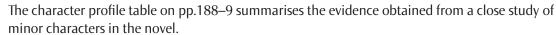
ACTIVITY

This example shows:

- a detailed explanation of how to approach the task through a close study of the text
- an annotated piece of creative writing a new scene including a conversation between characters in the novel
- links between the creative response and a close analysis of the text.

The task in this example involves the development of a character profile table – see pp.188–9. This table summarises evidence obtained from a close study of several minor characters in the novel. A close study of characters is an excellent basis for a creative response. The following activity is included should you decide to base your creative response on one or more characters.

Create a character profile table



This activity will enable you to locate textual evidence for the key features that are used to create these particular characters. This evidence will be very useful in developing both your creative response and your reflective commentary, as well as for writing about that character in a close analysis.

- 1. Study the table closely to see how different types of evidence are needed to build complex 'portraits' of these characters.
- **2.** Using the same features, create your own table for a group of characters in the text you are studying.
- 3. Use this as the basis for writing a creative response involving these characters. This could be a new section inserted into the text or a separate piece written from the point of view of one of these characters in the style of the original text.

A new scene for Jane Austen's *Persuasion*

The task: construct a new scene showing contrasting views of some of the minor characters who discuss the marriage of Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth.

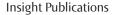
Preliminary activities

- Write down what Lady Russell, Sir Walter Elliot and Elizabeth, Admiral and Mrs Croft and Mary and Charles Musgrove might say or think about the recent marriage.
- Identify some of the text's main ideas and connect them to the writer's views and values.
- Make notes on elements of Austen's style.
- Make notes on Austen's construction of comic characters.
- Read some critical reviews particularly those offering differing critical perspectives.

Character profiles

This creative response focuses on a group of secondary characters whose views and values are markedly different. The views of the comic characters are juxtaposed with those of the more sensible characters; Austen's capacity for humour is evident in her implicit condemnation of values associated with the comic characters.

Page numbers refer to the 2003 Penguin Classics edition (edited with an introduction and notes by Gillian Beer).



Features of the text	Key quotations and elements of characterisation
Authorial comments on the characters	 Lady Russell: 'a sensible, deserving woman' (p.6); 'Lady Russell felt this break-up of the [Elliot] family exceedingly' (p.34). Sir Walter Elliot: 'Vanity was the beginning and the end of Sir Walter Elliot's character; vanity of person and of situation' (p.6).
	• Elizabeth Elliot: 'Elizabeth did not quite equal her father in personal contentment [she] had had a disappointment while a very young girl' (pp.8-9).
	• Mary Musgrove: 'A little farther perseverance in patience, and forced cheerfulness on Anne's side, produced nearly a cure on Mary's. She could soon sit upright on the sofa Then, forgetting to think of it, she was at the other end of the room, beautifying a nosegay' (p.38).
	• Charles Musgrove: 'Charles Musgrove was civil and agreeable'; 'he did nothing with much zeal, but sport' (p.41).
	• Mrs Croft: 'Her manners were open, easy, and decided without any approach to coarseness, however, or any want of good humour' (p.46).
What the characters say and think	• Lady Russell: 'Anne Elliot, with all her claims of birth, beauty, and mind, to throw herself away at nineteen in an engagement with a young man, who had nothing but himself to recommend him would be, indeed, a throwing away, which she grieved to think of!' (pp.26-7).
	• Sir Walter Elliot: disapproves of the Navy because it is 'the means of bringing persons of obscure birth into undue distinction' (p.20).
	• Elizabeth Elliot (to Mary): 'Then I am sure Anne had better stay [at Uppercross], for nobody will want her in Bath' (p.32).
	• Mary Musgrove (to Anne): 'I began to think I should never see you. I am so ill I can hardly speak' (p.36) - ironically, she goes on to speak a great deal.
	• Charles Musgrove (informing Mary that he will go out to dinner despite his son's accident): 'Your sister being with you, my love, I have no scruple at all. You would not like to leave him yourself, but you see I can be of no use' (p.52).
	• Mrs Croft: 'the only time that I ever fancied myself unwell, or had any ideas of danger, was the winter that I passed by myself at Deal, when the Admiral (Captain Croft then) was in the North Seas' (p.66).
	• Admiral Croft (meeting Anne in Bath): 'Can I go any where for you, or with you? Can I be of any use?' (p.159); Austen's tone is humorous as she exploits the Admiral's comic possibilities.
What others say or think of them	• Lady Russell (Henrietta Musgrove's opinion): 'I always look upon her as a person able to persuade a person to any thing!' (p.96).
	• Sir Walter Elliot (Elizabeth's opinion): 'While Lady Elliot lived, there had been method, moderation, and economy but with her had died all such right-mindedness' (p.10).
	• Elizabeth Elliot: 'Lady Russell had scarcely any influence with Elizabeth, and seemed to love her, rather because she would love her, than because Elizabeth deserved it' (p.16).
	• Mary Musgrove (Louisa Musgrove speaking to Captain Wentworth): 'Mary is good-natured enough but she does sometimes provoke me excessively, by her nonsense and her pride We do so wish that Charles had married Anne instead' (p.82).
	• Charles Musgrove (Mary speaking to Anne about her husband, after their son breaks his collar bone): 'I must say it is very unfeeling of him, to be running away from his poor little boy' (p.53); this is ironic as Mary soon decides to go to dinner with Charles and leave her injured son with Anne.
	 Admiral and Mrs Croft (Anne's opinion): they 'seemed particularly attached and happy' (p.59); Anne admires Admiral Croft's 'goodness of heart and simplicity of character' (p.118).
What the characters do	• Lady Russell: discourages Anne's early attachment to Captain Wentworth and later promotes Mr Elliot as a suitor; reconciliation with Wentworth is indicated near the end (p.235).
	• Sir Walter Elliot: lives beyond his means; fawns over his distant, aristocratic cousins in Bath (Lady Dalrymple and Miss Carteret).
	• Elizabeth Elliot: presides over Kellynch Hall as mistress after her mother's death; cultivates a friendship with the predatory Mrs Clay.
	• Mary Musgrove: marries Charles Musgrove after Anne refuses him; becomes demanding and petulant.
	• Charles Musgrove: mainly interested in shooting; not a particularly attentive father or husband, but solicitous of his sister Louisa after her accident at Lyme.
	 Admiral and Mrs Croft: take possession of Kellynch Hall; take a kindly interest in Frederick's romantic affairs.



