

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

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To explore the role played by accidents in the novel.
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** Share stories of accidents (preferably not serious ones).
 - Explore how 'accidental' they really were, and how they affected what followed.
 - If they had not happened, how would people's 'stories' have turned out?
 - You could also discuss why a writer might use accidents, and whether this is rather a cheat in place of genuine cause and effect.
 - Why does she make so much use of accidents in this novel?
- ☞ How does this affect our response to the novel? (Structure > Structure by volume > The positioning of Louisa's fall)
- ❖ **Recreative task:** Write a synopsis of the way the story might turn out if Louisa had not fallen on the Cobb. Could Austen still achieve her happy ending?
 - ☞ (Structure > Structure by plot > A Cinderella story)
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Divide the following passages around the class:
 - Anne's nephew falls from a tree (Ch 7);
 - Anne accidentally overhears Captain Wentworth and Louisa (Ch 10);
 - Anne twice unknowingly crosses paths with Mr Elliot at Lyme (Ch 12);
 - Louisa's fall on the Cobb (Ch 12).
 - For each, answer these questions:
 - What do we learn about the characters involved in the incident?
 - What particular use of language do you notice?
 - How does this accident affect the plot?
 - ☞ (*Persuasion* synopses and commentary > Volume 1 > Volume 1, Ch 7; Ch 10; Ch 12)
- ❖ **Critical task:** We are told that Captain Wentworth had 'been lucky in his profession.'
 - How far do you agree that chance plays too large a role in *Persuasion* for the reader to admire the main characters of Anne and Captain Wentworth?
 - ☞ (Characterisation > Anne Elliot)
 - ☞ (Characterisation > Captain Wentworth)
- ❖ **Extension task:** Research the theme of Fate in the novels of Thomas Hardy. For example, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*
 - ☞ (*Tess of the d'Urbervilles* Themes and significant ideas > Coincidence, destiny and fate)
 - Is *Persuasion* similar to Hardy's tales in its reliance on chance, or is there a distinct difference in Austen's purpose in using 'accidents'?
- ❖ **Discussion ideas:** Report back and discuss the answers to the questions.
 - Are the 'accidents' all used in the same way by Jane Austen?