Oliver Twist

Or

The Parish Boy's Progress

By

Charles Dickens

Traditional Booklet



Name: _____

English Mastery

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The Victorian era

The Victorian era lasted between 1837 and 1901. During this time, Britain was the most powerful nation in the world. Britain ruled many other countries in the world, and this was known as the British Empire. *Trade* with the Empire made Britain rich, sometimes at the expense of the countries Britain was trading with. This wealth led to advances in science, technology, and culture.

Trading with many different countries also brought people to London from around the world. Many people migrated to London from places such as India, Africa, South-East Asia and Europe. People also migrated from the countryside and from other parts of the UK, such as Ireland and Scotland. Unlike the English countryside, London was a diverse city filled with different races and cultures.

Victorian London was the largest city in the world during the nineteenth century. It was full of markets, music halls, factories, theatres and department stores. Many of London's most famous buildings and landmarks were built during the nineteenth century, including –



The Houses of Parliament



Tower Bridge



Trafalgar Square

In pairs, discuss the answers to these questions.

1. **When** was the Victorian era?
2. What have you learned about Victorian **Britain**?
3. What have you learned about Victorian **London**?

Poverty in Victorian London

London's increase in wealth did not mean that everybody who lived in London became wealthy. In fact, for many people, it meant the opposite.

Many people now wanted to live in London. In the nineteenth century, the population grew from about 1 million people to 6.7 million people. The city became overcrowded. Many poor families lived in slums, which were areas of the city where living conditions were extremely bad. Families who lived in poverty found it very difficult to make enough money to feed their families. Children were not free to play. They either had to work to support their families or were simply too sick or too hungry.

The city became overcrowded. Many poor families lived in slums, which were areas of the city where living conditions were extremely bad. Families who lived in poverty found it very difficult to make enough money to feed their families. Children were not free to play. They either had to work to support their families or were simply too sick or too hungry.

The city became polluted. The pollution created a thick fog which had a green colour (a 'pea-souper'). The fog was so bad that you couldn't see where you were going in it. Running water and toilets were rare. Waste ran straight into the River Thames. People had to use the river for drinking water, and this meant that they were drinking dirty water. Drinking dirty water caused a killer disease called, 'cholera.' Thousands of people were killed by these unhygienic conditions.

Life was different for rich families …

Wealthy families lived in large houses, with a special room for the children called the 'nursery.' Children ate, played and slept in the nursery, and were supervised by a servant called a 'nanny.' Even though wealthy people had luxuries like servants and better living conditions, they were still at high risk of disease and of dying young.



Jack' Transcript – Listening activity

My name is Jack. I live with my older sister and her family in a tiny place in Camden. Our parents both died of tuberculosis when I was 7. It was terrible – I would hear them coughing and coughing all night long, and then in the end they got so weak they died. My sister told me they'd be happy in heaven and we'd see them again in the afterlife. After they died there wasn't enough money for us all to live on, and there was hardly any food for us all. I had to go out to work as a chimney sweep. The work was horrible. I had to squeeze my way up dirty chimney pots to try and clear them. Sometimes it was so dark and dirty in the chimney that I weren't able to breathe. The soot and the dirt would get all over my clothes and in my hair and mouth. Whatever I would eat would taste of soot! My boss wasn't good to me either. If I didn't work fast enough or hard enough he'd whack me. I did that job for ages, but last year my sister got me a better job. Now I work as a message boy. I carry messages all over London. Some days you have to fight your way through all the crowds of people on the roads. In the winter the roads are muddy and you get covered in dirt. In the summer the smell coming from the river and the horse manure on the streets is terrible. Sometimes I see the rich people queuing up to go the theatres and eat in nice restaurants. I can't afford any of that.



The Workhouse

What was life like for people who couldn't work in Victorian London?

During the Victorian era, there were lots of people living in poverty. Lots of people couldn't work because they were too old, young or ill. Sometimes, there weren't enough jobs. There were also people who did work but still lived **in poverty** because they were paid so little. Life was very hard and many people couldn't afford to buy food and basic necessities because there were no benefits or **pensions**. There was also a lot of disease and there was no free healthcare so poor people could not afford treatment. Children were particularly at risk. Nearly half of all children died before the age of five. Not only that, but childbirth was very dangerous for women. Lots of women would die whilst giving birth.

in poverty – when you are extremely poor

pensions – money to help you live when you are too old to work

If both a child's parents are dead, we call that child an orphan. In Victorian England, there were a lot of orphans and they had tough lives. Sometimes, they would be looked after by another member of their family but if they didn't have someone like this, they would grow up on the streets and beg for money.

What difference did The Poor Law of 1834 make to the lives of people who couldn't work?

By 1834, the number of people begging on the streets was growing. The government wanted to stop this, so they wrote The Poor Law. This changed the laws about how to look after people who couldn't work. It made it illegal for poor people to be given food or money and created workhouses, instead. Workhouses were big buildings where desperate people would go to work in exchange for food and shelter.

What were workhouses like?

The workhouses were supposed to be so horrible that no one would want to seek help from them unless they were truly desperate. The work was very hard and often dangerous. Punishments for disobeying the rules were extremely harsh.

People in the workhouse were not paid any money for the work they carried out. It was thought that the food and shelter they were given was payment enough. However, they were given hardly any food. The most common meal was gruel, which is a thin liquid of oats and water.

You could not come and go from the workhouse. Families were split up and often never saw each other again, as there were separate parts for men, women and children. Once you entered, it was very difficult to leave and most people ended up dying there, either of disease or over-exhaustion. Many orphans were sent there and lived there for their whole lives.

What did Dickens think about The Poor Law? Why?

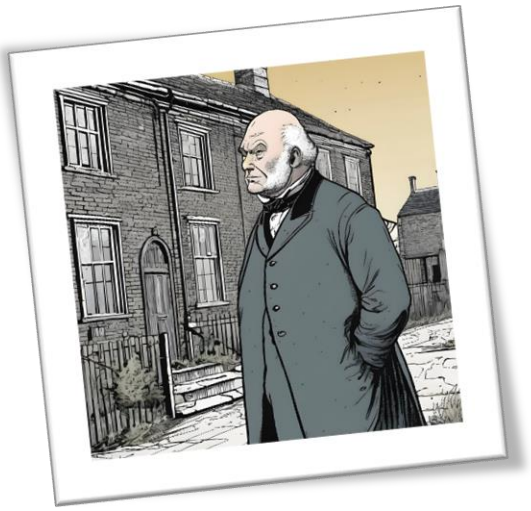
Charles Dickens was very strongly opposed to The Poor Law for several reasons. One reason was that his father owed money and couldn't pay it so was sent to prison. The conditions were horrible but the family was able to stay together so it seemed better than the workhouse. Dickens pointed out that, rather than helping poor people, The Poor Law was treating them like **criminals**. He dedicated his life to writing works that revealed the true horrors of life for poor people in Victorian London.

criminals - people who break the law.

Character Profiles

Name

Mr. Reginald Bartholomew



Description

A tall and serious-looking man, dressed nicely. His straight stance and intense blue eyes frighten the orphans at the workhouse.

Personality

- **Strict:** Mr. Bartholomew puts money over the well-being of those in the workhouse. He has strict rules and high standards.
- **Traditional:** He believes that some people deserve to be poor and kept away from the rich.

Name

Anita Carter



Description

Ten years old. Her workhouse uniform is too big for her and is loose. Orphaned as a young child, she barely remembers life before the workhouse.

Personality

- Anita copes the best she can inside the workhouse, even though life is hard
- She prefers watching others to speaking out
- It is difficult to make friends in the workhouse as there is no time for play and the other children are often tired or sick, so Anna feels lonely

Dreams

Anna dreams of a life outside the workhouse, even though she knows this is unlikely to happen.

Notes page:

‘Please, Sir, I want some more.’ Original extract.

Starving, the boys in the workhouse draw straws to decide who will ask the master for more gruel. Oliver draws the short straw and asks for more.

