

LBRIS

We know
books

Denis Delaney

Ciaran Ward

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fields of vision

MODULES

F *The Victorian Age*

G *Early Twentieth-Century and Modernism*

H *The Contemporary Age*

Literature
in the English language

VOLUME
2



Period	Author	Work	Text
F The Victorian Age 1837–1901	Charles Dickens (Writers' Gallery, p. F15)	David Copperfield (p. F2)	F1 <i>I Fall into Disgrace</i> (p. F2) F2 <i>Our Housekeeping</i> (p. F6)
	Emily Brontë (Writers' Gallery, p. F32)	Hard Times (p. F9)	F3 <i>The One Thing Needful</i> (p. F9) F4 <i>The Keynote</i> (p. F13)
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	Thomas Hardy (Writers' Gallery, p. F63)	The Picture of Dorian Gray (p. F48)	F13 <i>Beauty Is a Form of Genius</i> (p. F48) F14 <i>It Is the Face of My Soul</i> (p. F51)
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	Herman Melville (Writers' Gallery, p. F78)	The Scarlet Letter (p. F65)	F17 <i>The Light that Is to Reveal all Secrets</i> (p. F65) F18 <i>A Spell Was Broken</i> (p. F68)
	Mark Twain (Writers' Gallery, p. F85)	Moby Dick (p. F72)	F19 <i>It Is Moby Dick Ye Have Seen</i> (p. F72)
	Lord Alfred Tennyson (Writers' Gallery, p. F92)	Huckleberry Finn (p. F79)	F20 <i>Polly-Voo-Franzy</i> (p. F79) F21 <i>'I'll Go to Hell'</i> (p. F82)
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	Matthew Arnold (Writers' Gallery, p. F103)		F25 <i>Home-Thoughts, from Abroad</i> (p. F96) 🔊 F26 <i>Dover Beach</i> (p. F100)
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	Emily Dickinson (Writers' Gallery, p. F111)		🔊 F28 <i>A Bird Came Down the Walk</i> (p. F107) F29 <i>Because I Could not Stop for Death</i> (p. F109)
	Walt Whitman (Writers' Gallery, p. F116)		F30 <i>When I Heard the Learned Astronomer</i> (p. F112) 🔊 F31 <i>O Captain! My Captain!</i> (p. F114)
	Oscar Wilde (Writers' Gallery, p. F54)	The Importance of Being Earnest (p. F118)	F32 <i>I Was Found in a Handbag</i> (p. F119)

Genre	Theme	Critical Analysis	Links
Fiction – novel of initiation	Parents and children Marriage	Extended metaphor (p. F5)	Visual Link F5: Education
Fiction – novel	Education The environment	Revealing character through physical description (p. F11)	Link to the world of music: <i>Another Brick in the Wall</i> by Pink Floyd (p. F12) Visual Link F3: The Poor
Fiction – romantic novel	Love and marriage Love and obsession	Plot (p. F24)	Link to the world of music: <i>Wuthering Heights</i> by Kate Bush (p. F25) Visual Link F9: The Brontës
Fiction – novel of initiation	Injustice and rebellion Love denied	Dialogue to reveal character (p. F31)	
Fiction – novel	Greed The power of love	Omniscient obtrusive narrator (p. F39)	Link to the world of music: <i>Money</i> by Pink Floyd (p. F37) Visual Link F3: The Poor
Fiction – horror story	Thirst for knowledge Good and evil	Doppelgänger (p. F46)	
Fiction – aesthetic novel	Beauty Pride and corruption	Paradox (p. F50)	Visual Link F12: Art Nouveau
Fiction – regional novel	Social ostracism		Visual Link F3: The Poor
Fiction – novel	Retribution Conscience	Symbolic setting (p. F62)	Visual Link F6: Victorian Morality Visual Link F6: Victorian Morality
Fiction – novel	Moral courage Obsession/revenge	Pathos (p. F70) Symbolic names (p. F77)	Visual Link F7: Sentimentality
Fiction – novel of initiation	The art of argument Conscience	The naïve narrator (p. F84)	Visual Link F11: The USA: Slavery and the Civil War
Poetry – elegy	Mourning	Punctuation (p. F88)	Link to the world of music: <i>(Sitting on) the Dock of the Bay</i> by Otis Redding (p. F89)
Poetry – elegy	Death		
Poetry – dramatic monologue	Jealousy	Dramatic monologue (p. F95)	
Poetry	Homesickness		Link to the world of music: <i>Lonesome for a Place I Know</i> by Everything But The Girl (p. F98) Visual Link F8: A Crisis of Faith
Poetry – dramatic monologue	Love in changing times	Mood (p. F102)	
Poetry	Nature	Style (p. F105)	
Poetry	Nature		
Poetry	Death	Style (p. F110)	
Poetry – free verse	Nature and science	Free verse (p. F113)	
Poetry	Heroes		Visual Link F11: The USA: Slavery and the Civil War
Drama – comedy of manners	Snobbery	Creating a character (p. F123)	

