Charles Dickens and His Works
A Brief Biography of Dickens

- Full name: Charles John Huffam Dickens; Dates: 1812-1870
- His father was sent to debtor’s prison, which caused Dickens to be sent to Warren’s Blacking Warehouse at the age of 12
- He used many memories of his childhood in his writings
- His first story, A Dinner at Poplar Walk, was published in the periodical, Monthly Magazine in 1833
A Brief Biography of Dickens Continued.

- His first collection of works was *Sketches by Boz*, published between 1833 and 1836; Boz was his sometimes pseudonym.
- His first novel was *The Pickwick Papers*, published in March 1836, in installments.
- His last work, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, was unfinished at the time of his death.
A Brief Biography of Dickens Continued.

• He was involved in the Staplehurst Rail Crash in 1865, five years before his death
• He was buried in the Poet’s Corner of Westminster Abbey
Sketches by Boz

• 56 sketches, divided into four part sections: “Our Parish,” “Scenes,” “Characters,” and “Tales,” with the first three being nonfiction works

• Published in installments from 1833-1836
The Pickwick Papers

- Published between 1836 and 1837 as a serial, it is a sequence of loosely related adventures occurring between 1827 and 1828
- Main character: Samuel Pickwick
- Supporting characters: Nathaniel Winkle, Augustus Snodgrass, and Sam Weller
Oliver Twist

- Basic Plot: Orphan boy Oliver Twist escapes from a workhouse and travels to London. He meets the Artful Dodger, who leads a group of pickpockets. Oliver is led to the elderly criminal Fagin, unaware of the unlawful activities that Fagin engages in.

- Main Character: Oliver Twist

- Supporting Characters: The Artful Dodger, Fagin, Bill Sikes, Mr. Brownlow, and Nancy
Nicholas Nickleby

- Basic Plot: After the death of his father, Nicholas Nickleby must support his mother and sister, while his uncle Ralph tries to destroy him.
- Main Character: Nicholas Nickleby
- Supporting Characters: Ralph Nickleby, Kate Nickleby, Catherine Nickleby, Newman Noggs, Smike, Wackford Squeers, and Madeline Bray
The Old Curiosity Shop

• Basic Plot: Nell Trent lives with her grandfather in his shop of odds and ends. Her only friend is Kit, and her grandfather is obsessed with making sure she does not die in poverty.

• Main Character: Nell Trent

• Supporting Characters: Nell’s grandfather, Christopher “Kit” Nubbles, and Daniel Quip
Barnaby Rudge

- **Basic Plot**: Dickens’ first historical work; it is a murder mystery interwoven with the events of the Gordon Riots of 1780.
- **Main Character**: Barnaby Rudge
- **Supporting Characters**: Grip the Raven, Sir John, esquire
Martin Chuzzlewit

• Basic Plot: Martin Chuzzlewit is raised by his grandfather of the same name; his grandfather is paranoid about money. Young Martin becomes friends with Tom Pinch, falls in love with Mary, and repents his earlier selfishness.

• Main Character: Martin Chuzzlewit

• Supporting Characters: Old Martin Chuzzlewit, Tom Pinch, Mary, Seth Pecksniff, and Jonas Chuzzlewit
A Christmas Carol

• Basic Plot: Three ghosts visit Ebenezer Scrooge on Christmas and show him the error of his ways.
• Main Character: Ebenezer Scrooge
• Supporting Characters: Jacob Marley, Bob Cratchit, Tiny Tim, and Ghosts
Dombey and Son

- Basic Plot: Paul Dombey, owner of a shipping company, wants his son to continue the business. His son is often sickly, and he neglects his daughter, Florence.
- Main Character: Paul Dombey
- Supporting Characters: Florence Dombey, Master Paul Dombey, Edith Granger, James Carker, and Edward Cuttle.
David Copperfield

• (Really) Basic Plot: David Copperfield’s life, chronicled from childhood to maturity. His father dies when he is young; his stepfather is cruel. He goes to live with his aunt and, in the end, falls in love with Agnes Wickfield.

• Main Character: David Copperfield

• Supporting Characters: Peggotty, Betsey Trotwood, Agnes Wickfield, Edward Murdstone, James Steerforth, Wilkins Micawber, Uriah Heap
Bleak House

- Basic Plot: The Jarndyce and Jarndyce legal battle is the core of the story. The main story is about Esther Summerson, who is sent to live at Bleak House with Richard Carstone and Ada Clare. Esther eventually falls in love with Dr. Allan Woodcourt.
- Main Character: Esther Summerson
- Supporting Characters: Richard Carstone, Ada Clare, John Jarndyce, Harold Skimpole, Allan Woodcourt, Leicester Dedlock, and Mr. Tulkingham
Hard Times

- Basic Plot: Thomas Gradgrind is a schoolmaster, whose boss is Nicholas Bounderby. Gradgrind has a pupil named Sissy, whose father is involved with the circus and he has a son named Tom. Gradgrind’s daughter, Louisa, disagrees with his stoic view of the world and befriends Sissy.
- Main Character: Thomas Gradgrind
- Supporting Characters: Sissy Jupe, Josiah Bounderby, Louisa Gradgrind, Thomas Gradgrind, Stephen Blackpool
Little Dorritt

• Basic Plot: Arthur Clennam is the love interest of Amy Dorritt, whose father, William, is in debtor’s prison. Arthur and Amy eventually end up married.

• Main Character: Arthur Clennam

• Supporting Characters: William Dorritt, Amy Dorritt, Flora Finching, and Daniel Doyce
A Tale of Two Cities

- Basic Plot: French emigrant Charles Darnay, who happens to be nobility, ends up being tried for treason, and looks exactly like a barrister, Sydney Carton. Darnay falls in love with Lucie Manette, and escapes the guillotine when Carton sacrifices himself in place of Darnay.
- Main Character: Charles Darnay
- Supporting Characters: Sydney Carton, Lucie Manette, Dr. Manette, Madame DeFarge, Gaspard, and Jerry Cruncher
Great Expectations

- (Really) Basic Plot: The life of the orphan Pip is chronicled. He becomes friends with his sister’s husband, Joe, and falls in love with Estella.
- Main Character: Philip “Pip” Pirrip
- Supporting Characters: Joe Gargery, Mrs. Havisham, Estella Havisham, Abel Magwitch, and John Wemmick
Our Mutual Friend

• Basic Plot: John Harmon’s father dies, leaving him the estate, on the condition that he marries Bella Wilfer. The implementation of the Will is done by Mortimer Lightwood. Harmon himself is assumed dead throughout most of the work.

• Main Character: John Harmon

• Supporting Characters: Bella Wilfer, Nicodemus Boffin, Lizzie Hexam, Mortimer Lightwood, and Bradley Headstone
The Mystery of Edwin Drood

- **Basic Plot:** Edwin Drood is meant to marry Rosa Bud, but Edwin’s uncle, John Jasper, is also in love with Rosa.
- **Main Character:** Edwin Drood
- **Supporting Characters:** Rosa Bud, John Jasper, Neville Landless, and Helena Landless
The End!

“Dickens’ Dream” by R.W. Buss