Twist and his companions suffered the tortures of slow starvation for three months: at last they got so **voracious** and wild with hunger, that one boy, who was tall for his age, and hadn't been used to that sort of thing (for his father had kept a small **cook-shop**), hinted darkly to his companions, that unless he had another **basin** of gruel per diem, he was afraid he might some night happen to eat the boy who slept next him, who happened to be a weakly youth of **tender** age. He had a wild, hungry eye; and they implicitly believed him. A council was held; **lots were cast** who should walk up to the master after supper that evening, and ask for more; and it fell to Oliver Twist.

The evening arrived; the boys took their places. The master, in his cook's uniform, **stationed** himself at the copper; his **pauper** assistants ranged themselves behind him; the gruel was served out; and a long **grace** was said over the short commons. The gruel disappeared; the boys whispered each other, and winked at Oliver; while his next neighbours nudged him. Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger, and reckless with misery. He rose from the table; and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand, said: somewhat alarmed at his own **temerity**:

'Please, sir, I want some more.'

The master was a fat, healthy man; but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung for support to the copper. The assistants were paralysed with wonder; the boys with fear.

'What!' said the master at length, in a **faint** voice.

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

The master aimed a blow at Oliver's head with the ladle; **pinioned** him in his arm; and shrieked aloud for the **beadle**.

voracious – wanting food

cook-shop – shop selling cooked food

basin – bowl; **per dium** – every day

tender – young

lots were cast – someone was chosen at random

stationed – sat

pauper – poor

grace – prayer

temerity – nerve, cheek

faint – quiet

pinioned – grabbed him tight

beadle – person responsible for the workhouse (Mr Bumble)

Mrs Bumble

Sentence	What do we learn about Mrs Bumble in this sentence?
"Mrs Bumble was given a weekly allowance from the town council to feed and dress her charges."	
"She was a very careful woman and was always worried about money."	
"Unfortunately, she was more worried about her personal income than the well-being of the children in her care."	
"Therefore, she kept the majority of the allowance for herself and used the rest to feed the children."	
"In order to make the supply of gruel go farther, Mrs Bumble watered it down."	

'Noah Claypole.' Original Extract

In this extract, Oliver is provoked into a fight with Noah Claypole.

'Yer know, Work'us,' continued Noah, emboldened by Oliver's silence, and speaking in a jeering tone of **affected** pity: of all tones the most annoying: 'Yer know, Work'us, it can't be helped now; and of course yer couldn't help it then; and I am very sorry for it; and I'm sure we all are, and pity yer very much. But yer must know, Work'us, yer mother was a regular right-down bad 'un.'

'What did you say?' inquired Oliver, looking up very quickly.

'A regular right-down bad 'un, Work'us,' replied Noah, coolly. 'And it's a great deal better, Work'us, that she died when she did, or else she'd have been hard labouring in **Bridewell**, or transported, or hung; which is more likely than either, isn't it?'

Crimson with fury, Oliver started up; overthrew the chair and table; seized Noah by the throat; shook him, in the violence of his rage, till his teeth chattered in his head; and collecting his whole force into one heavy blow, felled him to the ground.

A minute ago, the boy had looked the quiet child, mild, **dejected** creature that harsh treatment had made him. But his spirit was **roused** at last; the cruel insult to his dead mother had set his blood on fire. His breast heaved; his attitude was erect; his eye bright and vivid; his whole person changed, as he stood glaring over the cowardly tormentor who now lay crouching at his feet; and defied him with an energy he had never known before.

'He'll murder me!' blubbered Noah. 'Charlotte! missis! Here's the new boy a murdering of me! Help! help! Oliver's gone mad! Char—lotte!'

Noah's shouts were responded to, by a loud scream from Charlotte, and a louder from Mrs. Sowerberry; the former of whom rushed into the kitchen by a side-door, while the latter paused on the staircase till she was quite certain that it was consistent with the preservation of human life, to come further down.

affected – pretend

Bridewell – a prison

crimson – deep red

dejected – sad
roused – stirred, awakened

Noah Claypole - Extract

'Yer know, Work'us, it can't be helped now; and of course yer couldn't help it then; and I am very sorry for it; and I'm sure we all are, and pity yer very much. But yer must know, Work'us, yer mother was a regular right-down bad 'un.'

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Journey to London

Find a quotation from the book that matches each point about Oliver's difficult journey.

Reasons why Oliver's journey to London is difficult:	**Sentence or phrase from the text that shows this (quotations):**
It was very long.	*'four days of endless walking.'*
His feet hurt because his shoes didn't fit.	
He had to walk the whole way, as carts and buggies passed him.	
He had to sleep outside.	
He didn't have enough food.	

'The Artful Dodger.' Original extract.

In this extract, Oliver has just arrived in London. He is spotted by a boy of the same age as him, who comes over for a chat.

By degrees, the shutters were opened; the window-blinds were drawn up; and people began passing to and fro. Some few stopped to gaze at Oliver for a moment or two, or turned round to stare at him as they hurried by; but none **relieved** him, or troubled themselves to inquire how he came there. He had no heart to beg. And there he sat.

He had been crouching on the step for some time: wondering at the great number of public-houses (every other house in Barnet was a tavern, large or small), gazing **listlessly** at the coaches as they passed through, and thinking how strange it seemed that they could do, with ease, in a few hours, what it had taken him a whole week of courage and determination beyond his years to accomplish: when he was roused by observing that a boy, who had passed him carelessly some minutes before, had returned, and was now **surveying** him most earnestly from the opposite side of the way. He took **little heed** of this at first; but the boy remained in the same attitude of close observation so long, that Oliver raised his head, and returned his steady look. Upon this, the boy crossed over; and walking close up to Oliver, said,

'Hullo, my covey! What's the row?'

The boy who addressed this inquiry to the young **wayfarer,** was about his own age: but one of the **queerest** looking boys that Oliver had ever seen. He was a snub-nosed, flat-browed, common-faced boy enough; and as dirty a **juvenile** as one would wish to see; but he had all the airs and manners of a man. He was short of his age: with rather bow-legs, and little, sharp, ugly eyes.

He wore a man's coat, which reached nearly to his heels. He had turned the cuffs back, half-way up his arm, to get his hands out of the sleeves: apparently with the ultimate view of thrusting them into the pockets of his corduroy trousers; for there he kept them. He was, altogether, as **roystering** and

relieved – helped

listlessly – with no purpose

surveying – watching
little heed – no notice

wayfarer – traveller
queerest – strangest

juvenile – young person

roystering – swaggering, confident

swaggering a young gentleman as ever stood four feet six, or something less, in the **bluchers**.

bluchers – leather boots

The 'strange boy' asks Oliver a number of questions, which Oliver naively answers.

'Going to London?' said the strange boy, when Oliver had at length concluded.

'Yes.'

'Got any lodgings?'

'No.'

'Money?'

'No.'

The strange boy whistled; and put his arms into his pockets, as far as the big coat-sleeves would let them go.

'Do you live in London?' inquired Oliver.

'Yes. I do, when I'm at home,' replied the boy. 'I suppose you want some place to sleep in to-night, don't you?'

'I do, indeed,' answered Oliver. 'I have not slept under a roof since I left the country.'

lodgings – a place to stay

country – countryside

‘The Artful Dodger.’ Close Reading.

a boy, who had passed him carelessly some minutes before, had returned, and was now **surveying** him most earnestly from the opposite side of the way. He took **little heed** of this at first; but the boy remained in the same attitude of close observation so long, that Oliver raised his head, and returned his steady look. Upon this, the boy crossed over; and walking close up to Oliver, said, 'Hullo, my covey! What's the row?'	**surveying** – watching **little heed** – no notice

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‘The Journey through London.’ Original extract.

The Artful Dodger has promised Oliver that he will be able to live with an ‘old gentleman’ that he knows. Oliver is forced to follow The Artful Dodger on a frightening journey through the streets of London.

Although Oliver had enough to occupy his attention in keeping sight of his leader, he could not help bestowing a few hasty glances on either side of the way, as he passed along. A dirtier or more **wretched** place he had never seen. The street was very narrow and muddy, and the air was impregnated with filthy odours.

There were a good many small shops; but the only **stock in trade** appeared to be heaps of children, who, even at that time of night, were crawling in and out at the doors, or screaming from the inside. The **sole** places that seemed to prosper amid the general blight of the place, were the **public-houses**; and in them, the lowest orders of Irish were wrangling with might and main.