Period	Author	Work	Text
F The Victorian Age 1837–1901	The Context (p. F124) Historical and Social Background (p. F124) The Victorian Age 1837–1901 (p. F124) Main events: Britain 1837–1901 (p. F126) North American History 1823–1900 (p. F127) Pieces of the Past The Gettysburg Address (p. F128) Main events: North America 1823–1900 (p. F129)		

G Early Twentieth Century and Modernism 1901–1950	Henry James (<i>Writers' Gallery</i>, p. G8) H.G. Wells (<i>Writers' Gallery</i>, p. G14) Joseph Conrad (<i>Writers' Gallery</i>, p. G22) E.M. Forster (<i>Writers' Gallery</i>, p. G31) D.H. Lawrence (<i>Writers' Gallery</i>, p. G39) James Joyce (<i>Writers' Gallery</i>, p. G52) Virginia Woolf (<i>Writers' Gallery</i>, p. G60) George Orwell (<i>Writers' Gallery</i>, p. G70) F. Scott Fitzgerald (<i>Writers' Gallery</i>, p. G79) Ernest Hemingway (<i>Writers' Gallery</i>, p. G88) William Faulkner (<i>Writers' Gallery</i>, p. G97) John Steinbeck (<i>Writers' Gallery</i>, p. G106)	The Turn of the Screw (p. G2) The War of the Worlds (p. G9) Heart of Darkness (p. G15) A Room with a View (p. G24) Sons and Lovers (p. G32) Dubliners (p. G41) Ulysses (p. G48) To the Lighthouse (p. G54) Nineteen Eighty-Four (p. G62) The Great Gatsby (p. G72) A Farewell to Arms (p. G80) The Sound and the Fury (p. G90) The Grapes of Wrath (p. G98)	G1 <i>A Living, Detestable, Dangerous Presence</i> (p. G2) G2 <i>Take Me Away from Her!</i> (p. G5) G3 <i>'Here They Are!'</i> (p. G9) G4 <i>Darkness Was here Yesterday</i> (p. G10) G5 <i>'The Horror! The Horror!'</i> (p. G19) G6 <i>The Sensation of a Fog</i> (p. G25) G7 <i>The Good Man</i> (p. G28) G8 <i>'I Will Call Him Paul'</i> (p. G32) G9 <i>'You're Old, Mother'</i> (p. G35) G10 <i>Araby</i> (p. G41) G11 <i>Yes</i> (p. G48) G12 <i>Why Must They Grow Up?</i> (p. G55) G13 <i>The Formidable Ancient Enemy</i> (p. G58) G14 <i>Big Brother Is Watching You</i> (p. G65) G15 <i>'How Many Fingers, Winston?'</i> (p. G65) G16 <i>'I'm Gatsby.'</i> (p. G72) G17 <i>'The Poor Son-of-a-Bitch'</i> (p. G75) G18 <i>I Was Through</i> (p. G80) G19 <i>Please don't Let Her Die</i> (p. G84) G20 <i>She Smelled like Trees</i> (p. G91) G21 <i>Pride about My Kinfolks</i> (p. G94) G22 <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> (p. G98) G23 <i>'He's Dyin', I Tell You!'</i> (p. G103)
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Genre	Theme	Critical Analysis	Links
The Literary Background (p. F130) Victorian Literature (p. F130) Pieces of the Past Oscar Wilde's Trial (p. F134)			Visual Link F4: The Victorian Family Visual Link F2: The Middle Classes Visual Link F3: The Poor Visual Link F1: The Depiction of Victorian Society Visual Link F5: Education Visual Link F11: The USA: Slavery and the Civil War Visual Link F10: Victorian Architecture Visual Link F8: A Crisis of Faith Visual Link F13: The End of the Century
Meanwhile, Elsewhere (p. F135) North American Literature (p. F141) Pieces of the Past Emily Dickinson (p. F143)			[Link to Russian Literature: Tolstoy (p. F135) Cross-Curricular Link: Literature and Society (European literature) (p. F144)
Fiction – ghost story	Supernatural/fear		Visual Link G1: The 'New Woman'
Fiction – science fiction	Adults and children Alien invasion	Limited point of view (p. G7) Science fiction (p. G12)	Link to the world of music: <i>Starman</i> by David Bowie (p. G13)
Fiction – novel	Civilisation Colonialism	Symbols (p. G18)	Visual Link G4: The Exotic
Fiction – novel of initiation	Social mores Self-realisation	Setting (p. G30)	Visual Link G3: The Changing Class System
Fiction – novel of initiation	Mother and child Mother and son	Dialogue (p. G38)	Visual Link G3: The Changing Class System
Fiction – short story	Adolescent love	Epiphany (p. G47)	
Fiction – modernist novel	Recollection	Stream of consciousness (p. G51)	Visual Link G13: Mal de Vivre
Fiction – modernist novel	Mother and children The creative process	Characterisation (p. G57)	Visual Link G14: Women Artists Visual Link G19: Modernist Sculpture
Fiction – dystopian novel	Totalitarianism Torture/brainwashing	Utopia and dystopia (p. G68)	Visual Link G20: Totalitarianism Link to the world of music: <i>Sexcrime</i> by The Eurythmics (p. G69)
Fiction – novel	Heroes Death and disillusionment	First-person narrators (p. G78)	Visual Link G16: Urban America
Fiction – novel	War Love and death	Style (p. G87)	Visual Links G7, G8, G9, G10: The First World War
Fiction – novel	Diversity Diversity	Interior monologue (p. G93)	Visual Link G17: Rural America and the Depression
Fiction – novel	Capitalism Desperation	Free indirect speech (p. G102)	Link to the world of music: <i>The Ghost of Tom Joad</i> by Bruce Springsteen (p. G105)

