

**Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey***



Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*  
Pre-Reading Considerations

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Variations on the Themes—to be answered individually or in small groups:**

1. Have you ever read a book where you felt you were smarter than the people in the book? If so, what was that experience like? If not, what do you imagine the experience would be like?
2. Have you ever read a book where you felt you were smarter than the author of the book? If so, what was that experience like? Did you finish the book? Why or why not? If not, what do you imagine the experience would be like? Would you finish the book? Why or why not?
3. What is your favorite genre (kind/type) of book? Why? What is an example of a favorite book in that genre?
4. What role do books play in your life? Why do you read? What do you hope to gain from reading?



## Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* Pre-Writing—Short Essay

*Write a 5-paragraph essay about one of the following:*

1. Describe your favorite school memory with a book (or books). Be specific with the sensory details.
2. Who is your favorite author? Why? Which of his/her books is your favorite? Why?
3. "If one cannot enjoy reading a book over and over again, there is no use in reading it at all." Do you agree or disagree with Oscar Wilde's quote? Support your observations with specific details.
4. "Every man who knows how to read has it in his power to magnify himself, to multiply the ways in which he exists, to make his life full, significant and interesting." Do you agree or disagree with Aldous Huxley's quote? Why or why not? Support your answer with specific details and examples.



**Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*  
While You Read**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer the following questions based on your reading of *Northanger Abbey*:**

1. Check out the definition of "gothic" novels in the dictionary and write it down here. List the literary conventions that are commonly found in gothic novels. Then track those conventions as they are found in *Northanger Abbey*.
2. Catherine is relatively innocent and inexperienced at the beginning of the novel. Track her as she grows and changes.
3. What situations typical to teenagers does Catherine find herself in? List them.
4. There are two kinds of reading in *Northanger Abbey*: reading books and letters, and reading people. Keep track of each instance where either occurs, commenting on each. What do we learn about Catherine in each instance? What does she learn about herself as she goes along? What does she learn about others?



5. List the characters and their wealth and status. How does this affect them as the story unfolds?
  
6. Notice Austen's use of satirical irony, particularly via her narrator. What are some examples?
  
7. Austen uses three methods to share her story: narration, dialogue, and free indirect discourse (staying in third person narration, but using the style and tone that reflect the way a certain character is thinking). Give examples of effective use of each. Tell why.
  
8. What is the turning point between Catherine and John Thorpe? How does this mark a new level of her independence? What brings Catherine and Henry together? What does Henry see in her that perhaps others do not?





**Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*  
Post-Reading Discussion**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer the following questions on your own or in small groups:**

1. What is significant about the novel's first sentence: "No one who had ever seen Catherine Morland in her infancy, would have supposed her born to be an heroine." Why was Catherine an unlikely heroine?
2. What kind of a character/person is Catherine? Describe her.
3. What role does the city of Bath play in this novel? What kind of a place is Bath? Why do people go there? What do they do? Jane Austen was not particularly fond of Bath, although she visited and lived there herself more than once. Why might Bath be an effective setting for the first part of this story?
4. In chapter V, Austen's narrator defends novel reading. What are her key points? Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?



5. Compare and contrast Isabella and Catherine. Discuss their friendship. Is it real or manipulated? Why?
6. Discuss the three instances where Austen (or her characters) pokes fun of gothic novels:
  - a. Henry's story about Catherine's first night in Bath
  - b. Catherine unlocks the mysterious cabinet
  - c. Catherine imagines that General Tilney murdered his wife
7. Describe how Catherine's imagination gets her in trouble.
8. Research *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. What is its reputation now? How does it compare to when *Northanger Abbey* was written? What impact does it have on Catherine?



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**Post Reading Considerations**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Choose one of the following options and write a 5-paragraph essay exploring the topic or question. Be sure to support your response with evidence from the book.**