Covered ways and yards, which here and there diverged from the main street, disclosed little knots of houses, where drunken men and women were positively wallowing in filth; and from several of the door-ways, great ill-looking fellows were cautiously emerging, bound, to all appearance, on no very well-disposed or harmless errands.

Oliver was just considering whether he hadn't better run away, when they reached the bottom of the hill.

wretched – awful
stock in trade – thing there were lots of
sole – only
public-houses – pubs

'Fagin.' Original extract

When Oliver finally arrives at Fagin's Den, he finds that the rooms are dirty and that Fagin himself is 'villainous-looking.' There are beds made of sacks and children who are drinking and smoking.

The walls and ceiling of the room were perfectly black with age and dirt. There was a deal table before the fire: upon which were a candle, stuck in a ginger-beer bottle, two or three **pewter**

pots, a loaf and butter, and a plate. In a frying-pan, which was on the fire, and which was secured to the mantelshelf by a string, some sausages were cooking; and standing over them, with a toasting-fork in his hand, was a very old shrivelled Jew, whose **villainous**-looking and **repulsive** face was obscured by a quantity of matted red hair. He was dressed in a greasy flannel gown, with his throat bare; and seemed to be dividing his attention between the frying-pan and the clothes-horse, over which a great number of silk handkerchiefs were hanging.

Several rough beds made of old sacks, were huddled side by side on the floor. Seated round the table were four or five boys, none older than the Dodger, smoking long clay pipes, and drinking **spirits** with the air of middle-aged men. These all crowded about their associate as he whispered a few words to the Jew; and then turned round and grinned at Oliver. So did the Jew himself, toasting-fork in hand.

'This is him, Fagin,' said Jack Dawkins; 'my friend Oliver Twist.'

pewter – metal

villainous – evil

repulsive – disgusting

matted – dirty

spirits – alcohol

Victorian Crime Record

Name No: Joseph Lewis 5248
Age (on discharge):11
Height: 4ft 6 3/4
Hair: Lt Brown
Eyes: Dark Grey
Complexion: Fresh
Where Born: England

Married or Single: Single
Trade or occupation: None
Distinguishing marks: Pockmarked, Scar right wrist
Address at time of arrest: 32 Princess Street, Rotherhithe
Place/date of conviction: Greenwich 10 April 1873
Offence for which convicted:
Simple theft for stealing 28lb of iron
Sentence : 1 Calendar Month Hard Labour in Coldbath Fields prison
Date to be liberated : 9 May 1873

Crime and Punishment in the Victorian era

Charles Dickens' stories often focus on the criminal underworld and centre on characters like Dodger, Fagin and Bill. He shows us how unfair and harsh this underworld can be. We know that Charles Dickens's own father was sent to prison and Dickens recognised that he could have easily been led astray by someone like Fagin or Dodger. Charles Dickens shows us how easily your life path can change and how serious the consequences are if you commit crimes.
There was a lot of crime in Victorian London because a lot of people were extremely poor and couldn't feed themselves without stealing. The police force was very new and there weren't many police. There was also no CCTV and no DNA testing so it was quite easy to commit crimes and get away with them.

Crime

Theft

Theft was the most common problem in cities. Most thefts were carried out by very poor people. Children were often used to steal things because they were small and agile. They could reach into people's pockets easily. They could also fit through windows so were often used to break into the houses of richer people to steal from them.
Some criminals would go to great lengths to steal. They put their victims to sleep by covering the victim's mouth with a rag soaked in chloroform or knocked them out by hitting them on the head.

Drunkenness

Life was very hard in Victorian Britain, and many people took comfort from alcohol, which caused a lot of loud behaviour and violence.
Violence and murder

There were lots of violent crimes in the Victorian era and the police did not have access to modern methods of crime detection. For example, the police never discovered who committed the 'Jack the Ripper' murders which took place in London in the 1890s.

Punishment

Capital punishment

Over 222 crimes were punishable by death. The most common method of capital punishment was hanging. The hangings took place in public and thousands would turn out to watch. Murderers were usually punished with death but you could also be killed for stealing. There were many slang terms for hanging and one of them was got 'twisted.' This refers to twisting on the rope. It is likely that Oliver's surname is linked to this idea. It was quite rare for children to be hanged in Victorian London but it did happen. Charles Dickens wants us to recognise that Oliver is in danger unless he is rescued and taken away from Fagin's den.

Transportation

Criminals would often be sent to work in British colonies, such as Australia. This might not sound so bad but it was a horrible punishment for many reasons. The prisoners travelled by boat, which took between four and six months. The conditions on the ships were worse than in the prisons. The standards of hygiene were so bad that disease spread quickly. Many people died on the journey. If they survived the journey, they would spend the rest of their life doing backbreaking work. If they broke the rules they could be whipped, chained up or killed. They would never see anyone they left behind in England again.

Imprisonment

The Victorians believed that prisons could be used to make criminals better people. To make them better people they made them work very hard, usually in silence, and made sure that they weren't allowed to talk to other prisoners. The rules were very strict.

‘Bill Sikes.’ Original extract.

The man who growled out these words, was a **stoutly**-built fellow of about five-and-thirty, in a black **velveteen** coat, very **soiled drab breeches**, lace-up half boots, and grey cotton stockings, which inclosed a bulky pair of legs, with large swelling calves; -- the kind of legs, which in such costume, always **look in an unfinished and incomplete state without a set of fetters to garnish them**. He had a brown hat on his head, and a dirty **belcher** handkerchief round his neck: with the long frayed ends of which he smeared the beer from his face as he spoke. He disclosed, when he had done so, a broad heavy **countenance** with a beard of three days' growth, and two scowling eyes; one of which displayed various **parti-coloured** symptoms of having been recently damaged by a blow.

'Come in, d'ye hear?' growled this engaging ruffian.

A white shaggy dog, with his face scratched and torn in twenty different places, skulked into the room.

'Why didn't you come in **afore**?' said the man. 'You're getting too proud to **own me afore** company, are you? Lie down!'

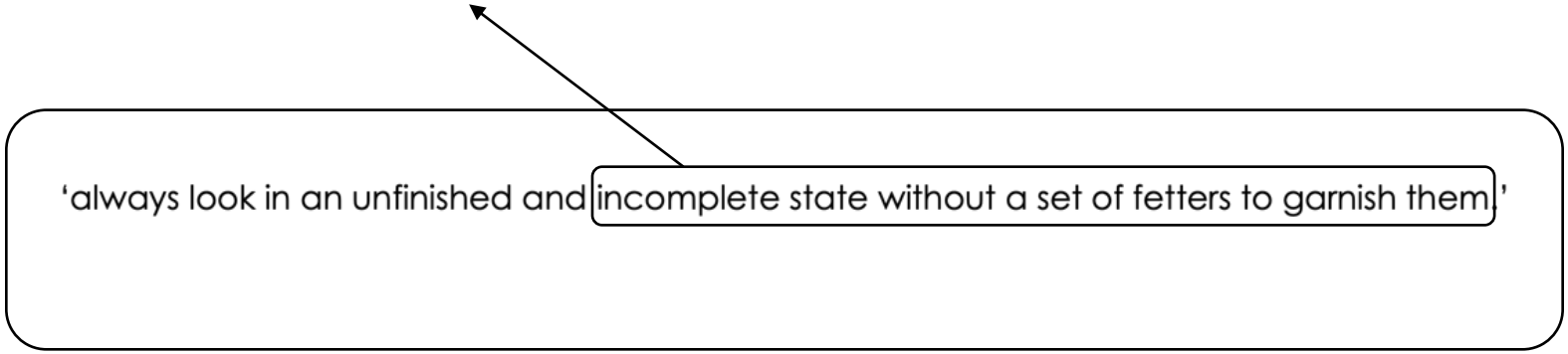
This command was accompanied with a kick, which sent the animal to the other end of the room. He appeared well used to it, however; for he coiled himself up in a corner very quietly, without uttering a sound, and winking his very ill-looking eyes twenty times in a minute, appeared to occupy himself in taking a survey of the apartment.

stoutly – heavy, wide
velveteen – fake velvet
soiled drab breeches – filthy trousers
i.e. look they are missing something without
fetters – leg cuffs with a chain
belcher – necktie
countenance – face
parti-coloured – different coloured

afore – before
own me – admit you’re mine **afore** – in front of

Bill Sikes Quotation Exploration

His outfit doesn’t look complete without fetters – check the meaning in your glossary. What does this tell us about the type of character Sikes is?


