



Dickens

Education Pack

Dip into the world of Charles Dickens some 200 years on. Use the author’s words to get a picture of life as it was in Dickens’ day and to understand how we might more vividly describe our own lives and surroundings. We hope that you can share your writing with others around the world.

This set of resources can help to facilitate dialogue between young people across the world, encourage them to learn more about their own contemporary writers and develop essential skills for learning and life, such as leadership and active citizenship. It includes activities to encourage creativity, improve writing and also to develop an understanding of social issues, global awareness and critical thinking.



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You could begin your project about Charles Dickens with this starter activity:

Please sir, can I have some more?

Engage with social and global justice issues through the work of Charles Dickens (1812 – 1870). His writing at a time of industrialisation, population increase and urbanisation 150 years ago opens eyes to many issues, social reforms and struggles still relevant today.

‘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, it had everything before us, we had nothing before us.’

Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities - Chapter 1: Recalled to Life

The opening lines of A Tale of Two Cities memorably capture the mood of two cities at a time of fundamental change in the eighteenth century. It was a time of transformation and modern thinking, but also of tradition and deep conservatism. There was the chance of greater opportunity and prosperity for some, and yet, all around, the evidence of ingrained poverty. How much of this description could apply to life in modern cities in today’s changing world? To what extent might people in 21st century London (or Beijing or other cities) be experiencing the best of times and the worst of times? What do you think?

Under Connecting Classrooms, the British Council’s flagship school programme that develops future global citizens, the Dickens 2012 Project aims to provide a range of activities to facilitate dialogue between young people across the world so that together they will come to better understand one of Britain’s greatest authors, learn more about their own contemporary writers and develop essential skills for learning and life. As well as providing opportunities to share endeavours with overseas partners, the suggested community activities also encourage children to develop leadership skills and engage in active citizenship. t

By discussing issues such as those raised in the opening paragraph with each other, young people can study literature from the past and present, and also exchange ideas about

today’s changing world and hence develop a better understanding of it. They will also learn to see issues about the cities they are growing up in from a range of global perspectives and will learn how to ‘shine a light’ on aspects of their lives and surroundings, just as Dickens did in the 19th century.

The project also supports schools to enrich their curriculum in an exciting and memorable way. Teachers will have the opportunity to expand their knowledge of authors and writing styles and to further develop their expertise in cross-curricular teaching. By working with teachers from other countries, cultures and schools, teachers will also share best practice and develop new strategies for addressing important issues such as social cohesion and cultural awareness.

Ideas for teachers

The following ideas and activities are designed as examples to be flexible and adaptable for use in a variety of circumstances with students aged 11 – 16, in both primary and secondary schools. The activities can be used simply as starting points in English lessons, to engage students with the work of Dickens, or could form part of a larger cross-curricular project on a topic such as life in Victorian Britain.

They could be part of normal lessons, or take place outside school hours. Some schools may only wish to enter the competition, whilst others may share pieces of work with partner schools, or embark on a longer joint project involving collaboration over a number of subject areas and the development of



Hablot Knight Browne

Encourage creativity and improve writing

CHARACTER PORTRAYAL

Pupils aged 11-16

Subjects covered: English, Art and Design

The English poet Ted Hughes said that we like to read about other people and want to find out everything about them because ‘we are nosy’. He went on to state that the trick to bringing a character in literature to life is to use ‘precise descriptive flashes or recount one or two typical incidents’. Dickens was an expert at doing this succinctly. See how he captures the appearance and character of Gaffer Hexham as he searches for bodies in the river at the beginning of *Our Mutual Friend* and the Artful Dodger as he swaggers on a street corner in *Oliver Twist*:

‘He was a hook-nosed man, and with that and his bright eyes and ruffled head bore a certain likeness to a roused bird of prey.’ *Our Mutual Friend* - Chapter 1: On the Look Out

‘He was a snub-nosed, flat browed, common-faced boy; and as dirty a juvenile as one would wish to see; but he had about him all the airs and manners of a man.’ *Oliver Twist* - Chapter 8: Oliver Walks to London

Modern writers have followed in his footsteps, creating vivid descriptions of characters. In *Change*, the Chinese writer Mo Yan describes the outsized He Zhiwu sitting in the classroom:

‘His upper lip was a little short, so his teeth showed the moment he smiles: the gum was purple, the teeth yellowish. There was a crack between his two front teeth. His special trait was to spit out tiny bubbles from this crack, one bubble after another floating in front of him, giving out a great alluring charm.’