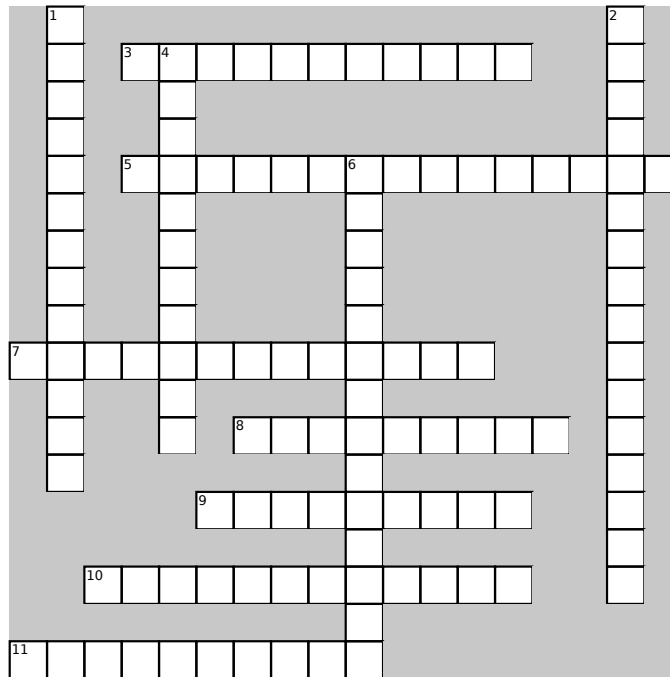
1. Is Henry Tilney's "teaching" of Catherine patronizing or bullying? Why does Henry feel the need to treat Catherine the way he does? Is Catherine open to his "help" or does she resist it? What effect does this have on your feelings about both characters?
2. Compare and contrast volume I with volume II of *Northanger Abbey*. Which characters continue on, which disappear (more or less)? How is the tone different? What role does parody play in volume II?
3. In volume II, Catherine realizes that people have an "unequal mixture of good and bad" in them. How so? Give specific examples from the story.
4. What is the climax of the novel? Support your opinion.
5. "The true journey of the novel is Catherine's coming of age" instead of her progression to a marriage. Agree or disagree. Support your opinion.





## Who's Who in Northanger Abbey

Determine which Northanger Abbey character is being described in the clues below.



### Across

- 3 A couple--relatively simple, practical folk, especially compared to people like Mrs. Thorpe and General Tilney
- 5 The oldest sibling in the Tilney family who, unlike his brother Henry or his sister Eleanor, is a flirt and given to mischief.
- 7 Henry's younger sister is a shy, quiet young woman. She shares an interest in reading with her brother,
- 8 The couple that invites Catherine to go to Bath with them.
- 9 The widowed mother of Isabella and of two other daughters.
- 10 The brother of Catherine and a fellow student of John Thorpe at Oxford University, he is mild-mannered and very caring, like his sister.
- 11 The brother of Isabella, he is conceited, arrogant, and given to boasting and exaggeration. He talks endlessly and rarely listens.

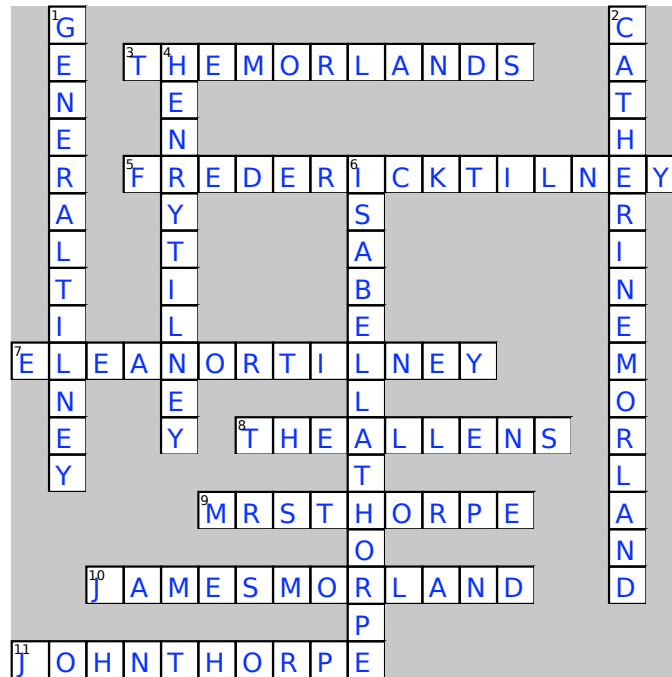
### Down

- 1 The domineering father of Henry, Eleanor and Captain Tilney. He is a widower.
- 2 The protagonist of Northanger Abbey.
- 4 A 26-year-old parson in a small village called Woodston. He is intelligent, well-tempered, and attuned to the motivations and behavior of those around him.
- 6 Catherine's best friend for the first half of the novel. She is attractive and very spirited, but like her mother, she is a gossip and often concerned with superficial things.



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