'always look in an unfinished and incomplete state without a set of fetters to garnish them.'

What does the word ‘growled’ suggest about the way Sikes is speaking? What does it make him sound like?

Check the meaning of the word ‘stoutly’ in your glossary. What does this tell us about the way he looks?

‘The man who growled out these words, was a stoutly-built fellow of about five-and-thirty.’

How old is Sikes? How does this compare to Oliver and Fagin? What does this tell us about his strength?

‘Keep quiet, you warmint!’ Original extract.

In this extract, Dickens presents Bill Sikes with his dog.

In the **obscure** parlour of a low public-house, in the filthiest part of Little Saffron Hill; a dark and gloomy den, where a flaring gas-light burnt all day in the winter-time; and where no ray of sun ever shone in the summer: there sat, brooding over a little **pewter** measure and a small glass, strongly **impregnated** with the smell of liquor, a man in a velveteen coat, drab shorts, half-boots and stockings, whom even by that dim light no experienced agent of the police would have hesitated to recognise as Mr. William Sikes. At his feet, sat a white-coated, red-eyed dog; who occupied himself, alternately, in winking at his master with both eyes at the same time; and in licking a large, fresh cut on one side of his mouth, which appeared to be the result of some recent conflict.

'Keep quiet, you **warmint**! Keep quiet!' said Mr. Sikes, suddenly breaking silence. Whether his **meditations** were so intense as to be disturbed by the dog's winking, or whether his feelings were so **wrought** upon by his reflections that they required all the relief **derivable** from kicking an unoffending animal to **allay** them, is matter for argument and consideration. Whatever was the cause, the effect was a kick and a curse, **bestowed** upon the dog **simultaneously**.

Dogs are not generally apt to revenge injuries inflicted upon them by their masters; but Mr. Sikes's dog, having faults of temper in common with his owner, and **labouring**, perhaps, at this moment, under a powerful sense of injury, made no more **ado** but at once fixed his teeth in one of the half-boots. Having given in a hearty shake, he retired, growling, under a form; just escaping the pewter measure which Mr. Sikes levelled at his head.

'You would, would you?' said Sikes, seizing the **poker** in one hand, and deliberately opening with the other a large clasp-knife, which he drew from his pocket. 'Come here, you born devil! Come here! D'ye hear?'

The dog no doubt heard; because Mr. Sikes spoke in the very harshest key of a very harsh voice; but, appearing to entertain some unaccountable objection to having his throat cut, he remained where he was, and growled more fiercely than before: at the same time

obscure – not well known

pewter – metal
impregnated – filled

warmint - vermin
meditations – thoughts

wrought – upset
derivable – gotten
allay - ease

bestowed – given
simultaneously – at the same time

labouring – struggling
ado – fuss

poker – metal instrument for moving coals in a fire

grasping the end of the poker between his teeth, and biting at it like a wild beast.

This resistance only **infuriated** Mr. Sikes the more; who, dropping on his knees, began to **assail** the animal most furiously. The dog jumped from right to left, and from left to right; snapping, growling, and barking; the man thrust and swore, and struck and **blasphemed**; and the struggle was reaching a most critical point for one or other; when, the door suddenly opening, the dog darted out: leaving Bill Sikes with the poker and the clasp-knife in his hands.

There must always be two parties to a quarrel, says the old **adage**. Mr. Sikes, being disappointed of the dog's participation, at once transferred his share in the quarrel to **the new comer**.

infuriated – made angry
assail – attack

blasphemed – swore

adage – a well-known saying
the new comer – i.e. Fagin

Bill Sikes Extracts

What does Bill's relationship with his dog tell us about him? Quotation selection.		Space for annotation
Extract 1 Highlight a quotation which proves that – **Bill's relationship with his dog tells us he is a maliciously violent man.** Extension: How does this quotation support this topic sentence? Annotate it.	In the obscure parlour of a low public-house, in the filthiest part of Little Saffron Hill; a dark and gloomy den, where a flaring gas-light burnt all day in the winter-time; and where no ray of sun ever shone in the summer: there sat, brooding over a little pewter measure and a small glass, strongly impregnated with the smell of liquor, a man in a velveteen coat, drab shorts, half-boots and stockings, whom even by that dim light no experienced agent of the police would have hesitated to recognise as Mr. William Sikes. At his feet, sat a white-coated, red-eyed dog; who occupied himself, alternately, in winking at his master with both eyes at the same time; and in licking a large, fresh cut on one side of his mouth, which appeared to be the result of some recent conflict.	
Extract 2 Highlight a quotation which proves that – **Bill's relationship with his dog shows he has extreme reactions.** Extension: How does this quotation support this topic sentence? Annotate it.	Whatever was the cause, the effect was a kick and a curse, bestowed upon the dog simultaneously. Dogs are not generally apt to revenge injuries inflicted upon them by their masters; but Mr. Sikes's dog, having faults of temper in common with his owner, and labouring, perhaps, at this moment, under a powerful sense of injury, made no more ado but at once fixed his teeth in one of the half-boots. Having given in a hearty shake, he retired, growling, under a form; just escaping the pewter measure which Mr. Sikes levelled at his head. 'You would, would you?' said Sikes, seizing the poker in one hand, and deliberately opening with the other a large clasp-knife, which he drew from his pocket. 'Come here, you born devil! Come here! D'ye hear?'	

Extract 3 Highlight a quotation which proves that – **Bill and Bull's-Eye share common characteristics (are similar).** Extension: How does this quotation support this topic sentence? Annotate it.	Dogs are not generally apt to revenge injuries inflicted upon them by their masters; but Mr. Sikes's dog, having faults of temper in common with his owner, and labouring, perhaps, at this moment, under a powerful sense of injury, made no more ado but at once fixed his teeth in one of the half-boots. Having given in a hearty shake, he retired, growling, under a form; just escaping the pewter measure which Mr. Sikes levelled at his head. 'You would, would you?' said Sikes, seizing the poker in one hand, and deliberately opening with the other a large clasp-knife, which he drew from his pocket. 'Come here, you born devil! Come here! D'ye hear?'	
Extract 4 Highlight a quotation which proves that – **Bill's relationship with his dog shows Bill won't tolerate disobedience.** Extension: How does this quotation support this topic sentence? Annotate it.	The dog no doubt heard; because Mr. Sikes spoke in the very harshest key of a very harsh voice; but, appearing to entertain some unaccountable objection to having his throat cut, he remained where he was, and growled more fiercely than before: at the same time grasping the end of the poker between his teeth, and biting at it like a wild beast. This resistance only infuriated Mr. Sikes the more; who, dropping on his knees, began to assail the animal most furiously. The dog jumped from right to left, and from left to right; snapping, growling, and barking; the man thrust and swore, and struck and blasphemed; and the struggle was reaching a most critical point for one or other; when, the door suddenly opening, the dog darted out: leaving Bill Sikes with the poker and the clasp-knife in his hands.	

'Warnings.' Original extract.

In each of these extracts, Fagin and Nancy warn Oliver not to upset Bill.

