

Dickensian London celebrates his bicentenary year

This year marks the bicentenary of Charles Dickens. The famous British writer and author created some of the best known characters in English literature, including *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* and *Miss Havisham*. Dickens was inspired by what he saw in the streets of London. Hence the term *Dickensian London*. In his day Dickens saw the capital, its hustle and bustle, its glittering promise and grimy streets and the extremes of poverty and wealth experienced by those who lived there. Dickens was known to spend hours pacing the streets of London, especially at the dead of night, drawing inspiration from what he saw around him. Alex Werner, the curator of the Museum of London: "It triggered his imagination." He added, "He knew its alleyways and streets better than anyone." The Charles Dickens Museum is housed in Dickens former family house in Doughty Street. It was here he wrote '*Oliver Twist*' and '*Nicholas Nickelby*'. The museum, which opened in 1925, holds the world's most important collection of Dickens items, including his pens, letters and furniture.

Dickens is buried in Westminster Abbey's Poet Corner, alongside other literary greats. Many of Dickens relatives are buried in Highgate Cemetery. To mark the Dickens bicentenary, the cemetery is hosting Dickens tours. The Museum of London in London is hosting a 'Dickens and London' exhibition. Dickens used to like visiting Covent Garden. In his day it was a proper working market. Lincoln's Inn and Chancery Lane feature in '*Bleak House*'. Gray's Inn is used as a location in both '*David Copperfield*' and '*The Pickwick Papers*'. The bells of the clock tower in St Dunstan-in-the-West church, Fleet Street, are the ones which wake Scrooge to his new life at the end of '*A Christmas Carol*'. Pubs and taverns also feature in his books. Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese pub, just off Fleet Street features in '*A Tale of Two Cities*'. The Grapes pub in Limehouse, east London feels very Dickensian. It featured in '*Our Mutual Friend*'. Dickens letters suggest various culinary excursions along the river Thames. The Trafalgar Tavern in Greenwich in Dickens time was famous for its whitebait suppers.

'London Walks' run a Charles Dickens London Tour every Friday afternoon at 2.30pm, departing from Temple tube station. The company also run special Dickensian Christmas walks in late November and December.

**Category: Charles Dickens / Bicentenary / London
Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate**

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EXERCISES

1. **Charles Dickens:** Think of three things you know about Charles Dickens. Go round the room swapping details with others.

2. **Dictation:** The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

3. **Reading:** The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

4. **Vocabulary:** Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

5. **The article:** Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?

6. **Geography: London:** Where is London? Where is Fleet Street? Where is Covent Garden? What river goes through London? Where is Greenwich? Draw a map on the board then **look on Google maps** to help you.

7. **Charles Dickens:** In pairs think of five things from the article about Charles Dickens. Then add five things about Dickensian London. Write them below. Discuss together. Has London changed? How?

Charles Dickens	Dickensian London
1 _____	1 _____
2 _____	2 _____
3 _____	3 _____
4 _____	4 _____
5 _____	5 _____

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

8. **Let's roleplay 1:** In pairs/groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *BBC World Service* radio studio. Today's interview is about: *Dickensian London celebrates his bicentenary year*.

1 Alex Werner	3 An avid Dickens reader
2 A tourist visiting London	4 A journalist

The teacher will choose some pairs to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

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9. Let's think! In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with **Charles Dickens**. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

10. Let's roleplay 2: In pairs. You are in The Trafalgar Tavern in Greenwich. Start a conversation about: *Charles Dickens*. *5-minutes*.

11. Let's do 'The Article Quiz': Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A

- 1) Who is the article about?
- 2) Where is the Charles Dickens museum?
- 3) What year was Charles Dickens born?
- 4) Where is Dickens buried?
- 5) Where are many of Dickens relatives buried?

Student B

- 1) What is the Museum of London is hosting?
- 2) Where are the 'bells'?
- 3) What is held every Friday afternoon?
- 4) Where is the Trafalgar Tavern?
- 5) What did Dickens do at night?

12. What the Dickens is the author worth? With your partner consider what the brand name of Charles Dickens is worth financially today? Consider the business opportunities open to his brand today. Consider the film and TV opportunities, the e-books etc... Discuss with your partner.

13. Dickens books: In pairs, think of five best selling books Charles Dickens wrote. Write them below. Discuss together. Which was the best?

Famous Dickens books	Famous Dickens characters
1 _____	1 _____
2 _____	2 _____
3 _____	3 _____
4 _____	4 _____
5 _____	5 _____

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class

14. Presentation: In pairs, groups or individually: Prepare in class or at home a two minute presentation on: **Charles Dickens**. Stand at the front of the class to give your presentation to the class. The class can vote on the best presentation.