Features of the text	Key quotations and elements of characterisation	
Relationships with other characters	 Lady Russell: maternal interest in Anne; concern for welfare of the Elliot family. Sir Walter Elliot: relationships revolve around his daughter Elizabeth, and those whose company will reflect well on him. Elizabeth Elliot: relationships are much like her father's; however, her early disappointment has left her embittered and increasingly desperate. Mary Musgrove: relationships are unfulfilling; her husband avoids her company and she cannot control her children. Charles Musgrove: friendly relationships with his parents, siblings and cousins; tolerant of Mary but evades his responsibilities to his children. Prefers shooting and the companionship of other men. Admiral and Mrs Croft: good relationships with everyone; a model of marital compatibility 	
Values represented by the characters and condemned by Austen	 which Anne and Captain Wentworth might emulate. Austen uses sharply satirical humour to condemn the vanity, folly, selfishness and snobbery of comic characters such as Sir Walter Elliot and Mary Musgrove. Characters such as Mr William Elliot and Mrs Penelope Clay are more strongly condemned as they are insincere, deceitful, self-seeking and unscrupulous. 	
Values endorsed by Austen	 Necessity for appropriate social change: Whether the ideals of romantic love are expressed in an attachment (e.g. Anne and Wentworth), or in a refusal to marry purely for financial security, Austen suggests such ideals are preferable to inflexible class boundaries. Relationships based on mutual respect, trust and support. Supportive and affirming family relationships: e.g. the Musgrove parents; the Crofts. In contrast, Sir Walter Elliot and Mary Musgrove are too self-centred to care for their children. Lady Russell shows maternal love for Anne and concern for her welfare. Honesty, compassion and loyalty in dealings with other people: e.g. Anne and Mrs Smith; Captain Wentworth and his friends (the Harvilles and Captain Benwick). 	
Author's tone when describing characters	 Sir Walter Elliot: Austen is often scornful and always critical, e.g. Sir Walter and Elizabeth are described as 'assiduously pushing their good fortune in Laura-place' (p.143). The combined effect of 'assiduously' and 'pushing' conveys Austen's distaste for such determined social climbing and fortune-hunting. Elizabeth Elliot: Austen's critical tone is evident when Elizabeth displays unkindness to Anne and rudeness to those she considers inferior, e.g. on seeing Captain Wentworth in Molland's, Elizabeth turns away 'with unalterable coldness' (p.166). Mary Musgrove: Austen's ironic tone highlights Mary's superficiality and hypocrisy. Charles Musgrove: Austen's tone is disapproving of Charles and his lack of social propriety, e.g. when he insists on ignoring a prior social engagement in order to attend a play: 'Phoo! phoo! what's an evening party? I shall go to the play' (p.209). 	
Author's style (use of language)	Elegance, humour and irony: see table on p.193.	
Other features (e.g. setting, imagery) connected with the characters	 Recurring motifs associated with particular characters: Sir Walter Elliot: the Baronetage (book of historical records of baronets and their families), mirrors. Mary Musgrove: illness. Charles Musgrove: guns, shooting. The setting of Bath, with its focus on dining, pleasure and gossip, is appropriate for Sir Walter and Elizabeth Elliot; it is significant that Anne has no wish to go there. 	

