

## 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 up the name *Charles Dickens* on the board. Put students in small groups of 3 or 4 and tell them they have 2 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 it to drag on especially as you might 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 in the left column with the correct definition in the right column (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**

*based on* – to use as a model to develop ideas from

*central* – main or most important

*character* – a person in a book or film

*conditions* – the situation or environment in which people live or work

*factory* – a building where people make things using machines

*memorable* – easy to remember

*publish* – to produce many copies of a book for people to buy

*spend* – to use money to buy things

**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 showing 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.

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### Websites

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic\\_figures/dickens\\_charles.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/dickens_charles.shtml) – a good overview of Dickens, his life and writings.

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

<http://www.macmillanenglish.com/default.aspx?id=470> and <http://www.macmillanenglish.com/DEFAULT.aspx?id=514> two links to the Macmillan Readers series. The first is the webpage for *A Christmas Carol* and the second for *Oliver Twist*. Both web pages include links to worksheets as well as a more detailed biography of Dickens.