



# GREAT EXPECTATIONS

BY CHARLES DICKENS

EMC Full Text Study Edition

Classroom materials written and edited by Andrew McCallum

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## Acknowledgements

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Cover: Oscar Kennedy as Young Pip in the BBC adaptation of *Great Expectations*, 2011

Maps on pages 385 and 386: © Rebecca Scambler, 2016

Black and white illustration of St Peters, Near Broadstairs, Kent, England (19th century); Timewatch Images/Alamy Stock Photo

Pen and ink drawings from *Great Expectations* used throughout the text are John McLenan's original illustrations for the serialisation in *Harper's Weekly* (1860-61) and are in the public domain.

Page 12: 'You Young Dog', said the man; page 19: The gibbet on the marshes; page 24: Magwitch alone on the marshes, trying to remove his manacle; page 29: Pumblechook, Pip and Mrs Joe; page 42: Mrs. Joe roughly washes and dries Pip's face; page 44: Pip and Joe by the hearth; page 53: 'Who is it?' said the lady at the table; page 61: 'Leave this lad to me, Ma'am; leave this lad to me'; page 65: 'At such times as your sister is on the rampage'; page 75: 'It's a great cake. A bride-cake. Mine!'; page 109: Pip, Biddy, followed by Orlick; page 117: 'Pip's a gentleman of fortune, then -' said Joe; page 129: Pip and Biddy sitting on a bank in the Marshes; page 137: 'You infernal scoundrel, how dare you tell me that-'; page 160: 'This chap murdered his master'; page 189: We walked round the garden twice or thrice; page 194: 'Hold me! I'm so frightened'; page 236: She carried a bare candle in her hand; page 287: The Aged P., Wemmick's father, at the hearth; page 292: 'Look here-', said Herbert; page 297: Let me sit listening as I would, with dread; page 306: I saw her running at me, shrieking, with a whirl of fire blazing all about her; page 339: He was taken on board, and instantly manacled at the wrists and ankles; page 352: Joe now sat down to his great work,-etc; page 368: I saw no shadow of another parting with her

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Page 398: '*Great Expectations* and Class' by John Bowen (<https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/great-expectations-and-class>); Page 399: Crime in *Great Expectations*' by John Mullan (<https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/crime-in-great-expectations>)

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## Using This Book

This book is part of the EMC Full Text Study Edition series of classic novels, each of which contains an original text, in full, along with an extensive range of activities for students to undertake before, during and after reading. We believe that these editions offer the perfect blend of guidance and challenge for developing readers who need to build their critical skills while also gaining a deep, secure understanding of their novel's narrative. To this end we have lightly glossed the text. As we believe that too much glossing slows reading down to the point where it becomes an obstacle to enjoyment rather than support, we have deliberately not glossed every difficult word.

The activities in our study editions cover many of the key areas that students need to look at when studying a novel, but due to limitations of space do not cover everything. As with all English and Media Centre resources, we encourage teachers to use the suggested activities alongside their own ideas and subject expertise.

The novel has been divided into 12 sections. These sections are not all of the same length but reflect sensible points to pause in the narrative. In some of the longer sections you may want to pause at the end of chapters to check understanding and to speculate about the development of the story.

### A note on the text

As with many 19th-century texts, different editions differ in punctuation and spelling, with some editions modernising both. The text in this edition is from [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org) and has been checked against the Norton Critical Edition, edited by Edgar Rosenberg. Chapter numbering is sequential from 1 to 59.

### Photocopying

This publication is not photocopiable with the exception of pages 383 and the maps on pages 386 and 387. A4 versions of these pages can also be downloaded from the English and Media Centre website. Please go to [www.englishandmedia.co.uk/publications](http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/publications) and search for 'Great Expectations'.

# BEFORE READING

## Expectations of *Great Expectations*

### Life in 1860

- Read the list of facts below about Britain in 1860, the year that *Great Expectations* was published.

The average life expectancy was 41 years.
Women who married in 1860 on average had six children.
300 in every 1000 children died before the age of 5.
20% of girls and 37% of boys aged 10-14 worked full-time.
The average working week was 70 hours long.
London's population was 2.5 to 3 million, and Britain's was about 29 million.
There was no state education system guaranteeing an education for all.
Literacy rates were 60% for women and 70% for men.
There was no National Health Service or social security system to support those who were ill or in need of financial assistance.

