

CHARLES DICKENS

Charles Dickens was born in Landport in 1812. He had an unhappy childhood since his father went to prison for debt and he had to work in a factory at the age of twelve. He knew the squalid suburbs of London and he stayed in contact with the poorest social classes. These days of suffering inspired his novels. In his novels he is interested in the social problems of that time such as the conditions of the poor and working class. He describes his characters with irony and spirit of sympathy. He died in 1870 and was buried in Westminster Abbey in London. He remains one of the most popular English Novelists of all time. Among his most important works we can remember "Oliver Twist", "A Christmas Carol", "David Copperfield", "Bleak house" and "Great Expectations".

Oliver Twist is the first of the novels in which Dickens reflects on the defects of society and the functioning of public administration.

Oliver Twist is a poor orphan boy. He is brought up in a workhouse and later he is sold to an undertaker as an apprentice, but the cruelty and the unhappiness he experiences with his new master get him to run away to London. There he falls into the hands of a nasty gang of young pickpockets. Oliver is kidnapped by the gang and forced to commit burglary; during the job he is shot and wounded. At last a middle-class family adopts Oliver and shows kindness and affection towards him. Investigations are made about who the boy is and it is discovered he has noble origins. The gang of pickpockets and Oliver's half-brother (Monks), who paid the thieves in order to ruin Oliver and have their father's property all for himself, are arrested in the end.

A Christmas Carol is essentially the tale of Ebenezer Scrooge, an old miser man who, during the night of Christmas Eve, after receiving the visit of his dead business partner Jacob Marley and of three spirits (the ghost of Christmas Past, the ghost of Christmas Present, the ghost of Christmas Yet to Come) changes completely his behavior. Progressively he understands the importance of altruism and begins to spend his money in

useful ways, to help needy people. He becomes jolly, charitable and friendly with everybody.

With this novel Dickens wanted to focus especially on the man's inability to consider in the right way moral values. People very often give too much importance to wealth and greed and neglects important values such as altruism, simplicity, honesty, family and love.

QUESTIONS

1. **Who was Charles Dickens?** He was one of the most popular English Novelist of all time
2. **Where and when was he born?** He was born in Landport in 1812
3. **How was his childhood?** It was unhappy. The writer knew the squalid suburbs of London and the poorest social classes
4. **What is the content of his novels?** He describes the social problems of that time such as the conditions of the poor and working class. He describes his characters with irony and spirit of sympathy
5. **What are his main novels?** They are *Oliver Twist*, *A Christmas Carol*, *David Copperfield*, *Bleak house* and *Great Expectations*.
6. **What about *Oliver Twist* ?** It reflects on the defects of society and the functioning of public administration.
7. **What about *A Christmas Carol* ?** With this novel Dickens wanted to focus on the man's inability to consider in the right way moral values. People very often give too much importance to wealth and greed and neglects important values such as altruism, simplicity, honesty, family and love.
8. *Oliver Twist* is about...
9. *A Christmas Carol* is about...