

*Jane Austen*

*SENSE &  
SENSIBILITY*



**Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility***



**Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility***  
**Pre-Reading Considerations**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

1. What's the difference between "sense" and "sensibility"? Look the words up in a dictionary and provide the definitions for each, noting, if possible, what they would have meant in Jane Austen's time.
2. If you were to characterize yourself, would you say you are more like "sense" or "sensibility"? Why? Is this desirable? Why or why not?
3. What is your most dominant character trait? Is it good or bad? Is it something easily changed? Why or why not?
4. What character traits do you look for in your friends? In potential dates? In a marriage partner? Do you think you have what it takes to be an ideal friend? Date? Marriage partner? Why or why not?



**Write a short essay about one of the following:**

1. Describe a typical day with your family. Be as detailed as possible (and as you are comfortable doing).
2. What are the typical things teenagers do today to amuse or entertain themselves? Describe a party or other social gathering.
3. What, if anything, does society have to do with who you are friends with? (In this case society might mean your classmates, your church, etc.)







3. What is Mrs. Dashwood like as a mother? Give specific details about her and her relationship with her daughters and the way she handles their life together.
4. Compare and contrast Colonel Brandon and Willoughby. Which makes a better boyfriend? Who makes a better husband? What's the difference? What matters most in each relationship?
5. What society games are played throughout the novel? Who is the best gamester? What specific things do they do?
6. Describe Jane Austen's writing style. Point out specific characteristics and tendencies of her as a writer.
7. Jot down three of your favorite lines/scenes in the book and tell why you chose them.



**Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*  
Post-Reading Discussion**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

1. There are critics who say that the characters of *Sense and Sensibility* are not fully developed human beings but rather stereotypes. Do you agree or disagree with this criticism? Are Marianne and Elinor more than simple representatives of *Sense and Sensibility*? Which characters are the most convincing for you? Support your answers with details and examples from the book.
2. Based on your reading, is Jane Austen "for" sense and "against" sensibility, the opposite, or a combination? How can you tell? Give specific examples that support your answer.
3. What do Marianne's and Elinor's descriptions of and reactions to Edward tell us about each of them? About their ideas of love? How do your ideas of love compare?



4. What do you think of John Willoughby at first? Do you like him? Why so? How does Austen reveal him to us? Does Willoughby change throughout the book? Why or why not?
  
5. Austen never married, yet she is known for her happy endings (weddings). What does this tell us about her views of marriage in general? What constitutes a good marriage for her, based on the marriages in this book? Can you tell which couple has the ideal marriage from Austen's point of view? What details reveal this to you?
  
6. What does this book have to say about money? Does it have anything to do with happiness in this context? Is it different for different characters? How has your attitude towards money and happiness changed, or has it? Support your answer with examples.
  
7. Austen's narrator tells us that happiness is "always at the mercy of chance." How is this belief played out in the book? Give examples. Do you believe this? Why or why not?



**Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility***  
**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. "Wealth has much to do with...happiness," Elinor states at one point. "Elinor, for shame!" says Marianne. "Money can only give happiness where there is nothing else to give it." What is the relationship between love and money in *Sense and Sensibility*? Is it different for different characters? Has the relationship between love and money changed in today's world?
2. "One's happiness must in some measure be always at the mercy of chance," the narrator says at one point. What role does chance play in the fates of the main characters? Be specific, citing evidence from the book.
3. "The agony of grief which overpowered them at first," says the narrator of Mrs. Dashwood's and Marianne's response to the death of Mr. Dashwood, "was voluntarily renewed, was sought for, was created again and again." Reading *Sense and Sensibility* in the twenty-first century, when it is considered psychologically healthy to "get in touch with your feelings," does the narrator's higher opinion of Elinor's more restrained response to her father's death seem "old-fashioned" and unhealthy?
4. *Sense and Sensibility* began its life as a novel in letters called *Elinor and Marianne*. What part does the sending and receiving of letters play in the action of the story? In the development of the characters? What was Austen able to do with narrative that she could not have done with an epistolary (letters) book?





**Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility***  
**Post Reading Projects**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

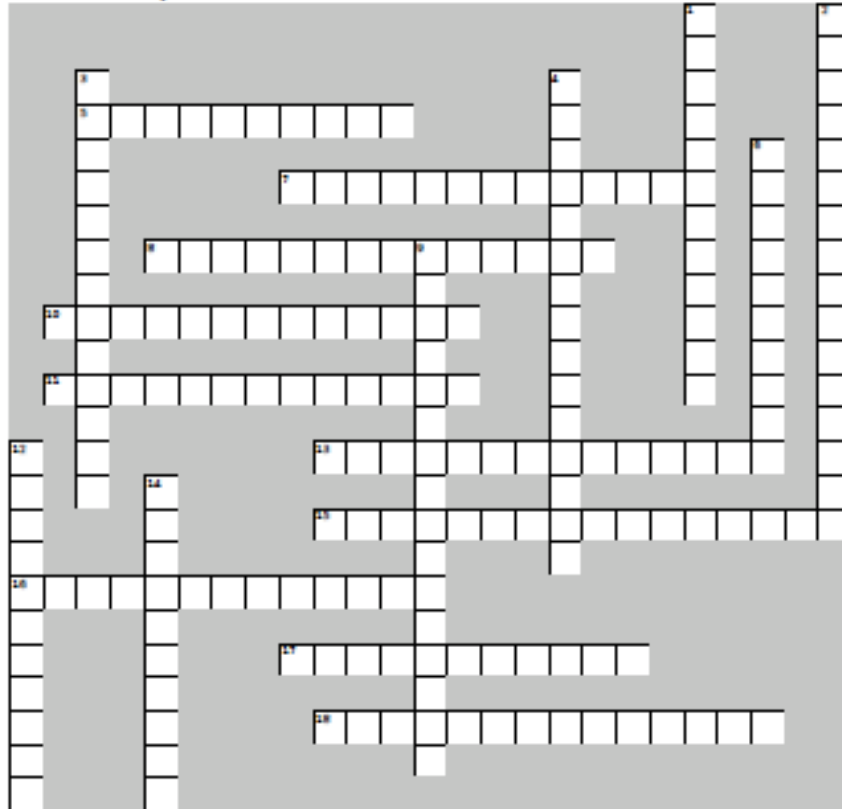
Choose one of the following options to produce a creative project responding to themes and ideas in *Sense and Sensibility*.

