

Examples of strong short writing responses  
English 4505

**Example 1**

1. Briefly (2 sentences) characterize Austen's younger voice. Support your assertion with textual evidence.

Dry humor and wit characterize the voice of Austen's juvenilia. After Lucy is murdered in "Jack and Alice", Austen's speaker sarcastically remarks that Miss Johnson and the Duke "had a most sincere regard for [Lucy], more particularly Alice, who had spent a whole evening in her company and had never thought of her since" (72). The Duke matches Alice's sincerity and care for Lucy—two weeks after Lucy's death, he moves on from their ten-day courtship and marries Caroline Simpson.

The young Austen also utilizes the shock value of violence and the comedy of human faults. In "Jack and Alice", for example, Sukey Simpson poisons and murders Lucy. In "The Beautiful Cassandra" the heroine refuses to pay for several expensive deserts and knocks down a pastry cook. Cassandra is hardly polite or proper; instead, the narrative celebrates her cheekiness, mischievousness, brashness, and free-spirited confidence.

2. Explore the Broadview Online: Jane Austen in Context website and choose one resource to briefly analyze and comment upon. If you are still waiting for your access, simply note and then expand part one, going into greater depth and using more examples to comment on Austen's juvenilia.

I choose to skim the critical reading "Jane Austen's Novels: Form and Structure" by David Lodge. Lodge argues Austen combines two popular eighteenth-century genres in her works: comedies of manners and sentimental novels. Moreover, Austen creates her own narrative innovations, utilizing layers of dramatic irony and mimetic realism. Mimesis can be defined as representing action through the imitated speech of characters. Indeed, Austen advances her narrative and characterization primarily with masterful dialogue. Lodge notes her stories unfold in a series of scenes "with a minimum of authorial description, and her skill in revealing character through speech is justly celebrated" (6). In this week's reading of Austen's juvenilia, her dialogue-driven storytelling is particularly evident: many stories are a series of social scenes centered around dialogue, with minimal description of setting and sensory experience. Similarly, while "Love and Friendship" lacks spoken dialogue, the entire narrative is composed of a string of letters—it centers on the written voice, the written "speech" of Laura. Moreover, the scenes Laura recalls from her memory tend to be dialogue-centric representations of social interactions.

**Example 2:**

Jane Austen's early work, including the short juvenilia and *Love and Freindship*, seems to be characterized by a lighthearted playfulness, the positive and imaginative naivete of childhood, and a clear sense of feminine humor. In *Love and Freindship* particularly, the classical notions of sensibility are exaggerated to the point of parody, such as when Laura writes to Marianne of

seeing a dear friend after some time, and she narrates that they “flew into each other’s arms and after having exchanged vows of mutual friendship for the rest of our lives, instantly unfolded to each other the most inward secrets of our hearts” (Austen 101).

2. While exploring the Jane Austen in Context website, I was drawn to the distinction between a photo of a traditional dining room and a painting of a traditional drawing room - the former which was viewed as a masculine space and the latter as a feminine one. Robert Adam designed a Dining Room from Landsdowne House, and it is vaguely reminiscent of the oval office - a large blue rug, an ornately set table, and empty clear carafes to fill with whiskey or wine. According to the source, this is the space where men would converse after formal dinners regarding politics, women, business, or other typically “masculine” subjects. A painting by William Henry Hunt entitled *The Green Drawing Room of the Earl of Essex at Cassiobury*, on the other hand, presents the feminine space - ornate furniture, an entire wall covered in art, and a woman intensely bent over her needle work. The drawing room illustrates the early nineteenth century notions of feminine sensibility, which Austen spends a great deal of her work attempting to break down.