Period	Author	Work	Text
G Early Twentieth Century and Modernism 1901–1950	William Butler Yeats (Writers' Gallery, p. G115)		⌂ G24 <i>Easter 1916</i> (p. G107) ⌂ G25 <i>He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven</i> (p. G111) ⌂ G26 <i>The Wild Swans at Coole</i> (p. G113) ⌂ G27 <i>The Soldier</i> (p. G117) ⌂ G28 <i>Dulce et Decorum Est</i> (p. G118) ⌂ G29 <i>Base Details</i> (p. G120) G30 <i>The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock</i> (p. G124)
	Rupert Brooke Wilfred Owen Siegfried Sassoon (Writers' Gallery, p. G122)		
	T.S. Eliot (Writers' Gallery, p. G130)		
	W.H. Auden (Writers' Gallery, p. G138)		⌂ G31 <i>Funeral Blues</i> (p. G132) G32 <i>Refugee Blues</i> (p. G134)
	Dylan Thomas (Writers' Gallery, p. G144)		⌂ G33 <i>In My Craft or Sullen Art</i> (p. G139) G34 <i>Do not Go Gentle into That Good Night</i> (p. G141) ⌂ G35 <i>The Road not Taken</i> (p. G145)
	Robert Frost (Writers' Gallery, p. G148)		
	Wallace Stevens (Writers' Gallery, p. G151)		⌂ G36 <i>Disillusionment of Ten O'Clock</i> (p. G149) ⌂ G37 <i>Eliza's First Pronunciation Lesson</i> (p. G152)
	G.B. Shaw (Writers' Gallery, p. G156)	Pygmalion (p. G152)	G38 <i>He just Wants You to Make Good</i> (p. G157)
	Arthur Miller (Writers' Gallery, p. G165)	Death of a Salesman (p. G157)	G39 <i>I'm a Dime a Dozen and so Are You</i> (p. G161)

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Britain 1901–1950 (p. G167)

Pieces of the Past Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat (p. G168)

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Pieces of the Past Riding the Rails (p. G175)

