

Etiquette, dating and dancing in Austen's time



DVD

In this second film extract we will see the film's director, Joe Wright, actor Matthew Macfayden (Mr Darcy) and actress Keira Knightley (Elizabeth Bennet) talking about the rules of dating¹ and etiquette² and the importance of the dance in Jane Austen's time.

1. **dating:** corteggiamento.
2. **etiquette:** il protocollo da rispettare in società.

Over to you

1 Before watching the extract look at the following words and expressions used by the speakers and match them with their definition on the right.

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|------------------------------|--|
| 1. code of conduct | a. to bend forward in a sign of respect |
| 2. courting | b. a formal gesture when saying hello |
| 3. to throw off the shackles | c. rules of behaviour |
| 4. to bow | d. physical contact |
| 5. to form collisions | e. attracting the opposite sex |
| 6. charged | f. a form of transportation using horses |
| 7. to shake hands | g. to free oneself of restrictions |
| 8. a carriage | h. full of excitement and anticipation |

2 Now watch the extract and answer true or false.

1. Joe Wright feels that there are still rules of courting today. T F
2. Matthew Macfayden thinks that the rules of conduct in Jane Austen's time were very restrictive. T F
3. Socialising between the sexes was very easy in Jane Austen's time. T F
4. Dancing was a very important way of meeting people. T F
5. Women and men would always shake hands when they met. T F

3 Watch the extract again and answer the following questions in your own words.

1. What does Matthew Macfayden like about the etiquette of Jane Austen's time?
2. Give two reasons why the dance was so important as a social occasion.
3. Why was it a significant moment when Darcy helped Elizabeth into the carriage?

4 Visual activity.

1. Matthew Macfayden is 'on set' as he speaks. What can you see in the background?
2. In the dance scene, although Elizabeth and Darcy are still cold with each other how can we tell that there is a 'chemistry' developing between them?

5 Dancing today: discuss in small groups the following and then compare your answers with the rest of the class.

1. How important is 'the dance' today as a way of meeting people?
2. Do young people still dance together?
3. What is the accepted etiquette of courting today among teenagers. How do you attract the opposite sex?
4. Do you think 'breaking the ice' today is easier, more difficult or just the same as in Jane Austen's time?
5. How acceptable is physical contact in public in your country? Do you think it is the same in all countries? Use the Internet to find out.

