

Before Reading

BEFORE READING ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1 BEFORE READING

1 N 2 Y 3 N

ACTIVITY 2 BEFORE READING

Encourage students to speculate and to guess, but do not tell them the answers. They will find out as they read that 1, 3, 5 are true statements.

ACTIVITY 3 BEFORE READING

Open answer. Encourage students to speculate, but do not tell them the answer. In fact, Newland will marry May, as planned.

While Reading

CHAPTERS 1 TO 3 WHILE READING

Point of view: New York society, 1870s

- 1 Yes, she was.
- 2 No, he wasn't.
- 3 Yes, he was.
- 4 Yes, he was.

Point of view: student's own culture, today.

Open answers. Encourage discussion of the differences in social rules and moral codes that emerge in the two sets of answers.

BEFORE READING CHAPTER 4

Encourage students to speculate and to guess, but do not tell them the answer. They will find out as they read that the answer is 1.

CHAPTERS 4 TO 6 WHILE READING

Suggested answers:

- 1 Newland, to Ellen, trying to explain to her that New York society will be much more unforgiving about accusations against her than the European society she knows. This shows Newland at his best, trying to be both kind and tactful, but giving an honest opinion.
- 2 Ellen, to Newland, about divorcing her husband. She sees her freedom as much more important than unpleasant accusations being made publicly against her. This shows both how out of touch she is with New York society, and also how desperately she wants to be free of the Count.

- 3 May, to Newland, about the possibility of his realizing his engagement was a mistake, in that he does not love May enough to marry her. This shows May at her best – brave to speak plainly about it, and generous to offer Newland his freedom.
- 4 Ellen, to Newland, about the impossibility of their being together. She means that what she loves about him is his goodness, his kindness, his nobility, and she wouldn't love him if he broke May's heart in order to be with her. This shows Ellen is capable of very intelligent analysis of her own feelings, and also that she is not selfish enough to try to build her own happiness on other people's unhappiness.
- 5 May, to Newland, about Ellen returning to live with her husband, the Count. This shows rather a cruel indifference to and a lack of understanding of Ellen's feelings in the matter, and perhaps indicates the beginnings of suspicion and jealousy in May's mind.

CHAPTERS 7 AND 8 WHILE READING

Suggested answers:

- 1 Ellen has been avoiding Newland because *she doesn't want to be tempted to go away with him; she loves him deeply, but wants to do the honourable thing now that he is married.*
- 2 Newland loves Ellen more than ever and *wants to escape from the misery of his marriage and be with her, but he realizes that if he attempts to persuade her, she will simply return to her husband, as a way of ending her relationship with Newland completely.*
- 3 May must suspect that Newland is in love with Ellen but *she seems determined to pretend that everything is normal, though perhaps is already secretly planning how to prevent him leaving her for Ellen.*

BEFORE READING CHAPTER 9

Open answers.

BEFORE READING CHAPTER 10

Encourage students to speculate and to guess, but do not tell them the answer. They will find out as they read that number 4 is what happens.

After Reading

ACTIVITY 1 AFTER READING

Suggested answers:

- 1 This means that Newland accepts the long-established principle that a man can have a 'past', that is, affairs before (and possibly after) marriage, but a girl must have led a blameless life, without lovers, and still be a virgin when she marries. It shows that Newland is actually still quite conventional in his attitudes, although he likes to think he is modern and free-thinking.
- 2 Ellen is saying, in effect, that New Yorkers live in an unreal world; they ignore unpleasant facts by trying to pretend they don't exist. Her words show how desperately unhappy Ellen is, although she is grateful to her family for welcoming her back.
- 3 May is saying that her mother would be upset at any variation to the traditional engagement and wedding, but she may be using her mother's opinion as an excuse for her own preference. Her words seem to show a lack of imagination; she will behave in the way society thinks is correct, and will not consider doing things differently.

ACTIVITY 2 AFTER READING

Possible answers:

Now I know, there is no *doubt* he loves her. He looked so *happy* / *pleased* at lunch today (the way he *used* to look when we were first *engaged*), when he offered to take my *carriage* and pick her up from the *station*, and poor Mother (she would be *horrified* / *shocked* if she knew!) accepted so very *gratefully* / *gladly* / *readily*. Then of course he had to *lie* to me – he has done that *before*, but this time it seemed much *worse* somehow. I do wonder if he *realizes* / *knows* how completely I understand him, and *pity* him as well, for the awful *pain* that I can see he is *suffering*. Does he know how much I *love* him, in spite of everything? I'll *never* give him up, unless he himself *decides* / *chooses* to leave me. I can only *hope* that one day his heart will *return* to me. He is so very *dear* to me.

ACTIVITY 3 AFTER READING

- 1 Sillerton Jackson, thinking about Newland's obvious interest in the Countess Olenska. He is having dinner at the Archer house, and has just had a conversation with Newland, man-to-man.
- 2 Julius Beaufort, thinking about Ellen Olenska, who has just arrived in her grandmother's box at the opera, causing a lot of speculation and gossip.
- 3 Janey Archer, thinking about May and Newland. Newland has just come home and found the telegram from May with the news about the early wedding. He laughed so loudly that Janey came out of her bedroom to find out what was going on.

- 4 Mrs Manson Mingott, thinking about her niece Regina, who came to ask for help when her husband Julius Beaufort became bankrupt in a most dishonourable way. Mrs Mingott has just recovered from a stroke brought on by the shock of this.
- 5 Mrs Welland, thinking about Newland, and his impatience about bringing forward the date of the wedding. He is staying with the Wellands in Florida, having come down unexpectedly to visit May.

ACTIVITY 4 AFTER READING

Suggested answers:

- MAY: Ellen dear, there's something *I want to tell you*.
ELLEN: What is it, May? Sit down beside me and *tell me all about it*.
MAY: Ellen, ever since you returned to New York, I know what a difficult time *you have had here*.
ELLEN: Yes, it hasn't *been easy for me*. I'm not sure I'll ever understand *how New Yorkers think*.
MAY: We New Yorkers *are* rather different *from Europeans*. And you have been *away for a long time, remember*.
ELLEN: Yes, a very long time. And I am so grateful to *Newland for all his help and support*.
MAY: He's very *fond of you, Ellen*.
ELLEN: And I am of him. He's the one friend I *have always felt sure of*.
MAY: I know that, and I've been glad that he *has been able to help you at this difficult time in your life*. Of course, in the future he'll have other, family responsibilities, so he may not *have so much time to spend looking after his friends*.
ELLEN: Family . . .? Do you mean, dear May, that *you are expecting a baby*?
MAY: Yes, I am. And Newland will *be so delighted!*
ELLEN: Yes, I'm sure he will be. He doesn't *know yet?*
MAY: Not yet. I'll tell him very soon. But I wanted *you to know the news*.
ELLEN: Yes, thank you for telling me, May. I'm so *pleased for you both*. It's *wonderful news*.
MAY: And what about your plans, Ellen?
ELLEN: My plans? Oh, I – well, I think I will *return to Europe*. I hope to persuade Grandmother to *make me independent of my husband. I must live by myself*.
MAY: I'm sure, if you explain, Grandmother will realize how important this is for you, and will help you to be independent.
ELLEN: I hope so, May – indeed, I do hope so . . .

ACTIVITY 5 AFTER READING

Open answers.

ACTIVITY 6 AFTER READING

Open answers.