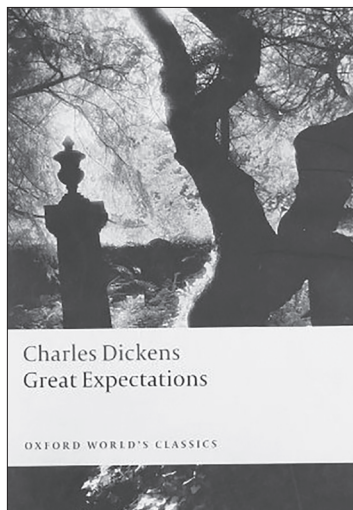
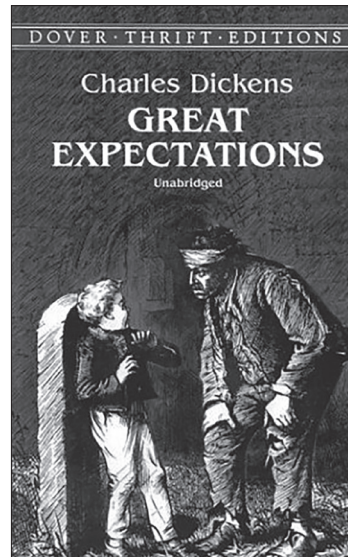
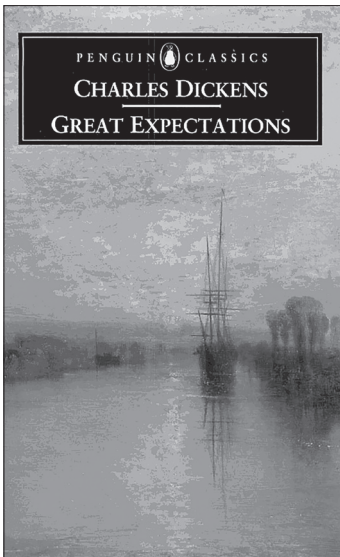
- What do these figures suggest about life in 1860. How, for example, does it compare with life today?
- What might average expectations have been for someone in Britain at this time? And what might great expectations have been?

N.B. *Great Expectations* actually takes place in the years before it was published. The exact dates aren't mentioned, but are probably around 1812-1840.

## Front covers

Here are three very different covers for editions of *Great Expectations*.

- Write down your thoughts about what each suggests about the novel: what it might be about, where it might be set, what type of story it is likely to be, and so on.
- Comment on why you think one novel has produced such different front covers.
- Compare your responses as a whole class.



## Key words

Below are some of the key words in *Great Expectations*, along with the number of times in which they occur.

- Which words stand out? Can you see any patterns?
- Make some predictions about the story based on these words; for example, about setting, action, themes and characters.

boy	220	love	60	truth	23
house	186	river	59	fear	22
eyes	180	guardian	56	grave	22
face	166	marshes	52	girl	20
gentleman	123	boat	49	murder	20
light	144	book	45	dread	19
friend(s)	102	fortune(s)	43	daylight	15
child/children	89	afraid	41	darkness	14
hope	86	family	39	benefactor	13
London	80	secret	37	jail	13
dark	71	expectations	29	avenger	11
change/changed	69	village	29	justice	11
convict(s)	64	wretched	26	haunted	10
business	62	stranger	25		



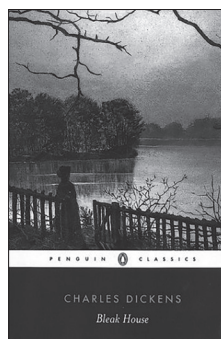
## Dickens' Writing Style

Dickens was hugely popular in his own time and to this day is still widely read around the world.

- Read the opening sentences from three of his novels below.
- Discuss what these extracts suggest about Dickens' writing style, thinking carefully about, for example, word choices and the tone created.
- Based on your discussion, jot down three things that are distinctive about Dickens' style.
- Now read the first two paragraphs of *Great Expectations*. In what ways is it similar or different in style compared to the openings to Dickens' other novels?

