

Persuasion: (a) Chapter one

☞ refers to links on www.crossref-it.info

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To examine the opening chapter, and how it sets up the rest of the novel.
 - Note: Unlike the majority of these lesson plans, this could be undertaken before reading the entire novel.
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** Look at a range of different novels, reading their opening sentences or paragraphs.
 - What impressions are given?
 - What are the possible aims of a novel's opening?
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Read Chapter One aloud.
 - This is available free on the internet if you do not wish to read it yourself. Try, for example, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MG-ZYpHWvIs> or <http://www.booksshouldbefree.com/book/persuasion-by-jane-austen>.) They take 14/15 minutes.
 - As they listen, students should make notes on the worksheet. You may need to pause occasionally to allow time for this.
 - ☞ (*Persuasion* synopses and commentary > Volume 1 > Volume 1, Ch. 1)
- ❖ **Discussion ideas:** Go through students' responses on **Worksheet a)i**, discussing issues arising.
 - Develop ideas about Jane Austen's style and approach.
 - ☞ (Narrative > Viewpoint of the narrator)
 - ☞ (Narrative > Irony)
 - Why is so much time taken with Sir Walter, a fairly minor character in the rest of the novel, in Chapter One? (Characterisation > Sir Walter Elliot)
- How are Mary and Elizabeth used by Austen?
 - ☞ (Characterisation > Mary and Elizabeth)
 - What are our first thoughts about Lady Russell?
 - ☞ (Characterisation > Lady Russell - a 'very good woman'?)
 - What themes are introduced?
 - ☞ (Themes > various)
 - ☞ (Imagery and symbolism > Money)
- ❖ **Recreative task:** Script a clip based on Sir Walter's episode of 'Who Do You Think You Are?' for the BBC series.
 - Look at examples of such short clips on <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00ksrc6>
 - If there is time, this could be filmed.
 - ☞ (Characterisation > Sir Walter Elliot)
 - ☞ (Imagery and symbolism > Money)
- ❖ **Critical task:** Helen Fielding has written:
 - 'One of Austen's great skills is to position your sympathies with absolute clarity in relation to each of her characters.'
 - Would you agree that Austen does this successfully in Chapter One of *Persuasion*, or is she too blatant in her opinions to take the reader with her?
 - ☞ (Narrative > Viewpoint of the narrator)
- ❖ **Extension task:** Compare this chapter with the opening chapters in other Jane Austen novels.
 - Is there any difference, perhaps as she matures as a writer?
 - ☞ (Author > Jane Austen > Later life)