Ask your students to find other examples of revealing glimpses of character from both Dickens’ work and that of contemporary writers. Then, ask them to think of someone they know well and try and capture a written picture of them in just one or two sentences. To test the power of their written descriptions, they could swap and illustrate each other’s from the words alone.

In developing this work further, students could create a piece of art work in any media, such as charcoal or clay, portraying a well known character from whichever Dickens novel they choose. The class artwork could then be

photographed and the images displayed in an online gallery, along with the students’ written descriptions.

Dickens gave many of the characters he created interesting names that indicated certain character traits, such as Thomas Gradgrind, Ebenezer Scrooge, Tulkinghorn, Wackford Squeers, Polly Toodle, Mr Sowerberry, Uriah Heep and Mr M’Choakumchild. Discuss other authors who create memorable characters and then ask your students to invent their own characters with interesting names and characteristics.

DICKENS ILLUSTRATIONS

Pupils aged 11-13

Subjects covered: English, Art and Design, Drama, ICT

Dickens worked closely with his illustrators as he understood how important pictures can be in portraying characters and underlining messages of social reform.

‘Men and women—boys and girls—



Sketches by Boz by George Cruickshank

vsweethearts and married people—babies in arms, and children in chaises—pipes and shrimps—cigars and periwinkles—tea and tobacco. Gentlemen, in alarming waistcoats, and steel watch-guards, promenading about, three abreast, with surprising dignity (or as the gentleman in the next box facetiously observes, “cutting it uncommon fat!”)—ladies, with great, long, white pocket-handkerchiefs like small tablecloths, in their hands, chasing one another on the grass in the most playful and interesting manner, with the view of attracting the attention of the aforesaid gentlemen—husbands in perspective ordering bottles of ginger-beer for the objects of their affections, with a lavish disregard of expense; and the said objects washing down huge quantities of “shrimps” and “winkles,” with an equal disregard of their own bodily health and subsequent comfort—boys, with great silk hats just balanced on the top of their heads, smoking cigars, and trying to look as if they liked ‘em, gentlemen in pink shirts and blue waistcoats, occasionally upsetting either themselves, or somebody else, with their own canes.’

London Recreations’ Sketches by Boz

Choose an illustration from one of Dickens’ novels and then ask your students to volunteer to be ‘in role’ as a character in the picture. Ask the rest of the class to ask them questions. The students then reply ‘in role’ as their characters.

Working in groups, they could then create a short play script of their favourite scene from a Dickens book. It may help them to watch some clips from the many films of Dickens’ works available online.

Either film these ‘plays’ and send the clips to your partner school, or alternatively send the scripts to your partner school to film and send the results back. The clips could be made starring the pupils themselves, or using animation - depending on expertise and enthusiasm!

The students could also draw illustrations of a local character from the school or local community. Their pictures should try to show the character’s surroundings and capture some of the ‘essence’ of his/her life.

CLIFF HANGERS

Pupils aged 11-13

Subjects covered: English, Art and Design

As Dickens’ major novels were often written in instalments, he would use dramatic, suspenseful endings or ‘cliff hangers’ to build tension and keep his readers hooked, from one episode to the next, just as soap opera writers do today.

In *A Christmas Carol*, he ends the second instalment with the following lines:

‘The bell struck twelve. Scrooge looked about him for the Ghost, and saw it not. As the last stroke ceased to vibrate, he remembered the prediction of old Jacob Marley and lifting up his eyes, beheld a solemn Phantom, draped and hooded, coming, like a mist along the ground towards him.’ *A Christmas Carol* - Stave 3: The Second of the Three Spirits

Discuss with your students how the language is used to create tension. How would they begin the next chapter? Can they think of other good ‘cliff hanger’ endings they have read or seen on television? Perhaps you could show them some clips from dramatic endings of episodes from television dramas.

Ask students to work in groups, each group planning the opening chapter of a story, setting the scene, introducing the main characters and taking the first steps along the path of the story. Ask them to end the chapter on an exciting ‘cliff hanger’.

Perhaps students might produce an illustrated book of completed stories, to share with other classes or parents.

WRITING ABOUT EVERYDAY LIFE

Pupils aged 11-16

Subjects covered: English, Art, and ICT

The subtitle of Sketches by Boz was Every-day Life and Every-day People. Dickens was very fond of walking around London and noting down the common sights, sounds and characters of Victorian city life that he then vividly portrayed in his sketches and novels.