### Extract 1: from *Bleak House*

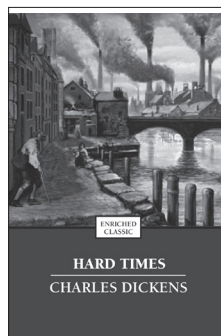
London. Michaelmas Term lately over, and the Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln's Inn Hall. Implacable November weather. As much mud in the streets as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill. Smoke lowering down from chimney-pots, making a soft black drizzle, with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snow-flakes – gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun. Dogs, undistinguishable in mire. Horses, scarcely better; splashed to their very blinkers.



### Extract 2: from *Hard Times*

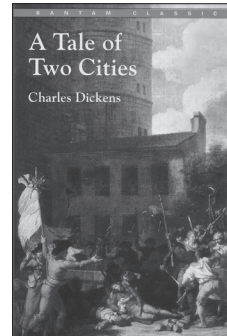
'Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir!'

The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a schoolroom, and the speaker's square forefinger emphasised his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster's sleeve.



### Extract 3: from *A Tale of Two Cities*

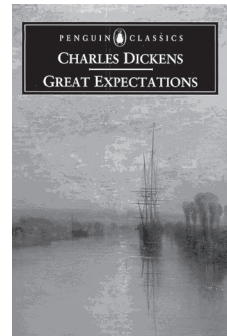
It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way - in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.



### Great Expectations – the first two paragraphs

My father's family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So, I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip.

I give Pirrip as my father's family name, on the authority of his tombstone and my sister – Mrs. Joe Gargery, who married the blacksmith. As I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any likeness of either of them (for their days were long before the days of photographs), my first fancies regarding what they were like were unreasonably derived from their tombstones. The shape of the letters on my father's, gave me an odd idea that he was a square, stout, dark man, with curly black hair. From the character and turn of the inscription, '*Also Georgiana Wife of the Above,*' I drew a childish conclusion that my mother was freckled and sickly. To five little stone lozenges, each about a foot and a half long, which were arranged in a neat row beside their grave, and were sacred to the memory of five little brothers of mine – who gave up trying to get a living, exceedingly early in that universal struggle – I am indebted for a belief I religiously entertained that they had all been born on their backs with their hands in their trousers-pockets, and had never taken them out in this state of existence.



# Chapter I

My father's family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So, I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip.

I give Pirrip as my father's family name, on the authority of his tombstone and my sister – Mrs. Joe Gargery, who married the blacksmith. As I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any likeness of either of them (for their days were long before the days of photographs), my first fancies regarding what they were like were unreasonably derived from their tombstones. The shape of the letters on my father's, gave me an odd idea that he was a square, stout, dark man, with curly black hair. From the character and turn of the inscription, *'Also Georgiana Wife of the Above,'* I drew a childish conclusion that my mother was freckled and sickly. To five little stone lozenges<sup>1</sup>, each about a foot and a half long, which were arranged in a neat row beside their grave, and were sacred to the memory of five little brothers of mine – who gave up trying to get a living, exceedingly early in that universal struggle – I am indebted for a belief I religiously entertained that they had all been born on their backs with their hands in their trousers-pockets, and had never taken them out in this state of existence.

Ours was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea. My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things, seems to me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon towards evening. At such a time I found out for certain, that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard; and that Philip Pirrip, late of this parish, and also Georgiana wife of the above, were dead and buried; and that Alexander, Bartholomew, Abraham, Tobias, and Roger, infant children of the aforesaid, were also dead and buried; and that the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that the low leaden line beyond was the river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing, was the sea; and that the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip.

'Hold your noise!' cried a terrible voice, as a man started up from among the graves at the side of the church porch. 'Keep still, you little devil, or I'll cut your throat!'

A fearful man, all in coarse grey, with a great iron<sup>2</sup> on his leg. A man with no hat, and with broken shoes, and with an old rag tied round his head. A man who had been soaked in water, and smothered in mud, and lamed by stones, and cut by flints, and stung by nettles, and torn by briars; who limped, and shivered, and glared, and growled; and whose teeth chattered in his head as he seized me by the chin.

'O! Don't cut my throat, sir,' I pleaded in terror. 'Pray don't do it, sir.'

'Tell us your name!' said the man. 'Quick!'

'Pip, sir.'

---

<sup>1</sup> The tombstones of the five brothers

<sup>2</sup> A chain

‘Once more,’ said the man, staring at me. ‘Give it mouth!’

‘Pip. Pip, sir.’

‘Show us where you live,’ said the man. ‘Pint out the place!’

