

Great novels Teacher's Notes

Aim

This lesson introduces students to the life and works of Charles Dickens, one of the greatest English novelists.

Warmer

Write the name *Charles Dickens* on the board. Put students in small groups of three or four and tell them they have two minutes to write down as many things as they know about Dickens. After the two minutes, ask a few groups to tell you what they have come up with and write these things on the board.

Note: Don't spend too long on the warmer. First of all, you don't want to cover things that come up in the worksheet. Secondly, you can always come back to it at the end of the lesson and explore some of the things that haven't come up during the lesson. This can also lead into homework or project work.

1 Reading

- Ask your students to read through the text and see how many things come up that were discussed in the warmer.
- Set a couple of questions like 'What new information did you find out?/What was the most interesting thing you found out?'
- Put the students in pairs and ask them to discuss these questions together.
- Ask a few students to report back on their discussion.

2 Comprehension

- Ask the students to look at the eight sentences and complete each one with the correct name.
- Tell students they can read the text again to help.
- Put the students in pairs and get them to check their answers together before checking as a class.

Answers

1 Oliver Twist 2 Scrooge 3 Scrooge 4 Dickens
5 Oliver Twist 6 Scrooge 7 Dickens 8 Dickens

3 Vocabulary

- Ask the students to match the words 1–8 with the correct definition a–h (one has already been done).
- Encourage the students to find the word in the text to help work out the meaning from the context.
- Put the students in pairs and ask them to check their answers together.
- Monitor and help where necessary.
- Check as a class.

Answers

1 c 2 d 3 b 4 g 5 h 6 e 7 f 8 a

4 Writing/Speaking

- Put the students in pairs and let them brainstorm endings to the two quotations from the text. How do they end?
- Ask them to choose one of the quotations and have them finish the dialogue, saying what they think happened next.
- Monitor and help when necessary.
- Ask them to practise their dialogues and ask a few confident students to act out their dialogues in front of the class.

5 Speaking

- Put the students in small groups and ask them to discuss the questions.
- Monitor and make notes about some of the things discussed.
- Ask a few students to report back on their discussion.

Extension

Why not give your students *Oliver Twist* or *A Christmas Carol* from the Macmillan Readers series? Then you could ask them to discuss the stories and characters.

Websites

Here are some websites with more information.

www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/dickens_charles.shtml

victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/dickensbio1.html and www.fidnet.com/~dap1955/dickens two comprehensive guides that cover many aspects of Dickens, including a good perspective of the social context and outline plots and detailed character descriptions.

www.macmillanreaders.com/?s=oliver+twist and www.macmillanreaders.com/?s=christmas+carol two links to the Macmillan Readers series. Both web pages include links to worksheets as well as a more detailed biography of Dickens.