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Genre	Theme	Critical Analysis	Links
Poetry	Rebellion	Refrain (p. G111)	Visual Link G6 : Dublin, 1916
Poetry	Romantic love		Link to the world of music : <i>Your Song</i> by Elton John (p. G112)
Poetry	Nostalgia/nature		
Poetry – sonnet	Patriotism		Visual Links G7, G8, G9, G10 : The First World War
Poetry	War/death		
Poetry – satire	Absurdity of war	Theme (p. G121)	
Poetry – dramatic monologue	Alienation	Conceit (p. G129)	Visual Link G11 : The End of the War Visual Link G13 : Mal de Vivre
Poetry	Bereavement and mourning		
Poetry – blues	Ostracism	Blues poetry (p. G137)	Visual Link G18 : The Spanish Civil War
Poetry	Creative process		
Poetry – villanelle	Death	Euphemism (p. G143)	
Poetry	Decisions	Literal and symbolic meaning (p. G147)	
Poetry	Conformity	Denotation and connotation (p. G150)	
Drama – comedy	Class division	Character portrayal (p. G155)	Visual Link G1 : The ‘New Woman’
Drama – modern tragedy	Work/ambition	Set and props (p. G160)	
	Generational conflicts		Link to the world of music : <i>Father and Son</i> by Cat Stevens (p. G164)
The Literary Background (p. G177) British Literature (p. G177) Pieces of the Past The Language of Politics (p. G180)			Visual Link G1 : The ‘New Woman’ Visual Link G2 : Votes for Women Visual Link G3 : The Changing Class System Visual Link G6 : Dublin, 1916 Visual Links G7, G8, G9 and G10 : The First World War Visual Link G20 : Totalitarianism Visual Link G21 : The Movies Visual Link G16 : Urban America and the Jazz Age Visual Link G17 : Rural America and the Depression Visual Link G4 : The Exotic Visual Link G5 : Cubism Visual Link G12 : Dada and the End of Logic Visual Link G13 : Mal de Vivre Visual Link G14 : Women Artists
Meanwhile, Elsewhere (p. G183) Pieces of the Past Global Poetry (p. G186) North American Literature (p. G188)			[Link to French Literature: Marcel Proust (p. G183)] Cross-Curricular Link : War Poets (French, Italian, German poetry) (p. G192)

Period	Author	Work	Text
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	Graham Greene (Writers' Gallery, p. H18)	Our Man in Havana (p. H10)	H3 <i>Seraphina</i> (p. H10) H4 <i>An Imaginative Writer</i> (p. H15)
	Muriel Spark (Writers' Gallery, p. H23)	The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie (p. H19)	H5 <i>Putting Ideas into My Girls' Heads</i> (p. H19)
	David Lodge (Writers' Gallery, p. H28)	The British Museum is Falling down (p. H24)	H6 'What's a Transvestite, Daddy?' (p. H24)
	Angela Carter (Writers' Gallery, p. H35)	Wise Children (p. H29)	H7 <i>Your Lovely Daughters</i> (p. H29) H8 <i>The Kind of Day Things Happen</i> (p. H32)
	Ian McEwan (Writers' Gallery, p. H42)	Black Dogs (p. H36)	H9 'Coloured, Invisible Light' (p. H36) H10 <i>A Revolution of the Inner Life</i> (p. H39)
	Roddy Doyle (Writers' Gallery, p. H49)	The Snapper (p. H43)	H11 <i>Who Was It?</i> (p. H43)
	Seamus Deane (Writers' Gallery, p. H55)	Reading in the Dark (p. H50)	H12 <i>Going to the Pictures</i> (p. H50)
	Jack Kerouac (Writers' Gallery, p. H62)	On the Road (p. H56)	H13 <i>All the Golden Land's ahead of You</i> (p. H56) H14 <i>The Source of Mankind</i> (p. H60)
	Toni Morrison (Writers' Gallery, p. H68)	Jazz (p. H64)	H15 <i>It Does Pump Desire</i> (p. H64)
	Chinua Achebe (Writers' Gallery, p. H76)	Things Fall Apart (p. H69)	H16 <i>The Man Was Mad</i> (p. H69) H17 'What Do You Want here?' (p. H71)
	Nadine Gordimer (Writers' Gallery, p. H85)	None to Accompany Me (p. H78)	H18 <i>Take back Your Language</i> (p. H78) H19 <i>Empowerment for Our People</i> (p. H82)
	Doris Lessing (Writers' Gallery, p. H89)	The Fifth Child (p. H86)	H20 <i>The Worst Year of Harriet's Life</i> (p. H86)
	Michael Ondaatje (Writers' Gallery, p. H97)	The English Patient (p. H90)	H21 'Keep Very Still' (p. H90) H22 'If Writers Have Wings' (p. H94)
	Margaret Atwood (Writers' Gallery, p. H102)	Cat's Eye (p. H98)	H23 <i>Cordelia Is My Friend</i> (p. H99)
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	Stephen Spender (Writers' Gallery, p. H116)		🔊 H27 <i>I Think Continually of Those who Were Truly Great</i> (p. H114)
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	Seamus Heaney (Writers' Gallery, p. H132)		H31 <i>Bye-Child</i> (p. H126) 🔊 H32 <i>When All the Others</i> (p. H129) 🔊 H33 <i>Field of Vision</i> (p. H130)
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Genre	Theme	Critical Analysis	Links
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Fiction – novel	Spoilt children	Allegory (p. H8)	
Fiction – novel	Dissimulation	Limited omniscient narrator (p. H13)	Visual Link H6: The Cold War
Fiction – novel	Education	Omniscient narrator (p. H22)	
Fiction – comic novel	Embarrassment	Humour (p. H27)	
Fiction – magic realism	Parents and children Magic	Magic realism (p. H32)	Visual Link H16: Magic Realism Visual Link H18: Postmodernist Architecture
Fiction – novel	Fear/revelation Evil	Symbols (p. H41)	
Fiction – regional novel	Parents and children	Dialogue (p. H48)	
Fiction – initiation novel	Adolescence	First-person narrators (p. H54)	
Fiction – picaresque novel	Travelling	Spontaneous prose (p. H59)	Visual Link H5: Angry Young Men
Fiction – novel	Civilisation The city	Syntax (p. H67)	
Fiction – regional novel	Colonialism	Rhythm (p. H74)	Link to the world of music: Cortez the Killer by Neil Young (p. H75)
Fiction – novel	Cross-culture Power and responsibility	Symbols (p. H82)	Visual Link H11: The End of the Empire Visual Link H12: Multicultural Britain
Fiction – novel	Childhood/evil	Suspense (p. H88)	Visual Link H11: The End of the Empire
Fiction – novel	Love and war Love	Omniscient third-person narrator (p. H96)	
Fiction – novel of initiation	Bullying	The naïve narrator (p. H101)	
Fiction – magic realism	Superstition/supernatural	Obtrusive narrator (p. H106)	Visual Link H11: The End of the Empire Visual Link H16: Magic Realism
Poetry	Expectations	True/imperfect rhyme (p. H112)	
Poetry	Work		
Poetry	Heroes		
Poetry	Spirituality		
Poetry	Single-mindedness	Diction (p. H122)	
Poetry	Love		
Poetry	Social ostracism	Free verse (p. H128)	
Poetry – sonnet	Mother and son		
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Poetry	War	Sound features (p. H137)	

