

# LITERATURE 1B

## TEACHER'S NOTES

**AUTHOR:** Charles Dickens  
**TITLE:** *Oliver Twist* (Chapter 2, reading Exercises 2, 3 & 4 Chapter 8, listening Exercises 7 & 8)  
**THEMES:** Money (unit 2), Food and drink (unit 3)  
**WRITING:** Character analysis  
**DID YOU KNOW?:** Characterisation

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charles Dickens (1812–1870) was born in Portsmouth, England. His works include *A Christmas Carol* (1843), *David Copperfield* (1850) and *Great Expectations* (1860).

Charles Dickens had a happy childhood until he was ten when the family moved to London. His father had financial difficulties and went to prison for debt. This changed Charles' life as he had to leave school and go to work in a factory. He later finished his education and became a journalist.

His experience in the factory inspired him to write about the poor and social injustice. Poor children are the main characters in many of his most famous books. He used his novels to criticise the social conditions of the time. The Poor Law of 1834 meant that the only way that extremely poor families could get help was to live and work in the workhouse. Conditions in the workhouses were deliberately dreadful so that only the very poor would enter. Families were separated and they received very little food and clothing in return for hard labour. Dickens hoped to raise awareness through his novel of the extreme poverty that was affecting many families in London at the time and of the conditions in the workhouses.

Dickens was famous for his humour, vivid descriptions of characters and accurate descriptions of society at the time. Many of his novels, including *Oliver Twist*, were written as serial publications: one or two chapters were published each month. Dickens was able to listen to his readers' opinions and change the characters' personalities if they were unpopular because he was still in the process of writing the novel. It wasn't just the characters that Dickens was interested in describing; descriptions of London also appear throughout his works.

### INTRODUCTION

Ask students if they have heard of Charles Dickens or *Oliver Twist*. Write any ideas on the board in note form. Use the information in the *About the author* box to provide an introduction. Ask if students know any of the novels mentioned – they may know *A Christmas Carol* or the character, Mr Scrooge. Depending on the class, it may be appropriate to use L1 at this stage.

### START THINKING ...

- 1 Draw students' attention to the film still at the top right of the worksheet. Elicit responses to the questions: *Who is in the first picture? How old do you think they are?* (lots of boys; around ten years old) *Do they look happy or sad?* (sad) *What are they doing?* (waiting for some food)

Organise the class into pairs or small groups. Set a time limit of a few minutes for students to discuss the questions. Then ask students for their opinions. Encourage them to back up their answers with examples. For example, 'I eat out in restaurants when it's someone's birthday.' 'I occasionally cook my own food.' Encourage them to use adverbs of frequency in their answers.

- 2 Draw students' attention to the text above the film still which 'sets the scene' and clarify understanding. Play the audio. When students have read and listened to the text once, allow time to check unfamiliar words in the glossary.

#### Optional extension

Ask some comprehension questions to check general understanding of the text: *Does Oliver Twist have a family?* (No. He's an orphan.) *Who does he live with?* (lots of other boys) *Is he happy?* (no) *Is there a happy ending to this part of the text?* (no)

- 3 Read through the questions and remind students to refer closely to the text to find the answers.

#### Answers

1 bread 2 spoons 3 rarely 4 told 5 The master  
6 on his own

- 4 Students read the text again. Discuss the questions and answers with the class.

#### Answer

b



### CRITICAL THINKING

Ask the students the question: *Why did the gentlemen put Oliver in a room all alone?* Elicit that they put him in the room as a punishment. Then ask them: *Why did the gentlemen punish Oliver?* Elicit that they punished him because orphans weren't allowed to ask for more food. Now write the following on the board: *Was it a fair punishment?* You could prompt students to think of one reason why it was fair, one reason why it wasn't fair and what they think a fair punishment would be. You may wish to use L1 to gather ideas or check understanding.

#### Suggested answers

Fair: Oliver knew that he wasn't allowed to ask for more. He broke the rules. The directors had to punish him to stop other boys asking for more.  
Unfair: Oliver was very hungry so didn't have a choice. He wasn't the only boy who wanted more. The master had already punished him when he hit him.  
A fair punishment: Students' own answers.

