own personal analysis and impressions of what you read. Response papers are written from the first person point of view, which means you may have phrases such as "I believe" or "I feel."

Writing a response is a wonderful exercise for subjective thinking, organization, and writing. One of the best ways to learn to write well is to read model writing. Read and analyze the following short response paper, making a checklist in your notebook of items needed for a successful response paper.

Starts with an attention-grabbing opening, such as a question, quote, short personal experience, or—as in this case—an interesting statement.

The title and author of the book are listed in the opening paragraph.

A body paragraph should have a topic sentence, but it does not always come as the first sentence in the paragraph.

It can be effective to use specific examples from the text, paraphrased or quoted.

### *Little Men Chapter 15*

#### *Response Paper*

*by Jenny Phillips*

Most people will not find themselves searching for a giant lost ruby in the middle of an exotic, mysterious jungle while being pursued by foes riding on elephants. Life rarely contains the kind of thrilling excitement you would find in an action-packed movie. Does that mean regular life is boring for most people? Chapter 15 of *Little Men* by Louisa May Alcott shows, through masterful writing, that regular life, indeed, does not have to be boring. Rather, excitement and deep enjoyment can be found in small things, available to everyone.

If you were trying to help a reader see how beautiful small, ordinary things in life can be, would you think of using the point of view of a tree? This is exactly what Alcott does in Chapter 15, brilliantly showing the beauty of ordinary things that happen in and under the willow tree. Alcott describes how the quiet, pleasant tree enjoys the children and all they do. From a busy, adult perspective, perhaps little girls' bits of soap for washing doll clothes and little boys' plans for butterfly nets are not of much significance. But the old tree finds it delightful: "A passing breath of air shook the old willow, as if it laughed softly at the childish chatter which went on in the nest, and it had hardly composed itself when another pair of birds alighted for a confidential

Transitions to the thesis statement.

Thesis statement

Topic Sentence

Each body paragraph sticks to the main idea of the topic sentence.



Cite the page number  
of direct quotes

twitter.” (page 217) The tree itself knows how to find joy in the little things: “For an hour the old willow sighed and sung to itself, talked with the brook, and watched the lengthening shadows as the sun went down.” (page 217) Alcott masterfully sets up the tree as something in touch with nature and the simple, beautiful things in life, so as we see the tree find joy in the doings of the little children, it naturally helps the reader see it, too.

wraps up  
examples with an  
original state-  
ment--not a  
quote from text

Uses transitions

In Chapter 15, Alcott also uses phrases packed with beautiful language that create emotion in the reader. For example, consider the following phrases from this chapter:

Topic Sentence

Uses transitions

- shout of delight
- so enchanted with his splendid success
- beginning already to feel the sweet satisfaction
- came sauntering home from a long walk in the woods
- looking up at the sky
- was soon wrapt up in watching for the fish
- the boy swung himself up into the tree
- evidently feeling the charm of the place and hour

We all know how good it would feel and how most people do not take time to saunter through the woods, look into the sky, and swing themselves up into a tree. In addition, Alcott’s use of alliteration in these phrases gives a sense of harmony and satisfaction: “splendid success,” “sweet satisfaction,” “walk in the wood,” and “wrapt up in watching.”

Uses transitions

The concluding paragraph  
wraps up the text without  
repeating exactly what  
has been said.

Chapter 15 of *Little Men* is truly packed with messages about finding joy in the ordinary things in life, but the chapter contains more than just messages. The simple act of reading the beautiful language in this chapter is one of the ways that we can ourselves experience pleasure and joy through little things.

Write about the book in  
present tense.