

# Blah Blah Blah presents - Oliver Twist



## Classroom Material for Superiore School Students

Oliver Twist is a boy who grows up in an orphanage. When he is ten years old he goes to a terrible place called the workhouse. He is very unhappy. He runs away to London. There he meets a gang of criminals and their master, Fagin. Fagin teaches him to be a thief. The police arrest Oliver. But a kind man called Mr Brownlow likes Oliver and decides to help him. Now Fagin is worried. Will Oliver tell Mr Brownlow and the police where the gang's lair is? Fagin wants Oliver to come back to the gang....

1. Here are some words that are important in the story. Your teacher will help translate them.....

WORKHOUSE	SERVANT	LAIR	APPRENTICE
GENTLEMAN	UNDERTAKER	BURGLARY	
THIEF	POVERTY	EVIL	PICKPOCKET
INHERITANCE	ORPHAN	CRIMINAL	MASTER

2. Now write the translation, like this:

pickpocket	-	borseggiatore
.....	-	.....
.....	-	.....
.....	-	.....

...and so on!

3. Find the some of words you learnt - in this square. They can be horizontal, vertical or even written backwards !

A T N E C I T N E R P P A S  
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 B U R G L A R Y S N V T R  
 M U R D E R E R F L T E E V  
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 Y O E T E K O P C I P T L N  
 U N D E R T A K E R D Y A T  
 T H I E F E S U O H K R O W

Here are some simple sentence. in them the Put order right! Sorry - Put them in the right order!

orphan is an Oliver: .....

he in workhouse lives the: .....

Oliver London away to runs:.....

Artful Dodger meets he the: .....

pickpockets Fagin of a is gang of master: .....

Mr Brownlow is likes a kind Oliver man who: .....

.....

## **OLIVER TWIST – The story for older students**

**Oliver Twist** is born in a workhouse in a provincial town. His mother dies after giving birth to Oliver. Oliver is raised under the care of **Mrs. Mann** and the beadle **Mr. Bumble** in the workhouse. When Oliver asks for more food in the workhouse, he is locked up and made apprentice to an undertaker, **Mr. Sowerberry**. Another apprentice of Mr. Sowerberry's, **Noah Claypole** insults Oliver's dead mother and the small and weak Oliver attacks him. However, Oliver is punished severely, and he runs away to London. Here he meets **the Artful Dodger**. The Artful Dodger is a member of **Fagin's** gang of boys. Fagin has trained the boys to become pickpockets. The Artful Dodger takes Oliver to Fagin's den in London. Oliver, who does not understand that he is among criminals, becomes one of Fagin's boys.

Oliver goes with The Artful Dodger on a pickpocket expedition and is shocked when he realizes they are really thieves. The police catch him, but not Dodger. Fortunately, the victim of the thieves, the old benevolent gentleman, **Mr. Brownlow** rescues Oliver from arrest and brings him to his house. He is kind to Oliver when the boy is sick. For the first time in his life Oliver is happy.

However, with the help of the brutal murderer **Bill Sikes** and his girlfriend, the kind **Nancy**, Fagin kidnaps Oliver. The mysterious Mr. Monks has told Fagin to do this. Oliver participates in a burglary in a house in the country. The thieves are discovered in the house of **Mrs. Maylie** and her adopted niece, **Rose**, and Oliver is shot and wounded. Sykes escapes. Rose and Mrs. Maylie help the wounded Oliver. When he tells them his story they believe him, and he stays with them. Fagin and Monks want to bring Oliver back to the gang. Nancy wants to help Oliver and decides to tell Rose about Fagin's plan. She meets Rose's servant at London bridge, but is discovered by Noah Claypole, who is now a member of Fagin's gang. Sykes is furious and murders her. On his frantic flight away from the crime Sykes accidentally and dramatically hangs himself. Fagin and the rest of the gang are arrested.

Mr. Brownlow reveals Monks' plan against Oliver: Monks is really Oliver's brother; their father was rich and Monks wants all of the inheritance for himself. Monks is sent away to America and Oliver is adopted by Mr. Brownlow.

Which of these statements are TRUE and which are FALSE?