Fagin's warning

"Take heed, Oliver! take heed!" said the old man, shaking his right hand before him in a warning manner. "He's a rough man, and thinks nothing of blood **when his own is up**. Whatever falls out, say nothing; and do what he bids you. Mind!" Placing a strong emphasis on the last word, he suffered his features gradually to resolve themselves into a ghastly grin, and, nodding his head, left the room.

his own is up – he is angry

Nancy's warning

"Hush!" said the girl, stooping over him, and pointing to the door as she looked cautiously round. "You can't help yourself. I have tried hard for you, but all to no purpose. You are **hedged** round and round. If ever you are to get loose from here, this is not the time."

hedged – surrounded

Struck by the energy of her manner, Oliver looked up in her face with great surprise. She seemed to speak the truth; her **countenance** was white and agitated; and she trembled with very earnestness.

countenance – face

"I have saved you from being ill-used once, and I will again, and I do now," continued the girl aloud; "for those who would have fetched you, if I had not, would have been far more rough than me. I have promised for your being quiet and silent; if you are not, you will only do harm to yourself and me too, and perhaps be my death. See here! I have **borne** all this for you already, as true as God sees me show it."

borne – carried, done

livid – bright, angry

She pointed, hastily, to some **livid** bruises on her neck and arms; and continued, with great rapidity:

"Remember this! And don't let me suffer more for you, just now. If I could help you, I would; but I have not the power. They don't mean to harm you; whatever they make you do, is no fault of yours. Hush! Every word from you is a blow for me. Give me your hand. Make haste! Your hand!"

She caught the hand which Oliver instinctively placed in hers, and, blowing out the light, drew him after her up the stairs.

‘Breaking in.’ Original extract.

Bill takes Oliver with him to burgle a house. In this chapter, Oliver is shocked to find out the truth about what the ‘job’ involves.

It was now intensely dark. The fog was much heavier than it had been in the early part of the night; and the atmosphere was so damp, that, although no rain fell, Oliver's hair and eyebrows, within a few minutes after leaving the house, had become stiff with the half-frozen moisture that was floating about.

"Straight through the town," whispered Sikes; "there'll be nobody in the way, to-night, to see us."

There was nobody **abroad**. They had cleared the town, as the church-bell struck two.

Quickening their pace, they turned up a road upon the left hand. After walking about a quarter of a mile, they stopped before a detached house surrounded by a wall.

Before Oliver had time to look round, Sikes had caught him under the arms and lifted him over to the other side of the wall. Sikes climbed over after him.

And now, for the first time, Oliver, well-nigh mad with grief and terror, saw that housebreaking and robbery, if not murder, were the objects of the **expedition**. He clasped his hands together, and **involuntarily uttered a subdued exclamation of horror**. A mist came before his eyes; the cold sweat stood upon his **ashy** face; his **limbs** failed him; and he sank upon his knees.

"Get up!" murmured Sikes, trembling with rage, and drawing the pistol from his pocket; "Get up, or I'll **strew** your brains upon the grass.“

"Oh! for God's sake let me go!" cried Oliver; "let me run away and die in the fields. I will never come near London; never, never! Oh! pray have **mercy** on me, and do not make me steal. For the love of all the bright Angels that rest in Heaven, have mercy upon me!"

The man to whom this appeal was made, swore a dreadful **oath**, and had **cocked** the pistol.

Sikes**, invoking terrific imprecations** upon Fagin's head for sending Oliver on such an errand, plied the crowbar **vigorously**, but with little noise. After some delay, the shutter to which he had referred, swung open on its hinges.

It was a little window, about five feet and a half above the ground, at the back of the house: which belonged to a **scullery**. The **aperture** was so small, that the inmates had probably not thought it worth while to defend it more securely; but it was large enough to admit a boy of Oliver's size, nevertheless.

"Now listen, you young limb," whispered Sikes, drawing a dark lantern from his pocket, and throwing the glare full on Oliver's face; "I'm a going to put you through there. Take this light: go softly up the steps straight **afore** you, and along the

abroad – in town

expedition – trip
i.e. – cried out in fear, without meaning to
ashy – pale; **limbs** – legs

strew – spread

mercy– kindness

oath – swear word
cocked– got ready to shoot
invoking terrific imprecations – cursing
vigorously – with force
scullery – part of kitchen
aperture– hole

afore – in front of

little hall, to the **street door**. "There's a bolt at the top, you won't be able to reach. Stand upon one of the hall chairs, unfasten it, and let me in."

Sikes put Oliver gently through the window with his feet first; and, without leaving hold of his collar, planted him safely on the floor inside.

"Take this lantern," said Sikes, looking into the room. "You see the stairs afore you?"

Oliver, more dead than alive, gasped out "Yes." Sikes, pointing to the street-door with the pistol-barrel, briefly advised him to take notice that he was within shot all the way; and that if he **faltered**, he would fall dead that instant.

"It's done in a minute," said Sikes, in the same low whisper. "**Directly** I leave go of you, do your work. Hark!"

In the short time he had had to collect his senses, the boy had **firmly resolved** that, whether he died in the attempt or not, he would make one effort to dart up stairs from the hall, and alarm the family. Filled with this idea, he advanced at once, but **stealthily**.

Sikes saw Oliver turn to go up the stairs instead of towards the locked street door. "Come back!" cried Sikes aloud. "Back! back!"

Scared by the sudden breaking of the dead stillness of the place, Oliver let his lantern fall, and knew not whether to advance or fly.

Bill cried again – a light appeared upstairs – a vision of two terrified half-dressed men at the top of the stairs swam before Oliver's eyes – a flash – a loud noise – a smoke – a crash somewhere – and Oliver **staggered** back.

Oliver, desperate with terror, fled back to the scullery window. He pulled up a chair to clamber back into Bill's outstretched arms.

"Clasp your arm tighter," said Sikes, as he tried to draw Oliver through the window. But in the blind panic, Oliver lost his balance. He fell to the floor, hitting his head on the cold, hard floor. Everything went black.

street door – back door

faltered – failed, changed his mind

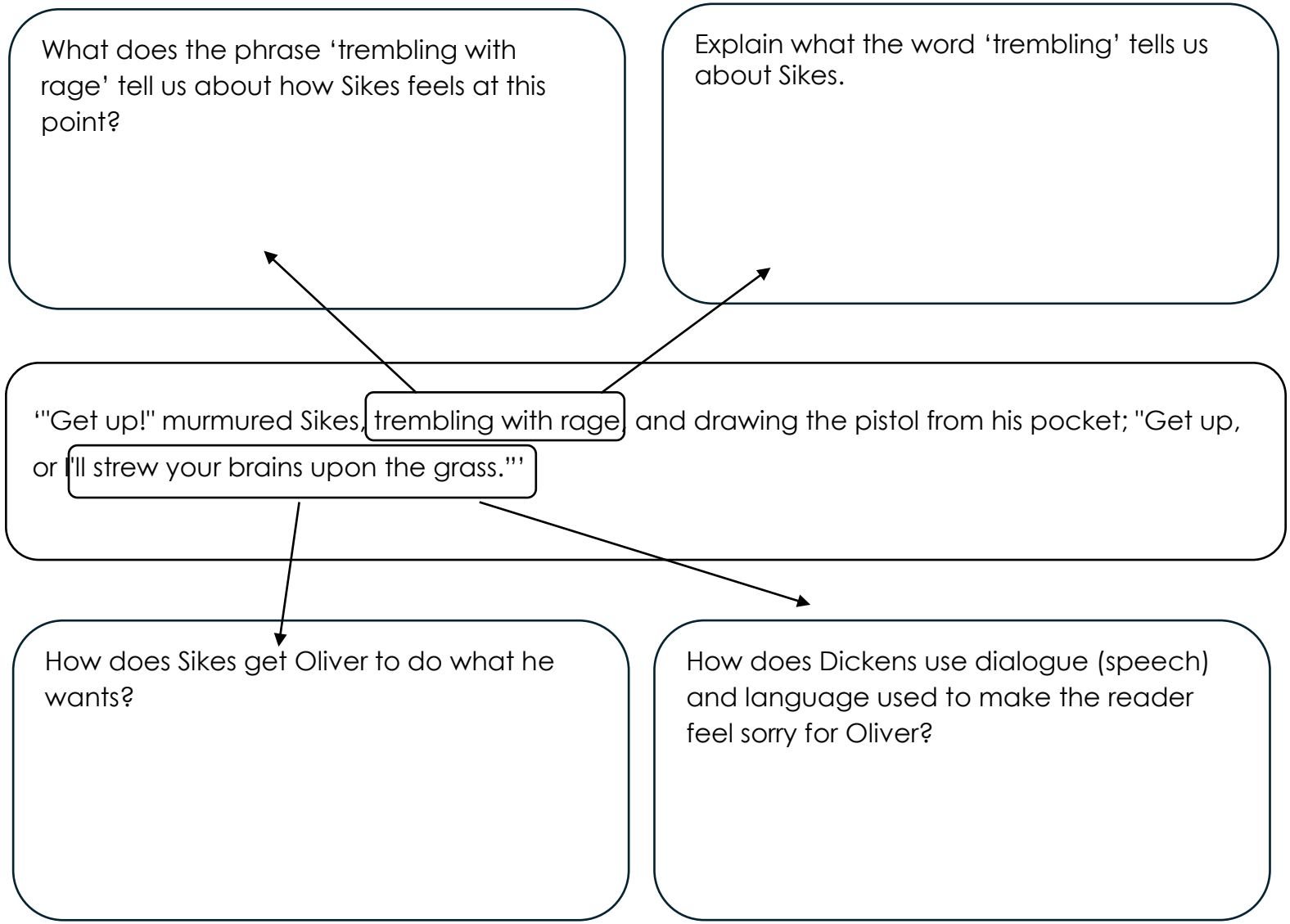
directly – as soon as

firmly resolved - decided

stealthily – quietly

staggered– moved unsteadily

Bill Sikes Quotation Exploration



‘Fagin’s revenge.’ Original extract.