Period	Author	Work	Text
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	Sylvia Plath (<i>Writers' Gallery</i> , p. H148)		
	Allen Ginsberg (<i>Writers' Gallery</i> , p. H152)		🔊 H39 <i>A Supermarket in California</i> (p. H144)
	Samuel Beckett (<i>Writers' Gallery</i> , p. H162)	Waiting for Godot (p. H153)	🔊 H40 <i>What Is Terrible Is to Have Thought</i> (p. H153) H41 <i>We'll Hang Ourselves Tomorrow</i> (p. H157)
	John Osborne (<i>Writers' Gallery</i> , p. H168)	Looking Back in Anger (p. H163)	H42 <i>God, How I Hate Sundays!</i> (p. H164)
	Harold Pinter (<i>Writers' Gallery</i> , p. H173)	The Careker (p. H169)	🔊 H43 <i>We're Going to Do Something to Your Brain</i> (p. H169)
	Alan Bennett (<i>Writers' Gallery</i> , p. H179)	The Madness of George III (p. H174)	H44 <i>'I Am the King'</i> (p. H174)
	Wole Soyinka (<i>Writers' Gallery</i> , p. H185)	The Beatification of Area Boy (p. H180)	H45 <i>It's the Principle of the Thing</i> (p. H180)

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Pieces of the Past Multicultural Britain (p. H190)

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Visual Links Glossary of Literary Terms

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Poetry	Love		Visual Link H11 : The End of the Empire
Poetry	Race/violence	Symbols (p. H143)	
Poetry	Ageing	Persona (p. H147)	Visual Link H2 : Abstract Art
Poetry	Values	Allusion (p. H151)	Visual Link H2 : Abstract Art Visual Link H5 : Angry Young Men Visual Link H4 : 1950s Consumerism
Drama – theatre of the absurd	Alienation	Timing (p. H156)	Visual Link H7 : The Theatre of the Absurd <i>Link to the world of music:</i> <i>Constant Craving</i> by K.D. Lang (p. H161)
Drama – modern tragedy	Alienation		
Drama – modern tragedy	Anger and disillusionment	Social milieu (p. H167)	Visual Link H3 : 'Brutalist' Architecture Visual Link H5 : Angry Young Men
Drama – modern tragedy	Alienation	Lighting (p. H172)	Visual Link H3 : 'Brutalist' Architecture
Drama – comedy	Madness	Movements and positioning (p. H178)	
Drama	Corruption – post-colonialism	Tone (p. H184)	
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David Copperfield

by Charles Dickens

LEAD IN

If you were to write a short account of your childhood, what would you include?