Arrange to take your students for a walk around interesting parts of your local area and ask them to capture the sights and sounds of everyday places using sketch books and digital cameras. Interesting details of buildings, transport, entertainments, shops and people, sights, smells, snippets of overheard conversations (even those from people on mobile phones, for example) could all be used to make the area come to life in words, back in the classroom.

Students could return at different times of day or in different weather conditions and note how the area changes, just as Dickens did. Ask them to keep a look out for particularly interesting details that could be used in their writing.



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Street posters offering rewards for drowned bodies were a common sight in Victorian London and feature in a number of Dickens novels including David Copperfield, Bleak House and most significantly in Our Mutual Friend. Dickens also wrote in an

article in Household Words about how he was intrigued by a leaflet he once saw in a tobacconist's window, advertising a cricket match between eleven one-armed men and eleven one-legged men!

Read effective examples of description from Sketches by Boz and modern writers such as Liu Zhenyun. As your students draft their descriptions of modern everyday life and people, encourage them to peer-assess each other's work, perhaps commenting on what they like about the writing and adding 'but it could be even better if...'

Completed descriptions could be accompanied by the students' photographs, compiled in a book or framed for a school exhibition, entered for the competition, or shared with other classes or partner schools.

Social issues, global awareness and critical thinking

INDUSTRIALISATION

Pupils aged 11-13

Subjects covered: English, Drama, History, Geography, Art and Design

Dickens often wrote about industrialisation and the changes it was bringing in England in the 19th century. Read with your students this description from *Hard Times*.

'It was a town of red brick, or it would have been red if the smoke and the ashes had allowed it. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves forever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of buildings full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam engine worked monotonously up and down like an elephant in a state of melancholy madness.' *Hard Times* - Chapter 5: The Keynote

Discuss with your students the images Dickens conjures up and why they think he chose them. What do these images tell us about Dickens' attitude to industrialisation? Does this sort of environment impact upon the stories that unfold within it? Can your students find other similar descriptions in Dickens' work, or that of modern authors? Talk about what a modern equivalent of these industrial settings might look like. Do the students know, or have they seen, any places like this?

Discuss how people can improve the environment and how they can damage it, and how decisions made about places and environments can affect the quality of people's lives. Perhaps students can find examples of this in the newspapers or on television. Set up a role play debate about, for example, the siting of a new factory close to their school. Pupils could take up roles including playing the factory owner, local environmentalists, shopkeepers, unemployed people, school pupils and so forth and debate its effect on the environment but also its role in providing jobs for people in a time of recession.

Encourage pupils to create their own different environments by paintings or photographs and then use these as backdrops for drama or animations that show the impact of the environments on people.



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CHANGING SOCIETY

Pupils aged 13 – 16

Subjects covered: English, History, Geography, Citizenship, Art and Design

The changing society was a topic of great interest to Dickens. In *Dombey and Son* for example he describes the impact that the new railway has on the environment and the lives of those who live nearby - an issue that is still being debated today as new transport systems impact on the environment. He wrote:

‘The first shock of a great earthquake had just at that period, rent the whole neighbourhood to its centre. Traces of its course were visible on every side. Houses were knocked down; streets broken through and stopped; deep pits and trenches dug in the ground; enormous heaps of earth and clay thrown up; buildings that were undermined and shaking, propped by great beams of wood... In short, the yet unfinished and unopened Railroad was in progress; and from the very core of all this dire disorder, trailed smoothly away, upon its mighty course of civilization and improvement.’

Chapter 6: Paul’s Second Deprivation

Encourage students to discuss the issues that have caused change in their local communities. These might include transport, industrialisation, housing, immigration, or changes in entertainment, or family lifestyle. Ask them to carry out research using local archives, census returns, maps and photographs (usually available online) to investigate what their local area was like in the past and how it has changed, with a view to sharing their findings with their international partners.

A very useful way of gathering pieces of oral history is to invite older members of the community into school, perhaps preparing a meal for them, and asking them to talk about what the area was like when they were younger, how it has

changed and how people have adapted to those changes. From this information timelines can be constructed and comparisons made with changes that were happening at the same time to the locality of their partner school.

Students could write about the lives of the older residents and create collages of images

from the past and present. Perhaps they could predict what life will look like for residents 200 years in the future!

