

# Charles Dickens & his Great Expectations

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# The Life and Times...

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- Born Landport, England...Feb. 7<sup>th</sup>, 1812.
- Dad: John Dickens Mom: Elizabeth Dickens
- Dad worked as clerk in Navy pay office. Couldn't pay debts. Sold most of what they owned. Finally sent to prison for debts.
- 1822 moved to Camden, England.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> of 7 children.
- Went to local school.
- First job: Wrapping shoe polish bottles – Age 12
- Relative died and left enough money to get John out of jail... and send Charles to private school.
- 15 – left school...worked as office boy in London.
- Hated the work...loved walking the streets and seeing the hard life.
- Take a look: <http://www.dickensmuseum.com/page6.html>

# His Middle Years

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- Wanted to be a reporter
- Taught himself shorthand.
- Became a political reporter.
- Thought politicians were stuck up.
- 1828 – (16) Court Reporter
- Became interested in social reform
- 1833- First story published.
- Pen name – Boz – wrote monthly installments in local magazines.
- Became tremendously popular.
- *The Pickwick Papers, Nicholas Nickelby* monthly installments.
- *The Christmas Carol...one of the first novels.*
- 1842 – *Condemned slavery in America*
- *Finally wrote for a journal in installments. Great Expectations (1860-1861) was one of these installment pieces.*

# Great Expectations- Setting

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- ❑ Published in 1860-1861 in England. The Victorian Period (Named after Queen Victoria.)
- ❑ At this time, Great Britain was most powerful nation on earth.
- ❑ Thriving economy...wealthy middle class.
- ❑ Industrial Revolution also great poverty...
- ❑ Poor Working conditions...Child Labor...
- ❑ Slums bred crime and disease.
- ❑ Only men with property could vote...so poor and women had little power.
- ❑ Dickens wanted to expose this under side of Victorian life.

# Themes

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- Class Bias
- Love
- Women in Victorian Society
- Snobbery
- Hatred/Revenge
- Loyalty
- Selfishness
- Getting something without working for it.

# Characters

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- Pip- An orphan raised by sister in poverty.
- Joe Gargery – Pip’s Uncle – shows him love.
- Miss Havisham-bitter old woman bent on revenge for being left at the altar.
- Estella- Havisham’s ward...who is used as a tool for revenge against men.
- Herbert Pocket- Pip’s roommate in college.
- Mr. Jagger- Gives Pip money from an anonymous donor.
- Abel Magwitch- Crude convict that helps Pip.
- Compeyson- Man who left Havisham and wants to destroy the convict helping Pip.

# Plot

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- Pip raised by sister – Horrible.
- Pip meets convict. Pip helps him. Convict says he will help Pip someday.
- Miss Havisham calls for Pip everyday to play with Estella...so she can break his heart.
- Pip called to London to become a gentleman...He assumes Havisham has done this so he can marry Estella.
- Finds out the convict is paying for him.
- Estella marries Pip's friend to Havishams delight. She wants all men hurt.
- Havisham dies. Pip's Uncle helps him out.
- Pip learns the value of the people who helped him...even though they are low society.
- After 11 years...Pip revisits Havishams home and sees Estella...
- HOW WILL IT ALL END? STAY TUNED AND FIND OUT!!!!!!!!!!!!

# The Novel

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- Novel first published as an original episode...with each following chapter published says later for the benefit of an audience with “Great Expectations”.
- How might the development of a novel with reader input in episodes differ from a normal one?

# Assignment

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## □ Group debate:

- How would you expect a child raised by his sister to differ from one who was raised by parents?
- What responsibility does one have to his or her siblings?
- Under what circumstances would you help a known criminal?
- Describe the stereotype of a rich person.
- What changes would you make in your life if you suddenly became wealthy?
- What kind of person do you hope to marry?