In this extract, Fagin is presented as even more villainous than before. He has heard about what Nancy has done and is planning his revenge.

Fagin sat watching in his old lair, with face so distorted and pale, and eyes so red and blood-shot, that he looked less like a man, than like some hideous phantom, moist from the grave, and worried by an evil spirit.

He sat crouching over a cold hearth, wrapped in an old torn coverlet, with his face turned towards a wasting candle that stood upon a table by his side. His right hand was raised to his lips, and as, absorbed in thought, he hit his long black nails, he disclosed among his toothless gums a few such fangs as should have been a dog's or rat's.

In this extract, Fagin is preparing Bill Sikes for the moment when he will learn of Nancy’s betrayal. Fagin wants Bill Sikes to murder Nancy.

'Suppose that lad,' pursued Fagin, 'was to **blow upon** us all—first seeking out the right folks for the purpose, and meeting with 'em in the street to **paint our likenesses**, and describe the crib where we might be most easily taken. Suppose he was to do all this of his own fancy; not grabbed, trapped, tried—but of his own fancy; to **please his own taste**; stealing out at nights to find those most interested against us, and **peaching** to them. Do you hear me?' cried Fagin, his eyes flashing with rage. 'Suppose he did all this, what then?'

'What then!' replied Sikes; with a tremendous oath. 'If he was left alive till I came, I'd grind his skull under the iron heel of my boot into as many grains as there are hairs upon his head.'

'What if I did it!' cried Fagin almost in a yell. 'I, that knows so much, and could hang so many besides myself!'

'I don't know,' replied Sikes, clenching his teeth and turning white at the mere suggestion. 'I'd do something in the jail that 'ud get me put in irons; and if I was tried along with you, I'd fall upon you with them in the open court, and beat your brains out **afore** the people. I should have such strength,' muttered the robber, poising his brawny arm, 'that I could smash your head as if a loaded waggon had gone over it.'

blow upon – i.e. a whistle, showing the police where they were

paint our likenesses – describe us

please his own taste – freely

peaching – revealing our secrets

afore – in front of

'You would?'

'Would I!' said the housebreaker. 'Try me.'

'If it was Charley, or the Dodger, or Bet, or—' *35*

'I don't care who,' replied Sikes impatiently. 'Whoever it was, I'd serve them the same.'

‘Fatal consequences.’ Original extract.

In this shocking extract, Bill confronts Nancy.

Without one pause, or moment's consideration; without once turning his head to the right or left, or raising his eyes to the sky, or lowering them to the ground, but looking straight before him with savage resolution: his teeth so tightly compressed that the strained jaw seemed starting through his skin; the robber held on his headlong course, nor muttered a word, nor relaxed a muscle, until he reached his own door. He opened it, softly, with a key; strode lightly up the stairs; and entering his own room, double-locked the door, and lifting a heavy table against it, drew back the curtain of the bed.

The girl was lying, half-dressed, upon it. He had roused her from her sleep, for she raised herself with a hurried and startled look.

'Get up!' said the man.

'It is you, Bill!' said the girl, with an expression of pleasure at his return.

'It is,' was the reply. 'Get up.'

There was a candle burning, but the man hastily drew it from the candlestick, and hurled it under the grate. Seeing the faint light of early day without, the girl rose to undraw the curtain.

without – outside
undraw – open

'Let it be,' said Sikes, thrusting his hand before her. 'There's enough light for wot I've got to do.'

'Bill,' said the girl, in the low voice of alarm, 'why do you look like that at me!'

The robber sat regarding her, for a few seconds, with dilated nostrils and heaving breast; and then, grasping her by the head and throat, dragged her into the middle of the room, and looking once towards the door, placed his heavy hand upon her mouth.

'Bill, Bill!' gasped the girl, wrestling with the strength of mortal fear,—'I—I won't scream or cry—not once—hear me—speak to me—tell me what I have done!'

'You know, you she devil!' returned the robber, suppressing his breath. 'You were watched to-night; every word you said was heard.'

'Then spare my life for the love of Heaven, as I spared yours,' rejoined the girl, clinging to him. 'Bill, dear Bill, you cannot have the heart to kill me. Oh! think of all I have given up, only this one night, for you. You shall have time to think, and save yourself this crime; I will not loose my hold, you cannot throw me off. Bill, Bill, for dear God's sake, for your own, for mine, stop before you spill my blood! I have been true to you, upon my guilty soul I have!'

The man struggled violently, to release his arms; but those of the girl were clasped round his, and tear her as he would, he could not tear them away.

'Bill,' cried the girl, striving to lay her head upon his breast, 'the gentleman and that dear lady, told me to-night of a home in some foreign country where I could end my days in solitude and peace. Let me see them again, and beg them, on my knees, to show the same mercy and goodness to you; and let us both leave this dreadful place, and far apart lead better lives, and forget how we have lived, except in prayers, and never see each other more. It is never too late to repent. They told me so—I feel it now—but we must have time—a little, little time!'

The housebreaker freed one arm, and grasped his pistol. The certainty of immediate detection if he fired, flashed across his mind even in the midst of his fury; and he beat it twice with all the force he could summon, upon the upturned face that almost touched his own.

She staggered and fell: nearly blinded with the blood that rained down from a deep gash in her forehead; but raising herself, with difficulty, on her knees, drew from her bosom a white handkerchief—Rose Maylie's own—and holding it up, in her folded hands, as high towards Heaven as her feeble strength would allow, breathed one prayer for mercy to her Maker.

It was a ghastly figure to look upon. The murderer staggering backward to the wall, and shutting out the sight with his hand, seized a heavy club and struck her down.

in solitude – alone

repent – ask forgiveness for sins

Assessment Prep Quotation Exploration

Who is Sikes attacking? Why is this unfair?

'bestowed' means a gift. How could this action by Sikes be seen as ironic? How is this not a good gift?

the effect was a kick and a curse, bestowed upon the dog simultaneously.
'

'simultaneously' means at the same time. What is Sikes doing at simultaneously? What might this suggest?

How does Dickens use dialogue (speech) and language used to make the reader feel sorry for Oliver?

Match the Statements

Topic sentence		**Evidence**
1. Sikes is presented by Dickens as a threatening character.		"Oh! For God's sake let me go!" cried Oliver. "Oh! Pray have mercy on me, and do not make me steal!"
2. Dickens presents Sikes as a very dangerous character.		"Get up, or I'll strew your brains upon the grass."
3. Dickens portrays Sikes as a character who evokes fear in others.		"Sikes swore a dreadful oath, and had cocked the pistol."

Year 7 Autumn 2 Practice Assessments

This extract will **not** be featured in your exam.

Read this extract from chapter 13 of 'Oliver Twist'.

Bill has just been introduced to the reader. He suddenly starts to kick and swear at his dog. His dog bites him and then hides under a table. Bill throws a cup at his head, then threatens him with a knife and a poker.