DICKENS THE SOCIAL REFORMER

Pupils aged 13-16+

Subjects covered: English, Citizenship, ICT

Dickens’ work was greatly influenced by his own experiences of poverty and working in a factory as a child. Throughout his life and work he championed many social causes such as inequality and poverty. Can your students find other classical and modern writers whose childhood has had a profound influence on their writing?

What issues do your students think Dickens would have written and campaigned about if he was alive today? Ask them to work in groups to find out about the work being done by organisations such as UNICEF and Save the Children Fund and to put together a presentation of their own about one particular issue that they would like to champion. They could present their findings to other pupils in the school. Alternatively students could use their research to write a thought provoking piece of prose or poetry about a global issue such as child poverty or famine, or devise a campaign or fundraising event to raise awareness about something they feel strongly about.

Example: A secondary school in London ran a citizenship project to raise awareness of social issues affecting the lives of children at home and abroad and to encourage their students to campaign to improve things for the better. They took part in a variety of activities which included organising a volunteering register to improve their school grounds and aspects of their local area.

They also took part in the Send My Friend to School campaign co-ordinated by organisations such as Action Aid and Comic Relief. They learnt about the millions of children worldwide who miss out on schooling and made hundreds of paper buddies to represent these children. They sent them to world leaders to highlight the issue and addressed a crowd of 20,000 people in London, alongside Nelson Mandela about the importance of education as part of the Make Poverty History campaign.

SOCIAL ACTION AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Pupils aged 13-16+

Subjects covered: English, Citizenship

Schools who would like to take this work further could encourage their students to reflect on their observations and research. They could work with members of the community to decide on action plans that could make a difference and improve aspects of life in their local surroundings. These changes could be recorded in a variety of ways and perhaps be developed concurrently with their partner school.

Others:

The Connecting Classrooms ‘Better Community, Better Life’ project offers a framework that could be useful to schools in taking forward projects in combination with the Dickens 2012 Project.

Useful websites:

www.dickens2012.org.uk

www.dickensmuseum.com

www.savethechildren.org.uk

www.unicef.org.uk

Similar projects:

Shanghai Expo from Bruno Barbey:

<http://inmotion.magnumphotos.com/essay/shanghai-world-expo>

NY Times: 1 in 8 million - about lives of New Yorkers www.nytimes.com/packages/html/nyregion/1-in-8-million/index.html?hp&hp

NY Times writer / illustrator series on cities <http://tinyurl.com/35fre96>

Project plans come in all shapes and sizes, depending on the needs of schools and teachers and whether they are for the long, medium or short term. They could be broken down into weekly lessons or take place over an extended period. However, they should be adaptable and focus on providing compelling learning experiences to increase the knowledge and skills of your students.

The following example, Heroes and Villains, gives a more detailed look at how a cross curricular project on characterization in literature could be introduced to a class of eleven year olds across a series of lessons.



Oliver Twist (1948) dir. David Lean(C) Park Circus

Sample Project Plan: Heroes and Villains

PRIMARY

Overview:

LESSON 1

Learning objectives: To create two interesting characters who will feature in a long piece of creative writing.

Activities: Provide the students with two boxes of interesting props such as hats, a walking stick, a necklace and dressing up clothes. Ask them to discuss in pairs who they could belong to and invent a hero and a villain (either male or female) who could own the items in the boxes.

Ask the students to draw pictures of these people and list at least three 'outside' characteristics that they possess. These could be things like 'tall with a scar like a moon on his cheek' or 'long greasy hair with fringe in her eyes.' Then give them at least three 'inside' characteristics such as 'kind hearted' or 'selfish and greedy.' Encourage the students to bounce ideas off each other and extend their initial thoughts with interesting adjectives and similes in their descriptions.

Dickens gave many of the characters he created interesting names that indicated certain character traits. Discuss how names such as Edward Murdstone or Polly Toodle give a character certain distinctiveness. Ask pupils to identify what each name suggests to them and talk about other modern authors such as JK Rowling who give their characters interesting names like Rubeus Hagrid or Severus Snape.

Finally, ask them to choose relevant names for their heroes and villains and devise a secret that each character could be hiding!

LESSON 2

Learning objectives: To read descriptions of Dickens' characters and use these as starting points to produce pieces of art work and descriptive paragraphs.

