

# LITERATURE 1A

## TEACHER'S NOTES

AUTHOR	Charles Dickens
TITLE	<i>David Copperfield</i> (Chapters 4 & 6)
THEMES	Talking about the past, advice and recommendations
WRITING	A letter
THINK STYLE	Bildungsroman

### 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's life as he had to leave school and go to work in a factory. He later finished his education and became a journalist. 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. Many of his novels, including *David Copperfield*, were written as serial publications: one or two chapters were published each month.

### INTRODUCTION

Ask students if they have heard of Charles Dickens or *David Copperfield*. Use the information in the *About the author* box to provide an introduction. Ask if students know any of the novels mentioned. It may be appropriate to use L1 at this stage.

### START THINKING ...

- 1 Find an illustration or image from the film of *David Copperfield* and project it on the whiteboard. Ask students to describe what they see and what they think the story is about.

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 and to give reasons to justify their answers.

- 2 Draw students' attention to the text in the top right-hand corner of the page 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.

- 3 Students read through the questions. Check for understanding and remind them to refer closely to the text to find the answers.

### Answers

1 Mr Murdstone is hurting David because he isn't doing very well (with his schoolwork). 2 Being sent to prison, being hanged. 3 He feels cheerful at first, then he remembers what happens and feels bad. 4 A door. 5 She says she loves him. 6 During the holidays.

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

### Suggested answers

1 He didn't plan to hurt his stepfather. He did it to protect himself because Mr Murdstone was hurting him. 2 She's very fond of him. She calls him 'My precious Davy' and tries to comfort him. 3 Miss Murdstone. She probably thinks that Miss Murdstone is cruel and aggressive and will harm David just as a cat attacks a mouse. 4 Miss Murdstone makes David's mother scared and not confident.

- 5 Read through the sentences one at a time to check comprehension of any unknown vocabulary. Students complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in the glossary. Ask students for answers.

### Answers

1 glared 2 beg / begging 3 trickle  
4 custody 5 acquaintances 6 urgency

### Optional extension

Ask students which facts they find interesting or surprising and why. Point out that these facts all relate to life in the 1850s. Ask them to think about what life would have been like for someone their age at the time. Ask them to think about their daily life, free time, entertainment and school.

- 6 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

- 7 Organise the class into pairs. Read the instruction and check that students understand what they are going to do. Ask a student to read the first part of the conversation. Brainstorm ideas and phrases on the board. Set a time limit of 5–10 minutes. Monitor and offer support while students are preparing their role plays. Students should write their scripts. Encourage as many pairs as possible to perform their role plays. Consider asking groups to perform to each other. The 'audience' group can monitor language use and make corrections if necessary.

### LISTENING

- 8 Before listening, explain that students are going to hear about what happened when David met a boy called Steerforth at school. Play the recording twice.

The first time, encourage students to listen without taking notes. The second time, they put the events in the correct order.

### Answers

D F C B A E

- 9 Students read through the summary. Encourage students to complete it from memory. Play the recording again for students to complete their answers and to check.

### Answers

1 shame 2 money 3 juice 4 cakes 5 fruit  
6 waste 7 mother's 8 Steerforth

### AUDIO SCRIPT (abridged from Chapter 6)

I was not considered as being formally received into the school, however, until J. Steerforth arrived. He was reputed to be a great scholar, and was very good-looking, and at least half-a-dozen years my senior. He inquired, under a shed in the playground, into the particulars of my punishment, and was pleased to express his opinion that it was 'a jolly shame'; for which I became bound to him ever afterwards.

'What money have you got, Copperfield?' he said, walking aside with me. I told him seven shillings.

'You had better give it to me to take care of,' he said. 'At least, you can if you like. You needn't if you don't like.'

I hastened to comply with his friendly suggestion, and opening Peggotty's purse, turned it upside down into his hand.

'Do you want to spend anything now?' he asked me.

'No thank you,' I replied.

'You can, if you like, you know,' said Steerforth. 'Say the word.'

'No, thank you, sir,' I repeated.

'Perhaps you'd like to spend a couple of shillings or so, on a bottle of currant juice, up in the bedroom?' said Steerforth.

'You'll be in the same room as me.'

It certainly had not occurred to me before, but I said, 'Yes, I should like that.'

'Very good,' said Steerforth. 'You'll be glad to spend another shilling or so on almond cakes, I dare say?'

I said, 'Yes, I should like that, too.'

'And another shilling or so on biscuits, and another on fruit, eh?' said Steerforth.

I smiled because he smiled, but I was a little troubled in my mind, too.

'Well!' said Steerforth. 'We must make it stretch as far as we can; that's all. I'll do the best in my power for you. I can go out when I like, and I'll get these things.'

With these words he put the money in his pocket, and kindly told me not to make myself uneasy; he would take care it should be all right.

He was as good as his word. I had feared it was a waste of my mother's two half-crowns – though I had kept the piece of paper they were wrapped in: which was a precious saving.

When we went upstairs to bed, he produced the whole seven shillings' worth, and laid it out on my bed in the moonlight, saying:

'There you are, young Copperfield, and a royal spread you've got.'



## CRITICAL THINKING

Ask the students the question: *What are the advantages and disadvantages of going to boarding school?* (A school where students live and study) Elicit some ideas from the students and then have them work in small groups to discuss their ideas. Ask them to think about whether their ideas change depending on the age of the student (they may have different ideas for a young child and for a teenager, for example) and what effect, they think, boarding school will have on David. Will his behaviour improve? How will his relationship with his mother and the Murdstones change?

## WRITING: A LETTER

- 10 Read through the *Writing* skills box. Ask students to give examples of phrases used to start and end letters in English (*Dear ...*, *Hi ...*, *Love from ...*, *Best wishes*). Remind them to choose the phrases carefully as some are formal and some are informal. Students can write their letter in class or for homework. Students then swap their letter with a partner. They read each other's work and highlight any mistakes. They assess whether the student has answered the question fully and whether they have followed the steps. They then return the letter to the original student who looks at the comments and redrafts their work. Ask some students to read their letters out loud to the class.

## THINK STYLE

### Bildungsroman

- 11 Read and check that students understand the meaning of *bildungsroman* (a novel in which the narrator tells the story of his life as he is growing up focusing mainly on how his character changes). Ask them to think of a *bildungsroman* that they have heard of in their own or another language. Write any ideas on the board. Then ask them if they agree or disagree with the suggestions. Examples include *Lazarillo de Tormes*, *Candide* (Voltaire) and more recently, *The Kite Runner* (Khaled Hosseini). They could either present their ideas to the class or write a paragraph about their *bildungsroman* which you could collate for them to look at later.

### Optional extension

Students could create a fictional character and make notes on the events that happen in their life. Remind them that in a *bildungsroman*, each of the events should have an effect upon their character. Ask them to explain how each event has changed their character for the better or worse.

### Additional reading or internet research topics

- Britain in the 1800s
- The life of Charles Dickens