15. Let's write an e-mail: Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: **Charles Dickens**. Your e-mail can be read out in class.

16. Sentence starters: Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- a) Charles Dickens _____
- b) The author _____

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DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) Have you ever been to London? If yes, when were you last there?
- 3) Have you read *Oliver Twist*?
- 4) Would you like to visit Highgate Cemetery in London?
- 5) Why is Charles Dickens so important today?
- 6) What does Dickensian London tell us?
- 7) Would you like to go on a Dickensian tour?
- 8) Would you like to visit the pubs mentioned by Dickens in his books? Why?
- 9) Would you like to have lived in Dickens Dickensian London?
- 10) Will you consider reading a Charles Dickens book after this lesson?

Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you have read?
- 2) Have you learnt anything in today's English lesson?
- 3) What Charles Dickens books have you read?
- 4) What is your favourite Charles Dickens book?
- 5) Have you ever read *A Christmas Carol*?
- 6) Would you like to visit Dickensian London?
- 7) Why do you think food was so important in Charles Dickens books?
- 8) What triggers your imagination?
- 9) Do you ever pace the streets anywhere over anything?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

SPEAKING

Let's discuss! Charles Dickens and Dickensian London

Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs / 1 to 1

20 things about Charles Dickens, his books, his characters and Dickensian London
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The teacher can moderate the session.

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GAP FILL: READING: edited

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Dickensian London celebrates his bicentenary year

This year marks the bicentenary of Charles Dickens. The famous British writer and (1)_____ created some of the best known (2)_____ in English literature, including *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* and *Miss Havisham*. Dickens was inspired by what he saw in the streets of London. Hence the term *Dickensian London*. In his day Dickens saw the capital, its hustle and bustle, its glittering promise and (3)_____ streets and the extremes of (4)_____ and (5)_____ experienced by those who lived there. Dickens was known to spend hours pacing the streets of London, (6)_____ at the dead of night, drawing inspiration from what he saw around him. Alex Werner, the curator of the Museum of London: "It triggered his imagination." He added, "He knew its (7)_____ and streets better than anyone." The Charles Dickens Museum is housed in Dickens former family house in Doughty Street. It was here he wrote '*Oliver Twist*' and '*Nicholas Nickelby*'. The museum, which opened in 1925, holds the world's most important collection of Dickens items, including his pens, letters and (8)_____.

characters

wealth

poverty

furniture

grimy

alleyways

author

especially

location

tours

cemetery

alongside

taverns

excursions

bells

market

Dickens is buried in Westminster Abbey's Poet Corner, (1)_____ other literary greats. Many of Dickens relatives are buried in Highgate Cemetery. To mark the Dickens bicentenary, the (2)_____ is hosting Dickens (3)_____. The Museum of London in London is hosting a 'Dickens and London' exhibition. Dickens used to like visiting Covent Garden. In his day it was a proper working (4)_____. Lincoln's Inn and Chancery Lane feature in '*Bleak House*'. Gray's Inn is used as a (5)_____ in both '*David Copperfield*' and '*The Pickwick Papers*'. The (6)_____ of the clock tower in St Dunstan-in-the-West church, Fleet Street, are the ones which wake Scrooge to his new life at the end of '*A Christmas Carol*'. Pubs and (7)_____ also feature in his books. Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese pub, just off Fleet Street features in '*A Tale of Two Cities*'. The Grapes pub in Limehouse, east London feels very Dickensian. It featured in '*Our Mutual Friend*'. Dickens letters suggest various culinary (8)_____ along the river Thames.

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GAP FILL: LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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Dickens is buried in Westminster Abbey's Poet Corner, alongside _____. Many of Dickens relatives are buried in Highgate Cemetery. To mark the Dickens bicentenary, the cemetery is hosting Dickens tours. The Museum of London in London is hosting a 'Dickens and London' exhibition. Dickens used to like visiting Covent Garden. In his day it was a _____. Lincoln's Inn and Chancery Lane feature in '*Bleak House*'. Gray's Inn is used as a location in both '*David Copperfield*' and '*The Pickwick Papers*'. The bells _____ St Dunstan-in-the-West church, Fleet Street, are the ones which wake Scrooge _____ the end of '*A Christmas Carol*'. Pubs and taverns also feature in his books. Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese pub, just off Fleet Street features in '*A Tale of Two Cities*'. The Grapes pub in Limehouse, east London feels very Dickensian. It featured in '*Our Mutual Friend*'. Dickens letters suggest various _____ along the river Thames. The Trafalgar Tavern in Greenwich in Dickens time was famous for _____.