Activities: Read the class some extracts from Dickens that portrays interesting characters. These could include the following descriptions from Great Expectations which introduce Abel Magwich and Miss Havisham:

'A fearful man all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg. A man with no hat, and with broken shoes and with an old rag tied around 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.' Great Expectations - Chapter 1: The Convict Frightens Me

'She was dressed in rich materials-satins and lace and silks – all white... some bright jewels sparkled on her neck and on her hands...she had not quite finished dressing for she had but one shoe on – the other was on the table. I saw that everything within my view which ought to be white had been white long ago and had lost its lustre and was faded and yellow. I saw that the bride within the wedding dress had withered like the dress and like the flowers had no brightness left but the brightness of her sunken eyes.' Great Expectations - Chapter 8: My Conductress

Discuss how Dickens' choice of words helps you form a vivid picture of each person and also touch on the meaning of any difficult words such as lustre. What are their first impressions of these characters? Would they like to meet either of them? Talk about any other well known Dickensian heroes and villains your pupils may be familiar with such as Oliver Twist or Ebenezer Scrooge. Perhaps choose members of the class to act 'in role' as some of these characters whilst the rest of the class asks them questions.

Provide art materials such as clay, paint or charcoal and ask the students to create a piece of art work which really captures the characteristics of particular Dickensian characters, both visual and 'inner. Encourage them to read the appropriate descriptions as they work and really bring the characters to life as Dickens does in his novels.

They could then photograph their completed artwork, put the images on the school website with the appropriate description and swap the results with their partner school by post or via an online gallery.

Ask them to look back at the hero and villain that they created in the first lesson. After reading some of Dickens descriptions are there any further interesting details or mannerisms they could add to their characters to really bring them to life? Ask them to produce a paragraph of really good description for each.

LESSON 3

Learning objectives: To create an atmospheric description of a setting for a story.

Activities: Dickens created some fantastic settings for his stories. Read with the class the following description of Victorian London in miserable November weather from Bleak House.

'London... 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 snowflakes.... Dogs, undistinguishable in mire. Horses scarcely better; splashed to their very blinkers. Foot passengers jostling one another's umbrellas, in a general infection of ill temper, and losing their foothold at street-corners, where tens of thousands of other foot passengers have been slipping and sliding since the day broke (if it ever broke), adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud....Fog up the river, where it flows among green aits and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping... fog drooping on the gunwhales of barges and small boats... cruelly pinching the toes and fingers of his shivering little' prentice boy on deck.'

Bleak House - Chapter 1: In Chancery

What sort of picture does this create in their minds, even if there are some words and phrases there are unsure about? Why do they think Dickens included the line about a Megalosaurus?

Give the class some photographs of different types of setting such as a bustling city, a deserted landscape and eerie looking forest. Ask them to work together and write effective descriptions of what they can see in the photograph using similes and metaphors. At the end of the session, read out some of the descriptions and see if they can guess which matches which photograph. They could also create a soundscape using percussion instruments to go with the description as they read them out.

LESSON 4

Learning objectives: To carry out research into aspects of Victorian life using a variety of sources.

Activities: Ask the class to work in groups to research what life was like for different types of people living in cities at the time when working children, rich ladies and gentlemen, servants in large houses, and people working in factories. Provide a variety of sources including fiction and non-fiction books, the internet, photographs and maps and ask each group to create a presentation at the end of their research.

If possible arrange to take the class to visit local museums or art galleries with genuine Victorian exhibits and watch film clips from one of Dickens novels such as Oliver Twist or Great Expectations.



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Illustration of Bill Skyes

LESSON 5

Learning objectives: Use accumulated knowledge to write the opening of a Victorian novel.

Activities: Ask the students to use the knowledge they have accrued through their study of Dickens about characterization, settings and living conditions to draft the opening chapter of a Victorian mystery novel that introduces the hero, the place where the novel is set and takes the first steps along the path of the story where their secret may be revealed!

Dickens major novels were published in instalments with dramatic endings or 'cliff hangers' to build tension and keep his readers hooked. Ask the students to end their chapter on a dramatic cliff

As they draft their opening chapter, encourage them to peer assess each other's work, asking them to comment on three things they like about another person's writing but also adding one 'I wish they had...' to make the writing even better.'

LESSON 6

Learning objectives: To complete the middle and end sections of a Victorian mystery novel working with students at their partner school.

Activities: Arrange with your partner school to send to each other the first chapters of these stories. The corresponding second chapters describing a dilemma and introducing the villain of the piece will be written by pupils at their partner school and these chapters too should finish with a climactic ending.

The stories can then be returned for the original pupils to complete with an ending chapter that resolves the events of the story.

The final books could be illustrated and published to share with friends and families. Perhaps this event could conclude with a celebratory heroes and villains party.

