

# David Copperfield

## Charles Dickens

### A Before Reading

1 Charles Dickens, the author of *David Copperfield*, is one of the most famous British writers of the nineteenth century. Do you know any other stories he wrote? From the list below, tick the titles which you think he also wrote (there are 4 correct answers):

- A Christmas Carol*
- Vanity Fair*
- A Tale of Two Cities*
- The Lord of the Rings*
- Great Expectations*
- A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- Oliver Twist*

2 Like Dickens' other stories, *David Copperfield* is set in the nineteenth century and it tells us a lot about life and society at that time in England. How do you think life was different then? Write your ideas in the table.

Transport	Social classes/ groups in society	The lives of men and women	Education and the lives of children
	<i>eg Big differences between upper, middle and working class people's lives</i>		

Now read pages 4-5 of the book to check your ideas.

3 The following places in England are all mentioned in the story as David travels from place to place. Do you know where in England they are? Try to put them in the correct place on the map.

- Plymouth
- Canterbury
- Suffolk
- Dover
- Yarmouth

Do you know any other English towns or regions?  
If so, add them to the map.



## B While Reading

- 4 David often changes home in the story, living with many different people. As you read, make a record of where he is living, with whom and whether this is a happy time in his life.

Where?	With whom?	A happy time?
<i>Blunderstone, Suffolk</i>	<i>Mother, Peggotty and then Mr Murdstone</i>	<i>Yes, until Mr Murdstone arrived.</i>

- 5 "I wrote Agnes a long letter, telling her that Dora and I were engaged. I also told her about poor little Emily and how unhappy I was about Steerforth." (page 57)

Write this letter from David to Agnes, describing these two important parts of the story.

Dear Agnes,

- 6 a *"Soon I was on the coach and travelling fast along the London road. I was well-educated, well-dressed and I had plenty of money. I thought of the past... How my life had changed!"*

Write a list of the people and things which have helped David make these big changes to his life:

**Example:** *The help and kindness of his friends, the Micawbers*

- b How easy/difficult is it in your country now for people to change their lives and class/social group? Is there good education for people of all classes? Is it possible to marry someone of a different class?

## C After Reading

- 7 a David's two schools, Salem House and Dr Strong's school in Canterbury, were very different. How?
- b Read the sentences about education and tick (✓) to show if you agree/disagree or if you think it depends on the situation.

	Agree	It depends	Disagree
Teachers should be strict with students, so that they obey and learn more.			
Sending children away to boarding school can be a good idea.			
Teachers should never hit students.			
Girls and boys should receive exactly the same education.			

Choose one of the sentences and write a paragraph explaining your opinion.

- 8 *"Dickens tried to improve the society in which he lived. He wrote about bad things because he wanted everyone to know the truth. People of all classes read Dickens' stories and enjoyed them. Then they helped Dickens to change society and make their country a better place to live in."* (page 5)

How important do you think it is for writers and film makers to tell the truth about their societies? Do you think it is possible for them to bring changes by showing the problems?

Imagine that you are going to write a book to show the problems in society in your country now. Which three problems would you show?

**Examples:** *unemployment, youth crime, terrorism, environmental pollution, broken families, war, use of guns/knives, poverty, poor education*

Write a paragraph describing the three problems and suggesting how things need to change in society.