The following questions will help you.

- 1 What are your happiest memories of childhood?
- 2 What do you remember about your early years at school?
- 3 Were you particularly close to any adults as a child?
- 4 Were you afraid or intimidated by any adults as a child?
- 5 Can you remember any funny things that happened to you?

INTRODUCTION ♦ Charles Dickens and his works have become synonymous with Victorian England. Many of his novels came out in monthly instalments and were awaited by his readers as eagerly as viewers today await the next episode of their favourite serial or soap-opera. His popularity lay in his ability to write gripping, sentimental stories filled with memorable characters. On a more serious level, his novels are a detailed account of both the good and bad sides of Victorian life.

CHARACTERS

- David Copperfield
- Clara, his mother
- Mr Murdstone, his stepfather
- Miss Murdstone, Mr Murdstone's sister
- Dora, David's wife
- Jip, David and Dora's dog

► Visual Link F5

THE STORY

Following the death of his father, David's mother, Clara, remarries. She dies soon after, so David is left in the care of his cruel and tyrannical stepfather, Mr Murdstone, and his just as unpleasant sister, Miss Murdstone. (► Text F1).

David runs away and starts to build a life for himself. He continues his studies in Canterbury and finds a job as a clerk in London. He does not like his job but he has a wide range of contacts and friends, among whom the most memorable are the impecunious but lovable Mr Micawber, and the conniving, greedy Uriah Heep.

He marries Dora (► Text F2), a pretty but silly girl, and launches out on a new career as a writer. When Dora dies, he marries his lifelong friend, Agnes, and becomes a successful writer.

Text F1 I Fall into Disgrace

David remembers what his lessons used to be like when he studied at home in the presence of his mother, Clara, Mr Murdstone and Miss Murdstone.

Let me remember how it used to be, and bring one morning back again. I come into the second-best parlour¹ after breakfast, with my books, and an exercise-book, and a slate². My mother is ready for me at her writing-desk, but not half so ready as Mr Murdstone in his easy-chair³ by the window (though he pretends to be reading a book), or as Miss Murdstone, sitting near my mother stringing steel beads⁴. The very sight of these two has such an influence over me, that I begin to feel the words I have been at infinite pains⁵ to get into my head, all sliding away⁶, and going I don't know where. I wonder where they do go, by the by⁷?

5

GLOSSARY

1. parlour: sitting room
2. slate: small board used to write on with chalk
3. easy-chair: armchair
4. stringing steel beads: putting tiny round balls made of steel onto a string
5. been at infinite pains: tried very hard
6. sliding away: disappearing
7. by the by: by the way

I hand the first book to my mother. 10
Perhaps it is a grammar, perhaps a history,
or geography. I take a last drowning⁸ look
at the page as I give it into her hand, and
start off aloud at a racing pace while I have
got it fresh. I trip over⁹ a word. Mr 15
Murdstone looks up. I trip over another
word. Miss Murdstone looks up. I redden,
tumble over¹⁰ half-a-dozen words, and
stop. I think my mother would show me
the book if she dared, but she does not 20
dare, and she says softly:

‘Oh, Davy, Davy!’

‘Now, Clara,’ says Mr Murdstone, ‘be firm
with the boy. Don’t say, ‘Oh, Davy, Davy!’
That’s childish. He knows his lesson, or he 25
does not know it.’