'Keep quiet, you **warmint**! Keep quiet!' said Mr. Sikes, suddenly breaking silence. Whether his meditations were so intense as to be disturbed by the dog's winking, or whether his feelings were so **wrought upon** by his reflections that they required all the relief **derivable** from kicking an unoffending animal to allay them, is matter for argument and consideration. Whatever was the cause, the effect was a kick and a curse, bestowed upon the dog simultaneously.

Dogs are not generally apt to revenge injuries inflicted upon them by their masters; but Mr. Sikes's dog, having faults of temper in common with his owner, and labouring, perhaps, at this moment, under a powerful sense of injury, made no more ado but at once fixed his teeth in one of the half-boots. Having given in a hearty shake, he retired, growling, under a form; just escaping the **pewter measure** which Mr. Sikes levelled at his head.

'You would, would you?' said Sikes, seizing the poker in one hand, and deliberately opening with the other a large clasp-knife, which he drew from his pocket. 'Come here, you born devil! Come here! D'ye hear?'

warmint – menace

wrought upon – irritated

derivable – that comes from

pewter measure – metal cup

Here is your assessment question:
How does Dickens present the character of Bill Sikes?
You **must** refer to this extract, and other key events in the story that have influenced your opinion of the character Bill Sikes.

When you've finished, check your writing.

- ❑ **Check 1**: Have you written about the extract that has been provided?
- ❑ **Check 2**: Have you written about parts of the story that involve Bill Sikes?
- ❑ **Check 3**: Have you used proper nouns clearly and accurately?

This extract will **not** be featured in your exam.

Read this extract from chapter 47 of 'Oliver Twist'.

In Chapter 47, Fagin reveals that Nancy has told Mr Brownlow about Bill Sikes' plan. Bill Sikes lists all the things that he would do to someone if they betrayed him. He says it doesn't matter who it was.

'What then!' replied Sikes; with a **tremendous oath**. 'If he was left alive till I came, I'd grind his skull under the iron heel of my boot into as many grains as there are hairs upon his head.'

'What if I did it!' cried Fagin almost in a yell. 'I, that knows so much, and could hang so many besides myself!'

'I don't know,' replied Sikes, clenching his teeth and turning white at the mere suggestion. 'I'd do something in the jail that 'ud get me put in irons; and if I was tried along with you, I'd fall upon you with them in the open court, and beat your brains out **afore** the people. I should have such strength,' muttered the robber, poising his **brawny** arm, 'that I could smash your head as if a loaded waggon had gone over it.'

'You would?'

'Would I!' said the housebreaker. 'Try me.'

'If it was Charley, or the Dodger, or Bet, or—'

'I don't care who,' replied Sikes impatiently. 'Whoever it was, I'd serve them the same.'

tremendous– huge

oath – promise

afore – before

brawny – strong

Here is your assessment question:

How does Dickens present the character of Bill Sikes?

You **must** refer to this extract, and other key events in the story that have influenced your opinion of the character Bill Sikes.

When you've finished, check your writing.

- ❑ **Check 1**: Have you written about the extract that has been provided?
- ❑ **Check 2**: Have you written about parts of the story that involve Bill Sikes?
- ❑ **Check 3**: Have you used proper nouns clearly and accurately?

Assessment key facts

The 'Oliver Twist' **extract** will be **unseen.**

The **assessment question** will be:

'How does Dickens present the character of Bill Sikes?'

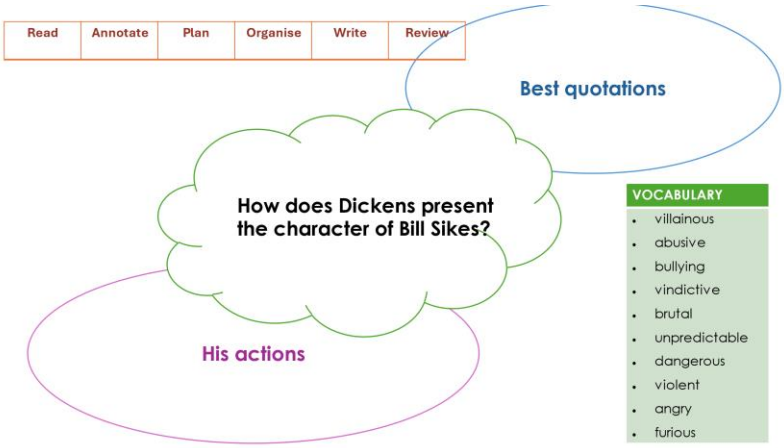
You are allowed to take **one page** of notes into the assessment with you.

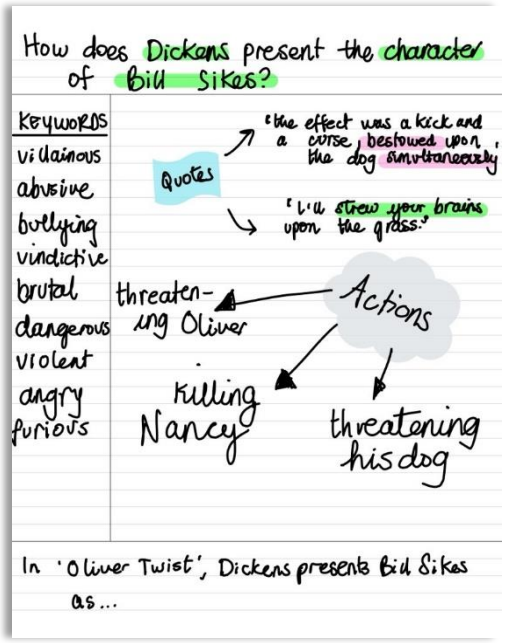
To create your notes page, you will need to know what to put on it!

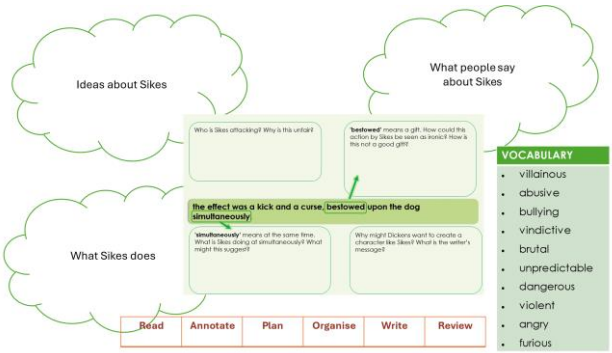
On the next pages are some ideas on

- How to lay out your notes page
- How to revise and prepare for the assessment.

What could your notes page look like?







How to revise

You can use the **knowledge organiser on the last page of the booklet** to quiz yourself on 'Oliver Twist.' Hide sections to check what you do and don't know.

Read Cover Write Check

1. **Read** each section out loud.
2. **Cover** the section.
3. **Write** what you can remember.
4. **Check** if you got it right and correct any mistakes.

Another good way to quiz yourself is with **a partially empty knowledge organiser.**

For example, here is the **plot summary.** One side is the whole thing, the other side has gaps to fill. You can build up to having one side totally blank.