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GRAMMAR - edited

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Dickensian London celebrates his bicentenary year

(1)___ year marks the bicentenary of Charles Dickens. The famous British writer and author created (2)___ of the best known characters in English literature, including *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* and *Miss Havisham*. Dickens was inspired by (3)___ he saw in the streets of London. Hence the term *Dickensian London*. In his day Dickens saw the capital, its hustle and bustle, its glittering promise and grimy streets and the extremes of poverty and wealth experienced by (4)___ who lived there. Dickens was known to spend hours pacing the streets of London, especially at the dead of night, drawing inspiration from (5)___ he saw around him. Alex Werner, the curator of the Museum of London: "It triggered his imagination." He added, "He knew its alleyways and streets better (6)___ anyone." The Charles Dickens Museum is housed in Dickens former family house in Doughty Street. It was here he wrote '*Oliver Twist*' and '*Nicholas Nickelby*'. The museum, (7)___ opened in 1925, holds the world's (8)___ important collection of Dickens items, including his pens, letters and furniture.

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Dickens is buried (1)___ Westminster Abbey's Poet Corner, alongside other literary greats. Many of Dickens relatives are buried in Highgate Cemetery. To mark the Dickens bicentenary, the cemetery is hosting Dickens tours. The Museum of London in London is hosting (2)___ 'Dickens and London' exhibition. Dickens used to like visiting Covent Garden. In his day (3)___ was a proper working market. Lincoln's Inn and Chancery Lane feature in '*Bleak House*'. Gray's Inn is used as a location in both '*David Copperfield*' (4)___ '*The Pickwick Papers*'. The bells (5)___ the clock tower in St Dunstan-in-the-West church, Fleet Street, are the ones which wake Scrooge to his new life at the end of '*A Christmas Carol*'. Pubs and taverns also feature in (6)___ books. Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese pub, just off Fleet Street features in '*A Tale of Two Cities*'. (7)___ Grapes pub in Limehouse, east London feels very Dickensian. It featured in '(8)___ *Mutual Friend*'. Dickens letters suggest various culinary excursions along the river Thames.

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SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	poverty	11	furniture
2	alongside	12	museum
3	literary	13	characters
4	relatives	14	grimy
5	Dickensian	15	taverns
6	literature	16	cemetery
7	bicentenary	17	culinary
8	hence	18	especially
9	imagination	19	wealth
10	curator	20	author

LINKS

<http://wiki.answers.com/Q/FAQ/4030>
<http://www.answers.com/topic/charles-dickens>
<http://www.dickens-literature.com/>
<http://dickens.ucsc.edu/resources/faq/>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_dickens
<http://www.visitkent.co.uk/explore/dickens-events.asp>

ANSWERS

GAP FILL: Dickensian London celebrates his bicentenary year: This year marks the bicentenary of Charles Dickens. The famous British writer and **author** created some of the best known **characters** in English literature, including *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* and *Miss Havisham*. Dickens was inspired by what he saw in the streets of London. Hence the term *Dickensian London*. In his day Dickens saw the capital, its hustle and bustle, its glittering promise and **grimy** streets and the extremes of **poverty** and **wealth** experienced by those who lived there. Dickens was known to spend hours pacing the streets of London, **especially** at the dead of night, drawing inspiration from what he saw around him. Alex Werner, the curator of the Museum of London: "It triggered his imagination." He added, "He knew its **alleyways** and streets better than anyone." The Charles Dickens Museum is housed in Dickens former family house in Doughty Street. It was here he wrote '*Oliver Twist*' and '*Nicholas Nickelby*'. The museum, which opened in 1925, holds the world's most important collection of Dickens items, including his pens, letters and **furniture**.

Dickens is buried in Westminster Abbey's Poet Corner, **alongside** other literary greats. Many of Dickens relatives are buried in Highgate Cemetery. To mark the Dickens bicentenary, the **cemetery** is hosting Dickens **tours**. The Museum of London in London is hosting a 'Dickens and London' exhibition. Dickens used to like visiting Covent Garden. In his day it was a proper working **market**. Lincoln's Inn and Chancery Lane feature in '*Bleak House*'. Gray's Inn is used as a **location** in both '*David Copperfield*' and '*The Pickwick Papers*'. The **bells** of the clock tower in St Dunstan-in-the-West church, Fleet Street, are the ones which wake Scrooge to his new life at the end of '*A Christmas Carol*'. Pubs and **taverns** also feature in his books. Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese pub, just off Fleet Street features in '*A Tale of Two Cities*'. The Grapes pub in Limehouse, east London feels very Dickensian. It featured in '*Our Mutual Friend*'. Dickens letters suggest various culinary **excursions** along the river Thames. The Trafalgar Tavern in Greenwich in Dickens time was famous for its whitebait suppers. **(V4)**

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