Write a brief plan of the response

Consider:

- what the characters would say (showing your understanding of character)
- *how* they would say it (showing your understanding of style)
- why they would say it (showing your understanding of issues and ideas in the text).

The following table provides examples of answers to these questions. Produce a similar table for characters whose points of view you will present in a creative response.

What the characters would say	• Lady Russell: would approve of the marriage and reflect on her advice to Anne about each of her suitors, showing her changed point of view.		
	• Sir Walter Elliot: we with himself.	ould prefer to discuss 'more impor	tant' matters to do
	Elizabeth Elliot: as the eldest and only unmarried sister, would feel resentful and bitter, with little positive to say about Anne's marriage.		
	Mary Musgrove: would be more interested in talking about herself.		
	Charles Musgrove: would talk about shooting - his only real interest.		
	Admiral and Mrs C their unqualified ap	roft: would be delighted with the roproval.	marriage and express
How they would say it	Lady Russell: approving and reflective tone - might also be authoritative.		
		rogant, dismissive tone.	
		ndescending and sometimes bitter	
		elf-pitying and envious tone, tempe n agreeable social connection.	red by snobbish
	Charles Musgrove:	enthusiastic tone (on the topic of	shooting).
	Admiral and Mrs C	roft: warm and supportive tone.	
Examples of Austen's language	felicity (happiness)	excessively	approbation
	tolerable	creature (person)	want of (lack of)
	shew/ed/ing	every body	countenance (face)
	chuse	most vexatious	pray do (please do)
	uncivil	disapprobation (disapproval)	dis/agreeable
	ungallant	barouche/landaulette (horse-dr	awn carriages)
	inducement		
Sentence structure and style	The arrangement of similarly constructed phrases, clauses or sentences creates a balanced and elegant style, reflecting the civilised control and restraint within this social context. For example:		
	'Such were Elizabeth Elliot's sentiments and sensations; such the cares to alloy, the agitations to vary, the sameness and the elegance, the prosperity and the nothingness, of her scene of life – such the feelings to give interest to a long, uneventful residence in one country circle, to fill the vacancies which there were no habits of utility abroad, no talents or accomplishments for home, to occupy.' (p.10)		
	and sensations'); re	elements in this quotation include epetition (of 'such' and 'no'); the b' and 'nothingness', 'home' and 'ab the sentence.	palancing of contrasts
Characteristic expressions	Use of the double negative, e.g. 'not entirely <u>displeased</u> '. The negative forms 'not' and 'dis' negate each other to make an affirmative comment - that he <i>is</i> pleased - but do so in a way that conveys restraint and perhaps implies that displeasure is a possibility.		

MIND For senior students

Form of the response

The creative response is in the form of an additional scene at the end of the novel after the marriage of Captain Wentworth and Anne Elliot.

The response shows a detailed knowledge and understanding of aspects of character and setting, and an awareness of the text's key ideas. Austen's implicit condemnation of the values of some characters is revealed through their dialogue and her authorial voice – filtered mostly through the narrative perspective of Lady Russell. This change in narrative perspective extends our understanding of her character and allows for interesting (but plausible) possibilities of character development. Elizabeth, too, is further developed, showing awareness and insight.

Sample creative response

The family party was once again assembled at Camden-place where Sir Walter and Elizabeth keenly anticipated the arrival of Lady Dalrymple and Miss Carteret who, Sir Walter hastened to assure every body, were now on quite intimate terms in Camden-place. He glanced at his reflection in the glass and was not entirely displeased.

"I have not the smallest objection," said Mary, "to receiving Lady Dalrymple and Miss Carteret, only that I am so very unwell and, with Anne gone away, there is not a creature to care for me."

Lady Russell, whose deep attachment to the Elliots did not blind her to their shortcomings, found herself contemplating the virtues of her beloved Anne, whose happy union with Captain Wentworth at Kellynch Church had prompted much reflection and not a little regret on her part. Her well-intentioned advice more than seven years ago had ushered in a time of suffering for Anne, which had slowly dissipated the youthful freshness in her complexion. Lady Russell could not, however, entirely regret her former caution, having borne in mind the marriage of Anne's dear mother to Sir Walter, a man with nothing but good looks and a hereditary baronetage to recommend him.