## VOCABULARY

- 5 Read through the sentences one at a time to check comprehension of any unknown vocabulary. Working individually, students complete the sentences with the words in the glossary. Ask individual students for answers to the questions.

### Answers

1 soup 2 director 3 supper 4 aprons  
5 orphanages 6 saucepan

### Optional extension

Ask students to make another sentence for each item in the glossary. Explain that writing new vocabulary items in context is a good way to remember them.

### Optional extension

Ask students to read the text again and to underline five more words that are new to them. Ask them to write the words in sentences. They then read their sentences in pairs and correct each other's mistakes.

## ROLE PLAY

- 6 Organise the class into pairs. Read the instruction and check that students understand what they are going to do. Set a time limit and then ask pairs to read out their answers. Then give students time to practise the conversation. When they are ready, ask a pair to perform their role play to the class.

### Answers

1 supper 2 spoon 3 vegetables 4 talk 5 ask

## LISTENING

- 7 Before listening, explain that students are going to hear what happened to Oliver Twist after he left the orphanage. Play the recording twice. The first time, encourage students to listen without taking notes. The second time, they complete the sentences.

### Answers

✓ socks, bread, afraid, hungry, alone, journey

- 8 Students read through the questions. Encourage students to answer from memory. Play the recording again for students to complete their answers and to check.

### Answers

1 70 2 work 3 field 4 man 5 in

### Optional extension

Students might enjoy acting out the scene in pairs. You could play the recording again and ask them to note down key details. Ask them to think about what Oliver and the boy might say to each other when they first meet and when they are walking to London together.

## AUDIOSCRIPT

### (adapted and abridged from Chapter 8)

One day, Oliver decided to leave. He left the town during the night. After about five miles, he felt tired and decided to sit down and think about what to do next. He saw a stone that said that London was seventy miles away. This gave him an idea. Why not go to London? London was a big city and people said that it was a wonderful place. They said that a boy could find work there, so Oliver decided that London was the place for him.

He had all his things in one small bag: one shirt, two pairs of socks, a piece of bread and one penny. 'A clean shirt,' thought Oliver, 'is a very comfortable thing and two pairs of socks and a penny are useful too, but they aren't much help for walking sixty-five miles in winter.' He had no idea what he was going to do, so he just walked.

Oliver walked twenty miles that day and he only ate the piece of bread he had in his bag and drank a little water. That night, he slept in a field but he was afraid. He was cold, hungry and alone but he was so tired after his walk that he fell asleep and forgot his problems.

The next morning, he bought some bread from a shop with his penny. He had no money now so he asked people to give him food, but lots of them said 'no'. He met some kind people: one day, a man gave him some bread and cheese and another day, an old woman gave him some of her food.

After walking for seven days, he arrived in a small town. He was tired and hungry and sat down in the street. After a while, he noticed a boy looking at him. The boy wore strange clothes and was dirty, but he was friendly. He sat next to Oliver and spoke to him. Oliver told him who he was and all about his journey. The boy lived in London and was on his way back there so he invited Oliver to walk with him. Oliver felt happier now that he had a friend and was near the end of his long journey.

## WRITING: CHARACTER ANALYSIS

- 9 Read the instruction. Ask students to say which character they find the most interesting and why. Then read through the *Writing* skills box. Look at the first bullet point with the class and ask them to underline the key information in the text. Students can write the character analysis in class or for homework. Students then swap their character analysis with a partner. They read each other's work and highlight any mistakes. They then return the character analysis to the original student who looks at the highlighted mistakes and corrects them. Ask some students to read their character analysis out loud to the class.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Read through the information and check that students understand the meaning of *comic* and *tragic*.

### Optional extension

Ask students to research another Dickens character. Popular ones include Mr Scrooge (*A Christmas Carol*) and David Copperfield (*Great Expectations*). Who are they? What is their role in the novel? Are they a tragic or a comic character? What is their personality like? Are they nice or nasty? Rude or polite?