Project plan: changing communities (secondary)

Project plans come in all shapes and sizes, depending on the needs of schools and teachers and whether they are for the long, medium or short term. They can be broken down into weekly lessons or take place over an extended period. However, they should always be adaptable and flexible and focus on providing compelling learning experiences to increase the knowledge and skills of your students.

The following example, Changing Community, gives a detailed look at how a cross-curricular project with a class of 13 to 14 year-olds aims to capture a picture of their local community and that of their partner school; whilst increasing their knowledge of Dickens and improving their research and writing skills.

Overview:

LESSONS 1 AND 2

Learning objectives: To capture a picture of the local area in words and pictures at a certain point in time, just as Dickens did in the 19th century; and compare with that of their partner school.

Activities: Take your students for a walk around interesting parts of your local area to capture the sights, sounds and smells of everyday places using sketch books and digital cameras. Interesting details about buildings, transport, entertainments, shops, local residents and snippets of overheard conversations (even those from people on mobile phones, for example) could all be noted, to make the area come to life, back in the classroom.

Ask them to keep a look-out for particularly interesting geographical features and details such as posters, shop signs or even bits of graffiti that could be described in their writing.

Back in the classroom, trace their routes on maps and the internet, noting where certain things were seen. If possible, look at copies of historical maps of the area to see how different the area would have looked in the past.

Read with the class some of the many vivid examples that Dickens wrote that really bring places to life. Discuss for example how he captures details of London streets and the sights and sounds of the busy Smithfield Market in the following extracts.

'Here and there, a bricklayer's labourer, with the day's dinner tied up in a handkerchief, walks briskly to his work, and occasionally a

little knot of three or four school boys rattle merrily along the pavement, their boisterous mirth contrasting with the demeanour of the little sweep who sits patiently on the doorstep until the housemaid may happen to awake.' *The Streets-Morning - Sketches by Boz*

Countrymen, butchers, drovers, hawkers, boys, thieves, idlers, and vagabonds of every low grade, were mingled together in a mass; the whistling of drovers, the barking dogs, the bellowing and plunging of the oxen, the bleating of sheep, the grunting and squeaking of pigs, the cries of hawkers, the shouts, oaths, and quarrelling on all sides; the ringing of bells and roar of voices, that issued from every public-house; the crowding, pushing, driving, beating, whooping and yelling; the hideous and discordant din that resounded from every corner of the market; and the unwashed, unshaven, squalid, and dirty figures constantly running to and fro, and bursting in and out of the throng; rendered it a stunning and bewildering scene, which quite confounded the senses.' *Oliver Twist - Chapter 16: The Expedition*

Ask the students to use descriptions like these as models to produce their own vivid portrayal of the area that they walked around. As they draft their descriptions, encourage them to assess each other's work, asking them to comment on three things they like about another person's writing but also adding one suggestion to make the writing even better.

Their written descriptions could be accompanied by their photographs and

LESSON 3

Learning objectives: To read examples from Dickens about changes that were taking place at the time of writing, discuss examples and causes of change in the world today.

Activities: The numerous changes taking place during the 19th century were of great interest to Dickens and often featured in his writing. In *Dombey and Son* for example, he describes the impact that the building of a new railway was having on the environment and the lives of those who live nearby. He wrote:

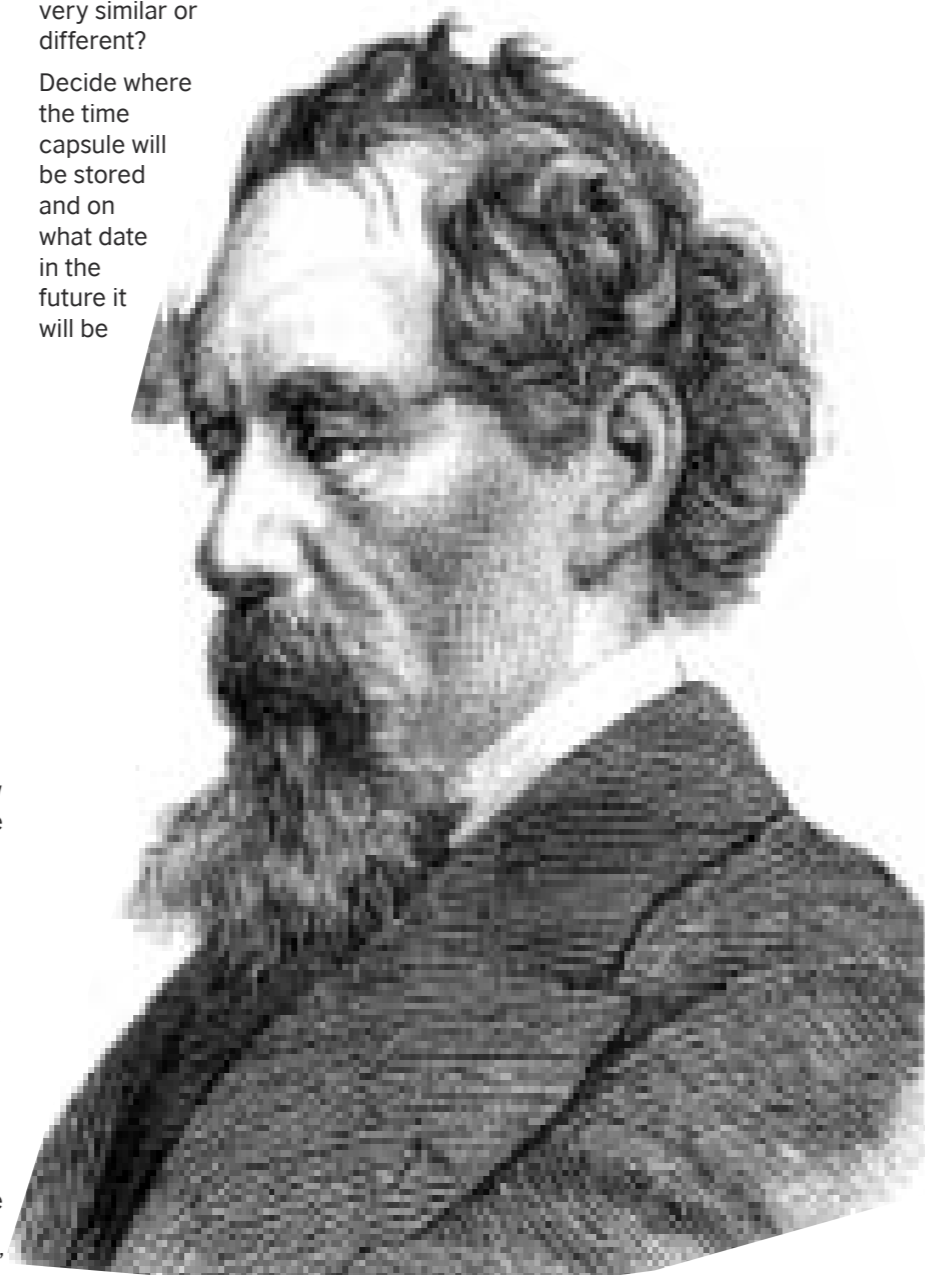
'The first shock of a great earthquake had just at that period; rent the whole neighbourhood to its centre. Traces of its course were visible on every side. Houses were knocked down; streets broken through and stopped; deep pits and trenches dug in the ground; enormous heaps of earth and clay thrown up; buildings that were undermined and shaking, propped by great beams of wood.....In short, the yet unfinished and unopened Railroad was in progress; and from the very core of all this dire disorder, trailed smoothly away, upon its mighty course of civilization and improvement.'

drawings and then shared with their partner school. Discuss the similarities and differences between the two localities.

To finish this section of the project, ask the students to suggest objects that could be put into a time capsule that would really capture elements of their local area on that date in time. Objects might include a newspaper, music, photographs and messages.

When the final selection has been made, put the items in a capsule and share photographs of the time capsule and the objects chosen with their partner school. What have they chosen to sum up their local area? Are they very similar or different?

Decide where the time capsule will be stored and on what date in the future it will be



Chapter 6: Paul's Second Deprivation

In *Hard Times*, he describes the growth of large cities such as Coketown and the changes from a rural to industrial society.

'It was a town of red brick, or it would have been red if the smoke and the ashes had allowed it. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves forever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of buildings full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam engine worked monotonously up and down like

an elephant in a state of melancholy madness.' *Hard Times - Chapter 5: The Keynote*

Discuss what these extracts tell us about Dickens' attitude to some of the changes taking place in Victorian England.

Can the students find examples of developments today that are having significant effects on their surroundings and the people who live there at home and abroad? Discuss the implications, both positive and negative for the people living nearby. Discuss how people can improve the environment and how they can damage it, and how decisions made about places and environments can affect the quality of people's lives.