1. Oliver was born in a hospital
2. His mother looked after him when he was a boy.
3. After leaving the workhouse, Oliver works for a carpenter
4. Noah Claypole is kind to Oliver
5. The Artful Dodger helps Oliver escape from the workhouse
6. Mr Brownlow arrests Oliver
7. Bill Sikes tries to murder Oliver
8. Nancy meets Fagin at London Bridge
9. Mr Brownlow is really Oliver's brother

## Characters - Match the name to the correct description

Nancy		The cleverest of Fagin's young pickpockets. He talks and dresses like a grown man.
Fagin		A brutal professional burglar in Fagin's gang
Mr Brownlow		An orphan born in a workhouse
Mr Bumble		One of Fagin's pickpockets
Bill Sikes		A criminal who trains homeless children to pick pockets
Artful Dodger		The undertaker to whom Oliver is apprenticed
Mr Sowerberry		A well-off gentleman who is Oliver's first benefactor
Nancy		A charity boy who bullies and mistreats Oliver
Noah Claypole		A pompous beadle who symbolizes greed and hypocrisy
Oliver Twist		Bill Sikes' girlfriend

## Pictures from the story:

Here are six famous illustrations from the story of Oliver Twist.

Match the descriptions to the picture!



1 .....



2.....



3.....



4.....



5.....



6.....

- A Fagin in prison
- B Bill Sykes tries to escape across the roof
- C Oliver asks for more food
- D Oliver learns how to be a pickpocket
- E Oliver asks for help at the door of Rose Maylie
- F The workhouse managers offer Oliver as an apprentice

## The London of Charles Dickens



Crime In 1888, there is an autumn of terror in London. Five people are killed by the murderer known as “Jack the Ripper”. The police never find him and Britain’s queen, Queen Victoria demands that the police service be improved. At the same time, the brilliant fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes, makes his debut in Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet*.

Disease But the biggest risk to Victorian Londoners is not Jack the Ripper but cholera and typhoid. Four epidemics of cholera – in 1831/32, 1848/49, 1853/54 and 1866 – kill about 140,000 people. The main problem is ignorance. The doctors believe that diseases are spread<sup>1</sup> by bad air and not infected water. Life is terrible for poor people, but even rich people suffer. Queen Victoria’s husband Albert dies of typhoid fever. Water in London is very dirty. The sewers<sup>2</sup> of the city run directly into the River Thames. The city stinks<sup>3</sup>. In 1858, when Queen Victoria and Albert try to take a cruise<sup>4</sup> on the Thames, they have to turn back after a few minutes because of the river's smell! Parliament is also closed because the smell from the river is so bad.

Work Adults and children as young as five work long hours in dangerous conditions. Many accidents happen in factories. Some jobs are terrible. Lots of small boys work as chimney sweeps<sup>5</sup>. <sup>6</sup>Bakers in London work all night in temperatures of over 33° C. Most of them die before the age of 40.

The City Many people come from the country to find work in the city and London’s population gets bigger and bigger. In 1800 there are 1 million people, in 1900 there are more than 6 million. There are not enough houses. One writer of the period says that “ It is not unusual to find three or four families that live together in a room of four square

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<sup>1</sup> To spread - trasmettere

<sup>2</sup> Sewer - fogna

<sup>3</sup> To stink - puzzare

<sup>4</sup> Cruise - crociera

<sup>5</sup> Chimney sweep - spazzacamino

<sup>6</sup> Baker - fornaio, panettiere

metres". Railways<sup>7</sup> are built. Factory chimneys pour dense smoke<sup>8</sup> into the sky, steam trains are noisy<sup>9</sup> and dirty and soot<sup>10</sup> from thousands of coal fires fills the air. Carts, carriages and horses clatter<sup>11</sup> across cobblestones.

**Here are some sentences about the text 'The London of Charles Dickens'.**

Are they true (√) or false (x)?

1 The police find Jack the Ripper in 1888.

2 Queen Victoria wants a better police service.

3 Sherlock Holmes helps Queen Victoria.

4 Cholera is spread by infected water.

5 Most Londoners die before they are fifty years old.

6 Queen Victoria and Prince Albert often take cruises on the river Thames.

7 The population of London grows between 1800 and 1900

8 Factory chimneys make the air very dirty.

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<sup>7</sup> Railway - ferrovia

<sup>8</sup> Smoke - fumo

<sup>9</sup> Noisy - rumoroso

<sup>10</sup> Soot - fuliggine, nerofumo

<sup>11</sup> To clatter - acciottolare



## About Charles Dickens

Read the text and answer the questions!

