

# LITERATURE – 1A

Oliver is a poor **orphan**. He's about ten years old and lives with other poor boys in the parish workhouse.

## START THINKING ...

1 Work in pairs. Tell your partner how often you do these things:

- eat out in restaurants
- cook your own food
- feel really hungry



## OLIVER TWIST (1838) Charles Dickens

The boys ate in a large hall. There was a table at one end with a big **saucepan** on it. One of the masters, dressed in an apron, served the soup at mealtimes. Each boy had one bowl of thin soup and no more – except on very special occasions when he also had a small piece of bread.

- 5 They never washed the bowls because the boys cleaned them with their spoons until they shone. The boys ate their soup very quickly and then sat and looked at the saucepan. They **sucked** any drops of soup from their fingers. The boys generally had excellent **appetites** and they wanted more to eat but they were afraid to ask. Oliver Twist and his companions suffered
- 10 the slow torture of **starvation** for three months and they were **desperate** with **hunger**. One day they decided they couldn't continue like this. They had a meeting to choose a boy to ask the master for more food; they chose Oliver Twist.



The evening arrived and the boys went to the hall for supper. The master, in his cook's uniform, stood near the big saucepan. He served the soup and the boys said their prayers before eating. The boys ate the soup and then they told Oliver to go.

- 15 Oliver was desperate with hunger and **misery**. He stood up and walked to the master with his bowl and spoon in his hand. He said: 'Please, sir, I want some more.'

The master was a fat, healthy man but he became very pale. He looked at the small rebel with astonishment for a few seconds and held onto the saucepan for support. The boys were too frightened to move.

'What!' said the master finally.

- 20 'Please, sir,' replied Oliver, 'I want some more.'

The master hit Oliver on the head and held him. He shouted for Mr Bumble\*.

[...]

Mr Bumble ran into the meeting of the directors of the **orphanage**.

'Excuse me, gentlemen! Oliver Twist has asked for more!'

- 25 There was silence.

'For more!' said one of the gentlemen. 'Do I understand correctly that he ate his soup and then he asked for more?'

'He did, sir,' replied Mr Bumble.

After a long discussion, the gentlemen put Oliver into a small, dark room all alone. The next morning, they put a notice on the gate: '**Apprentice** available. Price £5.' They didn't want Oliver at the orphanage any longer.

\* A church official at the workhouse

## Glossary

**orphan** a child whose parents are dead

**saucepan** a big round pan used for cooking things like soup

**suck** to pull in liquid through your mouth

**appetite** the feeling that you want to eat

**starvation** the state of not having food for a long time

**desperate** needing or wanting something very much

**hunger** the feeling you have when you need to eat

**misery** great unhappiness

**orphanage** a building where orphans live

**apprentice** someone who works for a skilled person for low pay in return for learning skills

2 **▶▶1A.1** Read the text and listen.

3 Read the text again. Answer the questions.

- 1 Who served the boys and what did he wear?
- 2 How were the boys feeling when they made their plan?
- 3 How did Oliver feel when he spoke to the master?
- 4 Who is Mr Bumble and what did he do?
- 5 Where did Oliver spend the night?

4 **▶▶READ BETWEEN THE LINES** Answer the questions.

- 1 Why do you think the boys' bowls shone?
- 2 What do you learn about the boys' lives?
- 3 How did the master and directors react to Oliver's request and why?

5 **▶▶VOCABULARY** Complete the sentences with the correct words from the glossary in the correct form.

- 1 Despite improvements in agriculture and technology, thousands of people still died of \_\_\_\_\_ in England in the 1840s.
- 2 When their parents died, brothers and sisters would look after their younger relatives to stop them from being put in an \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 In 1833, children as young as nine worked for eight hours a day in factories making items such as \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Meals in workhouses were poor. Although people living in them often experienced \_\_\_\_\_, at least they didn't starve.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ weren't just poor children who worked in factories. Children from wealthy families could become doctors and lawyers in this way.
- 6 Families were \_\_\_\_\_ to avoid going into the workhouse. In the workhouse, children as young as seven were separated from their parents and life was hard.

6 Underline five words in the text that are new to you. Look them up in a dictionary and then write each of them in a sentence.

7 **▶▶ROLE PLAY** Work in pairs. Sam is a new boy at the orphanage. Oliver explains what the food is like. Student A is Oliver, Student B is Sam. Read the beginning of the conversation and then continue with your own ideas.

OLIVER You're new! What's your name?  
 SAM Sam. Sam Todd. It's my first day here.  
 ...

8 **▶▶LISTENING ▶▶1A.2** Listen to the next part of the story. Complete the sentences.

- 1 London was \_\_\_\_\_ miles away.
- 2 Oliver decided to go to London because he could find \_\_\_\_\_ there.
- 3 He only had one \_\_\_\_\_, some socks, a piece of \_\_\_\_\_ and a penny.
- 4 When he slept in the field, he felt \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and alone.
- 5 His \_\_\_\_\_ hurt.
- 6 In a town near London, he met a \_\_\_\_\_. He shared some \_\_\_\_\_ with Oliver.

## WRITING Character analysis

9 **▶▶WRITING** Write a character analysis of Oliver in 80–100 words.

- 1 Think about the character's personality. Look for clues in the text about how he speaks, moves, feels and thinks.
- 2 How do other characters react to him?
- 3 What is your character's role in the text? Is he a protagonist or a secondary character?
- 4 Try to include short quotes from the original text in your analysis to illustrate your ideas. Include a wide range of adjectives.
- 5 When you have finished your character analysis read it again. Check your spelling, grammar and punctuation. Swap your character analysis with a partner and assess each other's work.

## THINK CHARACTERISATION

Charles Dickens is famous for creating many memorable characters – some good and some bad. He liked to make his readers laugh or cry so many of his characters are comic or tragic. He used a lot of details and strong adjectives to create his characters. He also described the places where they lived or worked to make them seem more real. Among his most famous characters are: Oliver Twist and Nancy (*Oliver Twist*), Mr Scrooge (*A Christmas Carol*), David Copperfield (*David Copperfield*) and Miss Havesham (*Great Expectations*).

10 Look at the picture of Oliver and the other orphans on page 1. What is their life like? Describe their appearance and the workhouse.