What Lady Russell did regret, however, was her failure to observe the signals of social change occasioned by the war which, according to Sir Walter, provided the Navy with the means of bringing persons of obscure birth into undue distinction. Lady Russell now perceived that a degree of change was highly advantageous in many respects; indeed the prosperous Admiral Croft had been the means of saving Kellynch Hall and of allowing Sir Walter to retain his dignity – such as it was – in a mere thirty feet of space between two walls in Bath.

It was her preference for the old ways that had blinded Lady Russell to the danger of Mr. Elliot, with his polished display of fine manners and his superficial sincerity. That his eminent suitability was universally affirmed in the first circles of Bath society, Lady Russell could now see, was an indication of the superficiality of those who lived there. She took no great pleasure in the imminent arrival of the Viscountess and her daughter, whose excessive pride she found intolerable.

In the absence of Lady Dalrymple, Mary overcame her indisposition sufficiently well to consume a vast quantity of macaroons. Seated on the sofa, Elizabeth, whose social circle had narrowed since the departure of Mr. Elliott and Mrs. Clay, was heard to remark to her father that she failed to understand what Captain Wentworth found to admire in Anne.

Conveys Elizabeth's spitefulness and bitterness.

accurately to show understanding of character and awareness of authorial views and values.

Uses textual details

Uses textual details accurately to show understanding of character.

A rephrasing of Lady
Russell's opinion of
Captain Wentworth on
the occasion of his earlier
engagement to Anne; shows
Lady Russell's conservative
values but also her
maternal concern for Anne.

Uses textual details accurately to show understanding of character.

Inclusion of
Austen's views
on the necessity
for social change
which benefits the
creative individual;
expressed by Lady
Russell to align her
changed perspective
with Austen's
authorial voice.

Emulates
Austen's use of
ironic humour
to expose Mary's
hypochondria,
self-indulgence
and selfcentredness.

Uses textual details accurately; comments ironically on the grandiose pretentions of Sir Walter and Elizabeth in their reduced circumstances.

Lady Russell's reflection reveals her changed attitude – in line with Austen's views on the superficiality of a decadent upper class; shows Lady Russell to be intelligent and honest enough

to reassess

her views and

values.

Uses textual
details accurately
to show
understanding
of character and
awareness of
authorial views
and values. Mary's
self-centredness
is comically
excessive.

Mrs Croft's defence of Anne is part of the author's sympathetic construction of her character.

Uses textual detail (p.137);
Gowland's lotion was a fashionable (but not always safe) treatment for the improvement of the skin.

Further develops ideas about Elizabeth's unpromising future and her reliance on family connections.

Three consecutive sentences beginning with 'that' emulate this feature (repeated phrases and structures) of Austen's style. These sentences convey an increasingly negative view of Elizabeth's prospects, revealing Austen's views on the stagnation caused by a conservative and inflexible class structure.

Uses textual details accurately to show understanding of character.

"Oh," exclaimed Charles, "he's a fine figure of a man and a capital shot.• I'm sure Anne will suit him very well."

"Indeed," was Mary's rejoinder, "Captain Wentworth is a connexion whom one need not regard as inferior. He was always so attentive to me and I do believe his very good opinion of me considerably raised Anne's standing in his eyes."

Mrs. Croft, whose visit to Bath was beginning to tire her, smiled. "It is gratifying indeed to have Frederick so well settled. We are delighted with Anne; she has proven herself quite the sailor and has already accompanied Frederick on a short sea-voyage to Plymouth."

"Sophy and I had many a pleasant voyage together," responded the "Admiral. "We travelled together to the East Indies and Lisbon and Gibraltar."

"I do not recommend a sea-faring life in general," Sir Walter expostulated, "the climate is excessively bad for one's complexion." His gaze was directed at Mrs. Croft, whose complexion did indeed betray signs of a seafaring life, and he was on the point of recommending the daily use of Gowland during the spring months. Lady Russell might also benefit from an application around the corners of her eyes where the crow's feet were becoming more apparent. He glanced at Elizabeth. In recent months, it had pained him excessively to peruse her complexion and observe that it was beginning to lose its bloom.