**Charles Dickens** was born in the southern English town of Portsmouth on 7 February 1812, the second of eight children. He started school at the age of nine, but didn't stay long as his father, who by now was a clerk for the Royal Navy's wages department in Chatham, wasn't actually very good at sums, and was put in prison for being in debt. At the age of twelve Charles was sent to work in Warren's shoe-blackening factory in London, where wages were meagre and conditions appalling. He was very lonely. After three years he went back to school, but he never forgot his awful experience at Warren's.

Like many writers, Charles began his literary career as a journalist. He started writing reports for *The Mirror of Parliament* and *The True Sun*, and in 1833 he became parliamentary journalist for *The Morning Chronicle*. Now that he had friends in publishing he was able to publish a series of sketches under the pseudonym 'Boz'. In April 1836 he married Catherine Hogarth, the daughter of his editor and publisher George Hogarth. In that same month his highly successful *Pickwick Papers* was published, and there was no looking back.

As well as writing novels, Charles produced an autobiography, edited weekly magazines including *Household Words* and *All Year Round*, wrote travel books, and administered charitable organisations. He was also a theatre enthusiast; he wrote plays and performed before Queen Victoria in 1851. His energy was seemingly inexhaustible, and he spent much time abroad. He lectured against slavery in the United States, and toured Italy with his friends Augustus Egg and Wilkie Collins. Wilkie Collins was another well-known Victorian writer who inspired Dickens' last and unfinished novel *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

Charles and Catherine had ten children, but when most of their children had left home they grew apart from each other, and separated in 1858. Towards the end of his life Charles had a long relationship with the actress Ellen Ternan. He died of an aneurism in 1870.

1. What was the date of Dickens' birth?
2. How many brothers and sisters did he have?
3. Why did Dickens not attend school often?
4. What was his first job?
5. What was his first literary job?
6. Who was 'Boz'?
7. What was the name of Dickens' wife?
8. What was the name of Dickens' first novel?
9. Apart from novels, what other literary works did Dickens write?
10. Name two countries Dickens visited.
11. Did Dickens have children?
11. What was the cause of Dickens' death?





# Blah Blah Blah presents - Oliver Twist



## Classroom Material for Elementary and Middle School Students

Oliver Twist is a boy who grows up in an orphanage. When he is ten years old he goes to a terrible place called the workhouse. He is very unhappy. He runs away to London. There he meets a gang of criminals and their master, Fagin. Fagin teaches him to be a thief. The police arrest Oliver. But a kind man called Mr Brownlow likes Oliver and decides to help him. Now Fagin is worried. Will Oliver tell Mr Brownlow and the police where the gang's lair is? Fagin wants Oliver to come back to the gang....

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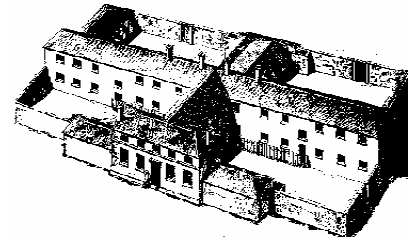
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## THE WORKHOUSE

Most people have heard of the boy who asked for more in CHARLES DICKENS' novel OLIVER TWIST. Oliver was a poor & miserable child who lived in a workhouse, and like all workhouse children, Oliver was permanently hungry owing to the totally inadequate meals.

### WHAT WAS A WORKHOUSE?

If you were poor, or an orphan, or a widow, if you were too old to work, or if you had no home or you were sick, you could finish in the dreaded union workhouse. The workhouse, sometimes referred to as the Bastille, was an attempt in 19th century England to solve the problem of poverty.

Life was much harder inside the workhouse than outside, and the buildings were deliberately grim & intimidating - they were designed to look like prisons. They were full of illness & disease caused by over-crowding & the starvation diet.

When you entered the workhouse, you were stripped, searched, washed & had your hair cut off. You had to wear a prison-style uniform.

Women were at all times kept separate from the men, including their husbands. Children were kept separately from adults - even from their own parents.

Work was hard and tedious: After rising at 5am (in summer), a person worked 7-12am and 1-6pm; which is a 10 hour working day. Bed was 8pm.

