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Sample

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Literature Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Oliver Twist

by Charles Dickens

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. define style and point out Dickens' use of parallelism in the novel.
2. discuss how setting is often symbolic.
3. identify examples of the following literary devices:
 - theme
 - narrator
 - contrast
 - personification
4. point out how Dickens uses foreshadowing to build tension and suspense.
5. define irony and recognize it in the story, including the following:
 - the fate of the Bumbles
 - the fate of Bill Sikes
6. define satire and discuss ways that satire is used to ridicule, particularly the social institutions in this novel.
7. find examples of comic relief in this story.
8. discuss the importance of the following themes in the novel:
 - the struggle of evil to overcome the good and innocent of the world
 - the ability for man to achieve happiness only by counting on kind people in the world
 - fate, and its control over people's lives
9. define the first person narrator and recognize when the narrator breaks away from the story to speak directly to the reader.
10. discuss the intricate plot and the intertwined relationship between characters.
11. identify the protagonist and antagonist of the story and the conflict that drives the plot forward.
12. identify the many coincidences in this novel that eventually result in the resolution of the conflict.
13. cite incidents from the novel to demonstrate Dickens' point of view on the treatment of the poor by society.

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. List four coincidences in the novel that must be accepted by the reader for the story to be believed.
2. Write a brief character sketch of Nancy. Do you think the character grows and changes by the end of the story? If so, what motivates the change? If not, what prevents it?
3. Support or refute the following statement by citing incidents from the story: Charitable institutions only reproduced the horrible circumstances in which the poor already lived.
4. In what ways can the scene in which Mr. Bumble woos Mrs. Corney be considered humorous? If it is satirical, at what group of people is Dickens poking fun?
5. Discuss the definition of irony. List and explain at least three examples of irony in this novel.
6. Dickens often selects names for his characters to contribute to a reader's understanding of the character or to foreshadow the character's future. What is significant about the following character names?
 - Oliver Twist
 - Rose Maylie
 - Mr. Bumble
 - Toby Crackit
 - Mrs. Mann
 - Mr. Grimwig
 - Bull's-eye
7. Discuss the use of London Bridge in this book. What does its use symbolize in this particular novel?
8. There are numerous examples of good and evil in this book. Select one example to support or refute the following statement: The line between who is good and who is evil is often blurred in this novel.
9. Dickens writes about orphans in many of his novels, and in this novel numerous orphans are present. What do you think he is saying about what it takes to properly raise a child?
10. Define a coming-of-age novel. In what ways does this novel fit the definition?
11. Discuss the character little Dick. What is his function in the story?
12. Discuss Gamfield, the chimney sweep. Why do you think Dickens included him in the story?

Oliver Twist

Chapter I

VOCABULARY

appendage—limb
buffeted—pummeled
consolatory—comforting
cuffed—hit
drudge—labor
indubitably—unquestionably
interposed—inserted
prudent—careful

1. Briefly describe the condition of the infant that is born in Chapter I. What might these conditions foreshadow of its future?

2. What does the conversation between the nurse and the surgeon reveal?

3. What happens to the infant after his mother dies?

Chapter X

VOCABULARY

axiom—adage
languish—get weaker
sallied—went forth

1. At the beginning of the chapter, what is Oliver's job?

2. Why does Fagin decide to let Oliver go with Charley and Dodger?

3. What realization finally comes to Oliver?

4. How does the reaction of the gentleman surprise Oliver and those around them?

Chapter XVII

VOCABULARY

alternation—fluctuation
deferentially—respectfully
fetters—chains
intimation—hint
jocularly—playfulness
portly—overweight
regales—entertains
rejoinder—comeback
sanctioned—authorized
sundry—various

1. What two aspects of life are juxtaposed at the beginning of this chapter? Why does Dickens include this discussion?

2. How is Mr. Bumble presented as both a comic and a tragic figure?

3. How does Oliver's character continue to be presented as innocent and untainted?

Chapter XXVI

VOCABULARY

boisterous—rowdy
denizens—businessmen
joviality—cheerfulness
languidly—lazily
profligacy—extravagance
sallow—yellow
skulking—lurking
supposition—belief

1. Why is the scene at The Three Cripples symbolic of the mood of the story at this point?

2. Who is Fagin looking for when he arrives at The Three Cripples?

3. Who does Fagin find at Sikes' home? What is her wish?