1. Interview an older woman—preferably from your grandmother's generation. Ask her what the politics, social expectations, attitudes, clothing, and lifestyles were concerning women when she was growing up. Ask her how these things have changed over her lifetime and why she thinks these changes have taken place. Present your findings in essay, chart, or creative form such as a video interview, power point, or podcast.
2. Create a series of letters between key characters in the book, telling their story only through these letters.
3. Create a series of Facebook status one-liners to reveal the progress and details of a favorite character's storyline.
4. Create a "companion" album of music that compliments the storyline of *Sense and Sensibility*.



## Who's Who in Sense & Sensibility

Identify the characters from Sense and Sensibility based on the brief descriptions below.



### Across

- 5 Lucy Steele's older, unmarried sister who accidentally reveals her sister's secret engagement to Edward Ferrars.
- 7 A conceited coxcomb and the younger brother of Edward and Fanny who inherits his mother's fortune after she disinherits his brother.
- 8 The oldest sister; all sense, practicality, and diplomacy.
- 10 The sensible and friendly older brother of Fanny Dashwood and Robert Ferrars
- 11 The father of John Dashwood and, by a second marriage, of Elinor, Marianne, and Margaret Dashwood
- 13 Dashing, handsome romantic interest of Marianne Dashwood.
- 15 The middle sister; all passion and romantic notions.
- 16 The selfish, snobbish, and manipulative wife of John Dashwood and the sister of Edward and Robert Ferrars
- 17 Lady Middleton's gossipy but well-intentioned mother.
- 18 Affluent suitor and eventual husband of Marianne Dashwood.

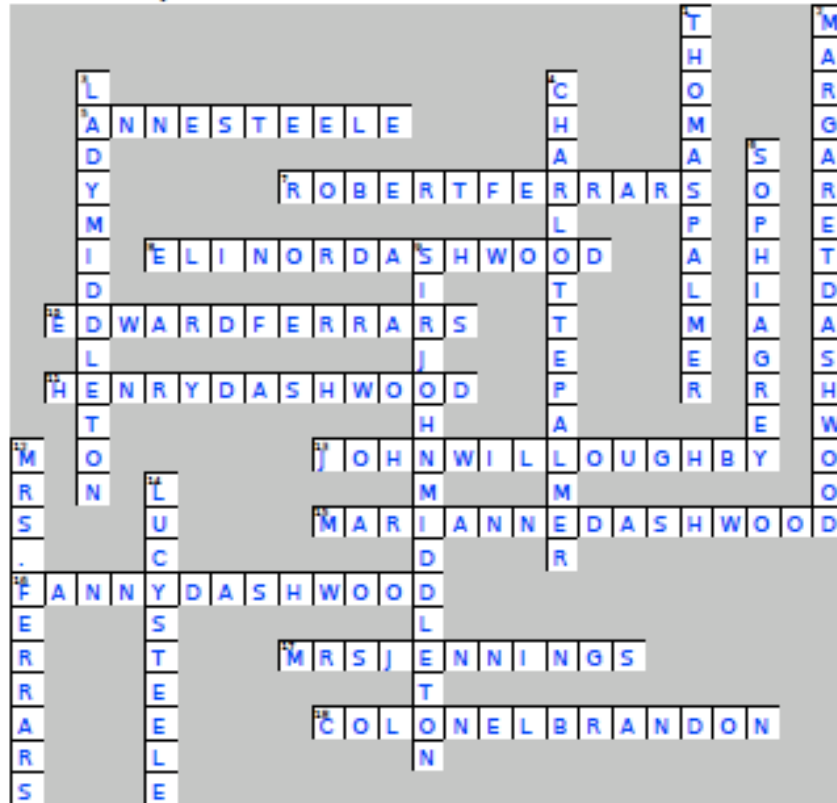
### Down

- 1 Mrs. Palmer's gruff, unemotional husband.
- 2 The thirteen-year-old, good-humored youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Dashwood
- 3 A distant relation of the Dashwoods who lives at Barton Cottage with her husband and children.
- 4 Mrs. Jennings' talkative and foolish daughter who invites the Dashwood sisters to stay at her home.
- 6 The wealthy heiress whom Willoughby marries after abandoning Marianne.
- 9 The jovial but vulgar distant relation of the Dashwoods who invites Mrs. Dashwood and her three daughters to stay at Barton Cottage.
- 12 The wealthy, manipulative mother of Edward and Robert who disinherits her first son when he refuses to marry a rich heiress.
- 14 Mrs. Jennings' cousin and a sly, selfish, and insecure young woman. She has been secretly engaged to Edward Ferrars.



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