I pointed to where our village lay, on the flat in-shore among the alder-trees and pollards<sup>3</sup>, a mile or more from the church.

The man, after looking at me for a moment, turned me upside down, and emptied my pockets. There was nothing in them but a piece of bread. When the church came to itself – for he was so sudden and strong that he made it go head over heels before me, and I saw the steeple under my legs – when the church came to itself, I say, I was seated on a high tombstone, trembling while he ate the bread ravenously.

‘You young dog,’ said the man, licking his lips at me, ‘what fat cheeks you ha’ got.’

I believe they were fat, though I was at that time undersized for my years, and not strong.

‘Darn Me if I couldn’t eat em,’ said the man, with a threatening shake of his head, ‘and if I han’t half a mind to’t!’

I earnestly expressed my hope that he wouldn’t, and held tighter to the tombstone on which he had put me; partly, to keep myself upon it; partly, to keep myself from crying.

‘Now lookee here!’ said the man. ‘Where’s your mother?’

‘There, sir!’ said I.

He started, made a short run, and stopped and looked over his shoulder.

‘There, sir!’ I timidly explained. ‘Also Georgiana. That’s my mother.’

‘Oh!’ said he, coming back. ‘And is that your father alonger your mother?’

‘Yes, sir,’ said I; ‘him too; late of this parish.’

‘Ha!’ he muttered then, considering. ‘Who d’ye live with – supposin’ you’re kindly let to live, which I han’t made up my mind about?’

‘My sister, sir – Mrs. Joe Gargery – wife of Joe Gargery, the blacksmith, sir.’

‘Blacksmith, eh?’ said he. And looked down at his leg.

After darkly looking at his leg and me several times, he came closer to my



<sup>3</sup> Tree with top branches chopped off to encourage new growth

tombstone, took me by both arms, and tilted me back as far as he could hold me; so that his eyes looked most powerfully down into mine, and mine looked most helplessly up into his.

‘Now lookee here,’ he said, ‘the question being whether you’re to be let to live. You know what a file<sup>4</sup> is?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘And you know what wittles<sup>5</sup> is?’

‘Yes, sir.’

After each question he tilted me over a little more, so as to give me a greater sense of helplessness and danger.

‘You get me a file.’ He tilted me again. ‘And you get me wittles.’ He tilted me again. ‘You bring ’em both to me.’ He tilted me again. ‘Or I’ll have your heart and liver out.’ He tilted me again.

I was dreadfully frightened, and so giddy that I clung to him with both hands, and said, ‘If you would kindly please to let me keep upright, sir, perhaps I shouldn’t be sick, and perhaps I could attend more.’

He gave me a most tremendous dip and roll, so that the church jumped over its own weather-cock. Then, he held me by the arms, in an upright position on the top of the stone, and went on in these fearful terms:

‘You bring me, to-morrow morning early, that file and them wittles. You bring the lot to me, at that old Battery<sup>6</sup> over yonder. You do it, and you never dare to say a word or dare to make a sign concerning your having seen such a person as me, or any person sumever, and you shall be let to live. You fail, or you go from my words in any partickler, no matter how small it is, and your heart and your liver shall be tore out, roasted, and ate. Now, I ain’t alone, as you may think I am. There’s a young man hid with me, in comparison with which young man I am a Angel. That young man hears the words I speak. That young man has a secret way pecooliar to himself, of getting at a boy, and at his heart, and at his liver. It is in wain for a boy to attempt to hide himself from that young man. A boy may lock his door, may be warm in bed, may tuck himself up, may draw the clothes over his head, may think himself comfortable and safe, but that young man will softly creep and creep his way to him and tear him open. I am a keeping that young man from harming of you at the present moment, with great difficulty. I find it wery hard to hold that young man off of your inside. Now, what do you say?’

I said that I would get him the file, and I would get him what broken bits of food I could, and I would come to him at the Battery, early in the morning.

‘Say Lord strike you dead if you don’t!’ said the man.

I said so, and he took me down.

‘Now,’ he pursued, ‘you remember what you’ve undertook, and you remember that young man, and you get home!’

‘Goo-good night, sir,’ I faltered.

4 Hand-tool with sharp teeth used to cut through metal

5 Mispronunciation of ‘victuals’, meaning food

6 A fort with gun emplacements, probably built during the Napoleonic Wars in the early 19th century