

LITERATURE 1B

TEACHER'S NOTES

AUTHOR	Charles Dickens
TITLE	<i>David Copperfield</i> (Chapters 4 & 6)
THEMES	Talking about the past, advice and recommendation
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*. 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. Depending on the class, 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. (e.g. *Young people can be encouraged to work hard at school by saying 'well done' when they do well and not criticising them when they make a little mistake.*). Encourage them 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 sentences. Remind them that all the sentences contain incorrect information. 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 good at his lessons.
- 2 David thinks he could be sent to prison or hanged.
- 3 When David first wakes up, he feels cheerful.
- 4 Peggotty and David are separated by a door when they are speaking.
- 5 David's mother loves her husband.
- 6 David will see his mother again during the holidays.

- 4 Students read the text again. They choose the correct answer.

Answer

- 1 No time 2 Miss Murdstone 3 scares

- 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 list. Ask individual students for answers to the questions.

Answer

- 1 rage 2 acquaintance 3 urgency
4 begging 5 glared 6 fellow

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. Ask two students 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 students 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. This can also be done as a full-class exercise.

LISTENING

- 7 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

- 8 Students read through the summary. Encourage students to complete it from memory. Point out that the first letter of each word is given. 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

AUDIOSCRIPT (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) Working individually, students write notes. When students have finished, ask them to work in small groups to compare their ideas. You can then bring their ideas together on the board and discuss their ideas as a class. 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). Then ask them to think about the effect boarding school will have on David. Will his behaviour improve? How will his relationship with his mother and the Murdstones change?

WRITING: A LETTER

- 9 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

- 10 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. Some additional 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