Elizabeth was in very low spirits although the prospect of a visit from the illustrious Irish cousins afforded her some comfort. Her hopes in Mr. Elliot had been cruelly dashed and in the most humiliating manner. That he should prefer the company of Mrs. Clay was mortifying in the extreme. That Mrs. Clay should have been deceiving them – after all they had done to advance her – was another cruel blow. That she had detected a certain coolness in her relations with the residents of Laura-place did not augur well for her prospects this season. She was most bitterly disappointed. The prospect of the next six seasons in Bath, attending interminable assemblies and dinner-parties at which she – a woman beyond her best years – was destined to be scorned or pitied – was utterly intolerable.

They were interrupted by a servant bearing a card from Laura-place:
Lady Dalrymple was indisposed and unable to attend the dinner party. The feelings evoked by this communication varied according to the opinions of the listeners on the pleasures afforded by the company in question; for Elizabeth, however, it was a particularly harsh blow – the effects of which only the Elliot pride could conceal. She felt a chill settle in the room and shivered at the thought of many more evenings such as this, when such little pleasure as Bath could offer might not always include the residents of Camden-place.

Some discussion of the reactions of the party at Camden-place using the kind of intricate sentence construction that characterises Austen's writing.

The final two sentences emphasise Elizabeth's understanding of her position and reinforce Austen's condemnation of pride and snobbery. This might also evoke a degree of sympathy for Elizabeth in her entrapment in a social hierarchy which allowed and perhaps encouraged pride and snobbery in the upper classes.

Uses textual details accurately to show understanding of the compatible and egalitarian relationship between Admiral and Mrs Croft.

Uses textual details accurately to show understanding of character. Sir Walter's vanity is revealed through his dialogue and thoughts but there's a darker edge here with reference to Elizabeth's advancing age.

The dashes used to separate clauses and phrases are a grammatical representation of the breaking down of Elizabeth's hopes.

Lady
Dalrymple's
'indisposition'
might indicate
that the
Elliots are no
longer socially
important
to her or her
daughter.

Links with close analysis

This table shows how the skills of close analysis are used and developed by writing a creative response to a text (in this case, *Persuasion*).

Study the table closely, then construct an equivalent table for the text you are writing a creative response on.



Features of the text		What the features tell you about the characters and the text's wider concerns	
Long, complex sentences, formal language	Elegance and formality of Austen's style	 Reflects the elegance, decorum and formality of Regency society; can be seen as a subtle authorial endorsement of particular social mores a time of social change. 	
	Use of clauses to qualify the main meaning of a sentence	 Main idea in sentences can be qualified or re-affirmed, enabling: considered deliberations by sensible characters (e.g. Lady Russell) humorously rambling digressions by comic characters (e.g. Admiral Croft) exploration of the text's wider concerns. 	
Irony	Humorous irony	 Part of Austen's wit; she is an entertaining social critic. Characters often reveal their flaws or folly through their dialogue. 	
	Situational irony	 Often connected with those who transgress the social codes and moral values which Austen endorses (e.g. Mr Elliot and Mrs Clay). Exploits a character's lack of awareness to fulfil a dramatic purpose. For example, we share Anne's condemnation of Mr Elliot's character which, unbeknown to him, has been exposed; he 'wanted very much to be gratified by more solicitation, but the charm was broken' (p.201). 	
Juxtaposition of opposites	 Opposing terms suggest underlying tensions 	 Characters who embody opposing sets of values are juxtaposed – notably Mr Elliot and Captain Wentworth as possible suitors for Anne; they embody the opposing values of the old order (the hereditary baronetcy) and the new order (the successful self-made man). 	
Setting, imagery	 Images/motifs associated with characters indicate the qualities and values they embody 	 Anne's musical ability and interest in poetry: social as well as artistic skills which are utilised for others' benefit and entertainment. Sir Walter's observations of other characters' complexions; his fondness for mirrors. Mary's 'illness'; Charles' interest in guns. 	
	Uppercross	• 'The Musgroves, like their houses, were in a state of alteration, perhaps of improvement' and exhibited 'an overthrow of all order and neatness!' (p.38)	
	• Kellynch Hall	A great house which symbolises England's past; affluent middle-class tenants highlight social changes occurring in Regency England.	
	• Lyme	 Extended description on p.89; the sea air was reputedly good for health (p.95). Dangers suggested by 'dark blue seas' and strong winds (p.101). 	
	Bath	 Anne 'disliked Bath, and did not think it agreed with her' (p.15); 'Sir Walter and Elizabeth were induced to believe that they should lose neither consequence nor enjoyment by settling there' (p.15). 	
		 See http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/printed/number23/parker.pdf for discussion of Bath and the social implications of locations referred to in <i>Persuasion</i>. 	