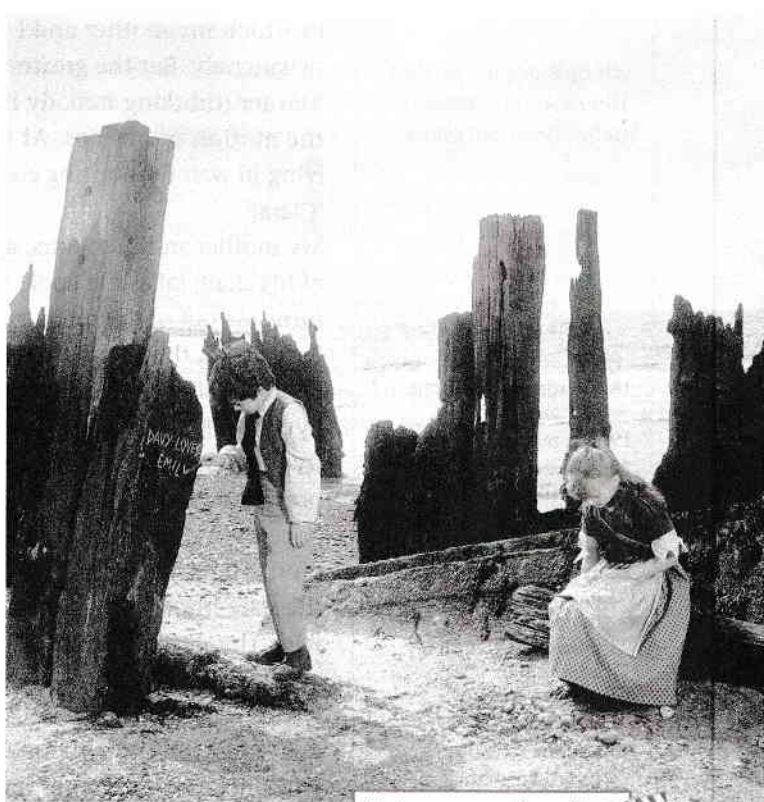
‘He does not know it,’ Miss Murdstone
interposes awfully.

‘I am really afraid he does not,’ says my
mother. 30

‘Then, you see, Clara,’ returns Miss
Murdstone, ‘you should just give him the
book back, and make him know it.’ ‘Yes, certainly,’ says my mother; ‘that
is what I intend to do, my dear Jane. Now, Davy, try once more, and don’t
be stupid.’ 35

I obey the first clause of the injunction¹¹ by trying once more, but am not
so successful with the second, for I am very stupid. I tumble down¹² before
I get to the old place, at a point where I was all right before, and stop to
think. But I can’t think about the lesson. I think of the number of yards of
net in Miss Murdstone’s cap, or of the price of Mr Murdstone’s dressing- 40
gown¹³, or any such ridiculous problem that I have no business with, and
don’t want to have anything at all to do with. Mr Murdstone makes a
movement of impatience which I have been expecting for a long time.
Miss Murdstone does the same. My mother glances submissively at them,
shuts the book, and lays it by¹⁴ as an arrear¹⁵ to be worked out when my 45
other tasks are done.

There is a pile of these arrears very soon, and it swells¹⁶ like a rolling
snowball. The bigger it gets, the more stupid I get. The case is so hopeless,
and I feel that I am wallowing in such a bog¹⁷ of nonsense, that I give up
all idea of getting out, and abandon myself to my fate. The despairing way 50



‘As to any recreation with
other children of my age,
I had very little of that.’
A scene from the film David
Copperfield (1970).

8. **drowning**: desperate

9. **trip over**: hesitate in saying

10. **tumble over**: say in a
confused way

11. **clause of the injunction**:

part of the request

12. **tumble down**: get confused

13. **dressing-gown**: long loose
coat worn indoors

14. **lays it by**: puts it aside

15. **an arrear**: work still to be
done

16. **swells**: becomes bigger and
bigger

17. **wallowing ... bog**: rolling
over in a muddy pool

18. **blunder on**: continue to make mistakes
 19. **cue**: missing word
 20. **colours ... faintly**: goes slightly red in the face
 21. **boxes**: hits
 22. **appalling sum**: hateful maths problem
 23. **pore over**: give all my attention to
 24. **wretched**: unfortunate
 25. **endure**: tolerate
 26. **untasked**: with nothing to do
 27. **rashly**: foolishly
 28. **clapped down to**: obliged to do
 29. **swarm**: group
 30. **for the gloomy ...**
 Disciples: the Murdstones, who were religious, believed that all children were bad even though there was a child among Christ's disciples in the Bible
 31. **held**: believed

in which my mother and I look at each other, as I blunder on¹⁸, is truly melancholy. But the greatest effect in these miserable lessons is when my mother (thinking nobody is observing her) tries to give me the cue¹⁹ by the motion of her lips. At that instant, Miss Murdstone, who has been lying in wait for nothing else all along, says in a deep warning voice:

'Clara!'

My mother starts, colours, and smiles faintly²⁰. Mr Murdstone comes out of his chair, takes the book, throws it at me or boxes²¹ my ears with it, and turns me out of the room by the shoulders.