LESSON 4

Learning objectives: To carry out research using a variety of secondary sources to investigate what their local area was like in the past and how it has changed; with a view to sharing their findings with their international partner.

Activities: Provide the students with a variety of written and online sources, local archives, census returns, maps and photographs (usually available online). Ask them to find out about what their local area was like in the past and research things that have led to changes in the community. These might include changes in transport, housing, and entertainment, or changes due to industrialisation and immigration. Are there aspects of change that they are particularly interested in? What would they like to find out about? What sources of evidence would be most useful in their enquiries?

Working collaboratively in groups, encourage them to make notes and then produce material for a presentation about one aspect of change to their local area. For homework, ask them to gather further research material by talking to members of their family and neighbours about changes that have taken place in their lifetimes and the effect on the surroundings. Perhaps they have some photographs or artefacts that could be used.

LESSON 5

Learning objectives: To gather oral testimonies about changes to the locality from older residents.

Activities: Ask the students to design and make invitations for some elderly local residents of the community to come for an afternoon tea or lunchtime meal at school, to talk about what the local area was like when they were younger, how things have changed and how local people reacted to those changes.

The students will need to devise a menu, price the ingredients, and prepare the food and decorations for the event. If funds are not available, students may need to devise ways to raise money to buy the ingredients.

Ask the students to prepare questions and work out how responses will be recorded. As well as making notes, one group could be tasked with filming and editing the event. Students could also write about the lives of the older residents as Dickens did so effectively in his novels and sketches. They could also ask their guests about what positive changes they would like to see in their community in the future. This could then form the basis for future projects.

LESSON 6

Learning objectives: To create presentations including writing and art work that chart changes that have occurred in the locality. Share and compare results with their partner school.

Activities: Using their creative writing inspired by Dickens and all the information that they have gathered, ask the students to create a presentation and display that portrays their locality as it currently is, the changes that have taken place in the past and those currently taking place. This could include a collage of images from the past and present, art work and film footage. Perhaps they could also predict what life will look like for residents 200 years in the future!

Invite members of the local community to see the final display and share and compare the results with partner school.

From the shared information, timelines can also be constructed and comparisons made with changes that were happening at the same time in the locality of their partner school.

Tips and resources for teachers

Some useful tips:

- English language materials will be available on the Teach English website <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/dickens>
- If you have a partner school, try to plan the project together so both schools can work collaboratively on agreed themes – remember to factor in time differences.
- If possible, try and integrate aspects of the project into the regular range of activities taking place in school, as this is most likely to lead to an effective legacy and an ongoing commitment to intercultural dialogue work within the school.



Sketches by Boz by George Cruickshank

Checklist for teachers

Focus	Action
<p>Aims and Outcomes</p> <p>Have you clearly identified what you are trying to achieve in ICD and literacy for your pupils through this project? Have you clearly identified what the outcomes will be?</p>	
<p>Pitch and challenge</p> <p>Are there sufficient opportunities for pupils to exercise choice and autonomy and express their own creativity and imagination?</p>	
<p>Teaching and learning approaches</p> <p>What approaches will be most effective to achieve your aims? Will they encourage creativity and critical thinking? Will these include enquiry, and independent research?</p>	
<p>Time and place</p> <p>Where and when will the activities take place? Will the activities take place weekly over a term, or in a condensed period of time? How will the timetable be organised? How will time differences with partner schools be accommodated? What will be done outside of the school day?</p>	
<p>People</p> <p>Who will need to be involved? Will this include other teachers, parents, teaching assistants, supporting organisations, partner school staff and pupils? Will subject faculties in secondary schools need to plan and work together? Will the learning experience be most effective if the work is organised for one class, year group or mixed ages?</p>	
<p>Resources</p> <p>What resources will be needed? How will you ensure they are available when required?</p>	
<p>Curriculum links</p> <p>What themes or subjects will be involved? What skills will you be looking to develop in both the arts and the pupils' broader lives? How will the project encourage your pupils to ask 'big' questions about the world around them and explore key issues such as identity and culture? Will the activities encourage innovation, optimism, purposeful enquiry and new understandings and knowledge?</p>	
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>How will you evaluate the project? How could you involve learners, colleagues, parents, members of the local community in this? Who are you going to share the information with and how will this be done?</p>	
<p>Legacy</p> <p>How will you build on this experience to further develop the knowledge, skills and understanding of your pupils? How can the experience be extended across the school to other pupils and staff?</p>	

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