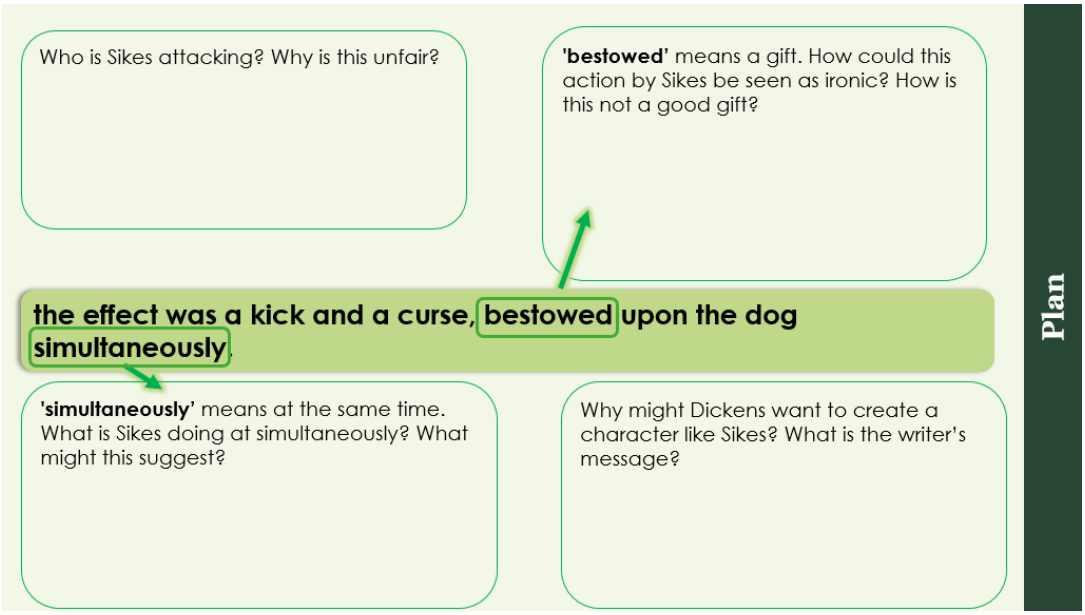
Plot breakdown: full	Plot breakdown: partial
Oliver is born in the workhouse. When he is a bit older he is nominated to ask for more food because the boys are starving.	Oliver is born in the … He is nominated to ask for more … because …
He is kicked out of the workhouse and given away to the Sowerberry family to be an undertaker's apprentice. He's bullied by Noah. They fight and he is locked up.	He is kicked out of the workhouse and given to the …… family to work as an …… He is bullied by …… and responds by …… Then ……..
Oliver runs away to London, meets Dodger and is introduced to Fagin's gang.	Oliver runs away to …….. He meets …… who introduces him to ……
Oliver is taken out with the gang and is horrified to see Dodger steal a gentleman's handkerchief. Oliver is wrongly arrested for the theft.	Oliver is taken out with ……. He is horrified to see …. Oliver gets arrested for …….
The gentleman, Mr. Brownlow, takes pity on Oliver and takes him in. The gang plot to get him back in case he reveals information about them.	Mr Brownlow …… The gang plots to …. In case ….
Oliver is abducted by the gang whilst running an errand for Mr. Brownlow.	Oliver is abducted by ……. When running an errand for ……
Oliver is used by Sikes in a burglary. They fail and Sikes runs away. Oliver is left behind but the people who live there feel sorry for him and look after him. They are called Fred and Rose Maylie.	Oliver is taken by Sikes to commit …… Sikes runs away but the people who live there ……. They are called ……..
When Bill and Fagin realise what has happened, they plot to catch Oliver again. Nancy overhears and visits Mr. Brownlow to warn him.	When Bill and Fagin realise what has happened, they …….. Nancy overhears and ……..
Fagin tells Bill about Nancy's betrayal and Bill murders her. Fagin is discovered and sent to prison and Bill dies trying to run away.	Fagin tells Bill that Nancy has …… Bill is angry and ……. Fagin is discovered and sent to .. Bill …. trying to run away
Oliver discovers who his parents were and joins Mr. Brownlow and the Maylies to live happily ever after.	Oliver discovers ……. He joins Mr …… and the Maylies and lives ……

Another good way to revise is to **make your own knowledge organiser about Bill Sikes.** This one has been started for you…

You should choose your own ideas, vocabulary and quotations to fill it in.

Bill Sikes		
His actions	**Vocabulary about him**	**Quotations about Sikes**
Maliciously kicking and hurting his dog.	• villainous • abusive • bullying • vindictive • brutal • unpredictable • dangerous • violent • angry • furious • tense • vicious • reckless • malicious • cruel	"the effect was a kick and a curse, bestowed on the dog simultaneously"
		"I'd grind his skull under the iron heel of my boot into as many grains as there are on his head"

You might also want to revise using your **quotation explorations:**



These are some ways to make sure your **knowledge** of Oliver Twist is secure.

You will also need to remember **how** to approach the assessment.

How to approach the question

This is a reminder of the process for approaching the question and writing your answer:

Process	Steps	Timings
Read	**Step 1. Read** and **annotate** the **question** **Step 2. Read** the whole **extract**, including the **context box**	10 mins
Annotate	**Step 3. Highlight** and **annotate** the evidence that shows the different elements of Sikes's character (e.g. write 'violent' or 'malicious' next to the quotation which best shows this)	5 mins
Plan	**Step 4. Choose your best three ideas** from your annotations **Step 5. Put each idea** into a **topic sentence** to start each paragraph clearly	10 mins
Organise	**Step 6.** Use your **topic sentences** to structure your essay plan	5 mins
Write	**Step 7.** Write your essay	40 mins
Review	**Step 8.** Check your work using Mastery checks and guidance given	5 mins

Read, cover, write, check!
Tip: try folding the paper over to hide sections!

'Oliver Twist': Knowledge Organiser

Plot breakdown

Oliver is born in the workhouse. When he is a bit older he is nominated to ask for more food because the boys are starving.

He is kicked out of the workhouse and given away to the Sowerberry family to be an undertaker's apprentice. He's bullied by Noah, they fight and he is locked up.

Oliver runs away to London, meets Dodger and is introduced to Fagin's gang.

Oliver is taken out with the gang and is horrified to see Dodger steal a gentleman's handkerchief. Oliver is wrongly arrested for the theft.

The gentleman, Mr. Brownlow, takes pity on Oliver and takes him in. The gang plot to get him back in case he reveals information about them.

Oliver is abducted by the gang whilst running an errand for Mr. Brownlow.

Oliver is used by Sikes in a burglary. They fail and Sikes runs away. Oliver is left behind but the people who live there feel sorry for him and look after him. They are called Fred and Rose Maylie.

When Bill and Fagin realise what has happened, they plot to catch Oliver again. Nancy overhears and visits Mr. Brownlow to warn him.

Fagin tells Bill about Nancy's betrayal and Bill murders her. Fagin is discovered and sent to prison and Bill dies trying to run away.

Oliver discovers who his parents were and joins Mr. Brownlow and the Maylies to live happily ever after.

Key words

morality – a code of right and wrong. People who try to be good can be called **moral** and people who do bad things can be called **immoral.**

vulnerable – in a situation in which you could be easily harmed. People living on the streets are **vulnerable.**

brutal – very violent or cruel.

corrupt – a word used to describe a person who uses their power in a dishonest or illegal way in order to make life better for themselves.

villain – a 'baddie' who harms other people or breaks the law to get what they want.

malicious – meant to hurt or upset someone.

victim – someone who has been harmed, often by other people.

naïve – If someone is naïve if they don't have experience of how complicated life can be and therefore trust people too much.

society – the people who live in a certain area. This could be a country, town or small group.

workhouse – a place where people who couldn't support themselves were sent to live and work.

Background information

'Oliver Twist' was written in 1837-39.

It was written by Charles Dickens.

In was published chapter by chapter in a periodical (magazine).

Charles Dickens had to work in harsh conditions as a child when his father was sent to prison.

Dickens wanted to criticise a new change to The Poor Law which happened in 1834 and created more workhouses and show how hard life was for poor people.

Characters

Oliver
He is a 'pale, thin' orphan who is treated badly by almost everyone he meets. He tries his best to be a good person and experiences 'horror and alarm' whenever he sees crimes being committed.

Mr. Bumble
The man who runs the workhouse and gives Oliver his name. He is 'a fat man' who enjoys power and doesn't care about the people beneath him.

Noah Claypole
A 'malicious and ill-conditioned' boy who bullies Oliver at the undertakers. He eventually runs away to London and joins the same gang as Oliver.

Fagin
An old man who runs the gang of pickpockets. He seems kind but his 'villainous-looking and repulsive face' reflects his selfish nature as he gets young boys to do his dirty work for him.

Jack Dawkins (The Artful Dodger)
A young boy who introduces Oliver to Fagin's gang who has 'all the airs and manners of a man'. He's confident and cunning.

Bill Sikes
A 'rough man' who has been a criminal for many years. He beats his dog viciously and brutally kills his girlfriend, Nancy.

Nancy
Bill's girlfriend who risks her life to help Oliver escape from the gang. She loves Bill even though he treats her abusively and she feels guilty about the life of crime she has led.

Mr. Brownlow
A wealthy older gentleman who takes Oliver in and looks after him. He believes in Oliver's goodness even when it looks like Oliver has stolen from him and eventually finds out the truth about Oliver's parents.