Even when the lessons are done, the worst is yet to happen, in the shape of an appalling sum²². This is invented for me, and delivered to me orally by Mr Murdstone, and begins, 'If I go into a cheesemonger's shop, and buy five thousand double-Gloucester cheeses at fourpence-halfpenny each, present payment' – at which I see Miss Murdstone secretly overjoyed. I pore over²³ these cheeses without any result or enlightenment until dinner-time, when, having made a Mulatto of myself by getting the dirt of the slate into the pores of my skin, I have a slice of bread to help me out with the cheeses, and am considered in disgrace for the rest of the evening.

It seems to me, at this distance of time, as if my unfortunate studies generally took this course. I could have done very well if I had been without the Murdstones; but the influence of the Murdstones upon me was like the fascination of two snakes on a wretched²⁴ young bird. Even when I did get through the morning with tolerable credit, there was not much gained but dinner; for Miss Murdstone never could endure²⁵ to see me untasked²⁶, and if I rashly²⁷ made any show of being unemployed, called her brother's attention to me by saying, 'Clara, my dear, there's nothing like work – give your boy an exercise'; which caused me to be clapped down to²⁸ some new labour, there and then. As to any recreation with other children of my age, I had very little of that; for the gloomy theology of the Murdstones made all children out to be a swarm²⁹ of little vipers (though there was a child once set in the midst of the Disciples³⁰), and held³¹ that they contaminated one another.

COMPREHENSION

- 1 Who is present in the parlour while David recites his lesson? What effect does this presence have on him?
- 2 What does Miss Murdstone suggest that David's mother should do?
- 3 Is David more or less successful the second time he tries to recite his lesson? What does he think about instead of concentrating on the lesson?
- 4 How does David's mother try to help her son?
- 5 What is the 'appalling' task that David faces when the lessons are over?
- 6 How, in David's opinion, might his studies have been different if the Murdstones had not been present at his lessons?
- 7 Why did the Murdstones not approve of David playing with other children?

ANALYSIS

1 In the passage, a *first-person narrator** is speaking about his younger self. Identify the sentences in the passage that underline the distance in time between the point of narration and the moment when the events took place.

2 Which verb tense does the narrator use to describe the lessons he had as a child? What effect does this choice of verb tense have on the narration?

- ☐ It makes it more vivid and dramatic.
- ☐ It makes it seem more childish.
- ☐ It makes it seem as though it happened recently.

3 Find evidence in the text that David's mother is intimidated by Mr and Miss Murdstone. Is David critical of his mother's behaviour?

4 Focus on the characters of Mr and Miss Murdstone.

- a. What striking *simile** suggests the evil and predatory nature of their behaviour?
- b. Where is it suggested in the text that Miss Murdstone derives sadistic pleasure from tormenting David?
- c. What associations do you make with the name Murdstone?

5 The passage gives the reader some insights into the relationship between children and adults in nineteenth-century Britain. How would you define this relationship?

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| ☐ Loving | ☐ Formal |
| ☐ Detached | ☐ Nurturing |
| ☐ Understanding | ☐ Other: |

6 Consider the relationship between men, as represented by Mr Murdstone, and women, as represented by David's mother and Miss Murdstone. Does the passage suggest that the status of men and women was equal in nineteenth-century Britain? Justify your answer by referring to the text.

WRITERS' WORKSHOP

Extended metaphor

An **extended metaphor** or **simile** is a metaphor or simile which is sustained over several lines in a passage or throughout an entire passage. A writer uses words or expressions literally denoting one kind of object, idea or action in place of another to suggest likeness or analogy between the two. The use of extended metaphors and similes, like all figurative use of language, adds a further layer of intellectual and emotional significance to a writer's work.

TASK

Charles Dickens establishes an association between speaking and walking/running in the following sentence. How?

'I take a last drowning look at the page as I give it into her hand, and start off aloud at a racing pace while I have got it fresh.' (Lines 12–15)

How is the parallel between speaking and walking/running extended in the next three lines?

OVER TO YOU

Select a topic of interest to you (dancing, music, reading, love, a person you know) and compare it to something else in an extended metaphor or simile.

- 1** First establish the association: *My cat Sheeba is like a ball of fire.*
- 2** Extend the metaphor or simile by using associated terms to continue your description:
Her coat is made of flames and coals. She brings me little dead birds to show her love. She sits motionless eyeing her prey – a glowing ember ready to spark into life. Then when the moment is right she darts like a flame along spilt petrol.

OUT

Have you ever felt like David? Do you feel nervous or even intimidated when you do an oral test? Have you ever been so nervous that you could not speak? Tell your classmates.