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***Great Expectations***  
BY CHARLES DICKENS



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All references come from the Prestwick House Literary Touchstone Classics edition of *Great Expectations*, published 2006. Activity Pack written by Nicole Guertin.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Pre-Reading****Thematic Ideas**

Objectives:     Understanding thematic ideas  
                  Developing positions for debate  
                  Focusing reading

**Activity**

Choose one of the thematic statements from the worksheet and write a position paper on it. The paper should offer at least three specific, detailed examples that support your opinion on the issue.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter I****Imagery**

**Objectives:**     Visualizing imagery  
                         Understanding how imagery contributes to foreshadowing

**Activity**

Re-read the following passage from the end of Chapter I, and in the space below, using only the colors Pip mentions, sketch what Pip sees.

The marshes were just a long black horizontal line then, as I stopped to look after him; and the river was just another horizontal line, not nearly so broad nor yet so black; and the sky was just a row of long angry red lines and dense black lines intermixed. On the edge of the river I could faintly make out the only two black things in all the prospect that seemed to be standing upright; one of these was the beacon by which the sailors steered – like an unhooped cask upon a pole – an ugly thing when you were near it; the other a gibbet, with some chains hanging to it which had once held a pirate. The man was limping on towards this latter, as if he were the pirate come to life, and come down, and going back to hook himself up again. It gave me a terrible turn when I thought so; and as I saw the cattle lifting their heads to gaze after him, I wondered whether they thought so too.

1. What could the beacon and gibbet represent?

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2. What could they foreshadow?

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As you read, look for evidence to prove or disprove your opinions.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapters X – XIII****Comic Relief****Objective:** Analyzing the use of comic relief**Activity**

Though *Great Expectations* is a serious novel, Dickens uses humor pervasively. One way is through humorous character names such as Pumblechook and Wopsle. His descriptions of social interactions often have humorous aspects to them, as well. For each scene below,

- identify the situation or language that makes it humorous.
- suggest what serious effect Dickens could be reinforcing by contrast with the humor.

1. Chapter X: Mr. Wopsle's great-aunt's classroom

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2. Chapter XI: Miss Havisham's conversation with her relatives

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3. Chapter XI: Pip's fight with the "pale young gentleman"

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4. Chapter XIII: Joe's meeting with Miss Havisham

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5. Why do you think Dickens chooses to use humor in otherwise serious situations?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapters XV – XIX****Allusion**

- Objectives:**
- Interpreting allusions
  - Understanding the value of allusions
  - Using allusions to enrich descriptions

**Activity**

Authors use allusions to enhance their descriptions through comparisons. They are a kind of literary inside joke because, while you can still comprehend the literal meaning of a passage without understanding an allusion it contains, you don't get the pleasure of the added detail, and often, the humor, the allusions provide. Dickens uses many allusions to enrich our understanding of the novel.

For each of the allusions below:

- A. explain in detail the historical or literary event or person to which Dickens is referring.
- B. explain how understanding the details of the reference add to your understanding or appreciation for the situation in the novel in which the reference occurs.

**Example:**

“The boat had returned, and his guard were ready...no one seemed surprised to see him, or interested in seeing him, or glad to see him, or sorry to see him, or spoke a word, except that somebody in the boat growled as if to dogs, ‘Give way, you!’ which was the signal for the dip of the oars. By the light of the torches, we saw the black Hulk lying out a little way from the mud of the shore, like a wicked Noah's ark. Cribbed and barred and moored by massive rusty chains, the prison-ship seemed in my young eyes to be ironed like the prisoners.”

- A. Dickens uses the Biblical story of Noah's ark to enhance the description of the prison ship. In the story, God is angry because everyone has forgotten him. He finds that Noah and his family are the only good people left—the only ones who still follow him. So he tells Noah to build a ship and to collect two of each kind of animal and load them onto the ship. Then, God sends so much rain on the earth that all the evil people and all the remaining animals are drowned. Only those on the ark survive. After the earth dries, Noah and his family and the pairs of animals come out of the ark and repopulate the earth.
- B. Dickens calls his a “wicked Noah's ark,” turning the traditional story on its ear: it is not the good people of society that are being saved, but the evil that are being collected. Other parallels are that all types of criminals are on the ship, just as every kind of animal was loaded onto the ark, that there are many of them, and that they are sequestered on the ship, away from the rest of society.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapters I – XIX****Plot****Objective:** Predicting outcomes**Activity**

Based on the events through Chapter XIX and the suspense Dickens has created with the characters (their past experiences, actions, motives, and desires), what are your predictions for the roles they will play in the remainder of the story? Will they have more, less, or the same importance as they do now? Think in terms of a deck of cards with which Dickens is playing. What value or role in the coming action will each person below have? Assign each person to a face or number card, and write a brief explanation of your choices.

Consider the following characters:

- Mrs. Joe
- Joe
- Pip
- the convict in the marshes
- Biddy
- Miss Havisham
- Estella
- Mr. Jaggers
- Mr. Pumblechook
- Sarah Pocket
- Mr. Wopsle
- Orlick
- Camilla and Raymond