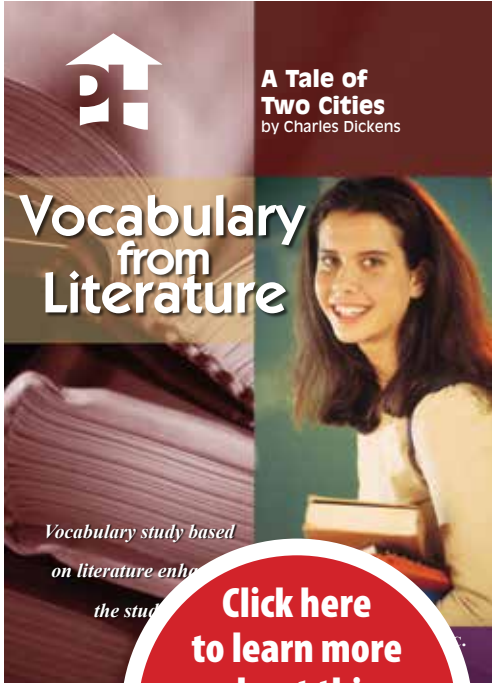




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# *A Tale of Two Cities*

*by Charles Dickens*

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*Vocabulary From Literature*

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## Vocabulary From Literature

### Information for Instructors

The activities in this Unit are designed to help students increase their vocabulary by studying the meanings of words selected from Charles Dickens' novel *A Tale of Two Cities*. All definitions provided in these activities are based on the contexts in which the vocabulary words appear, which may not always convey the words' conventional usage.

It is the goal of this Unit to familiarize students with vocabulary words that they will re-encounter in life and in other readings. The words are carefully selected to meet this goal. Many unfamiliar words not covered by the Unit are defined in a Glossary following the Activities section; the Glossary may also contains slang expressions and proper nouns.

Rather than matching *A Tale of Two Cities* chapter-for-chapter, we have divided the book into segments depending on the number of vocabulary words from each chapter. While all of the activities may be completed by students individually, we have had the best results when students worked on them in pairs or small groups. The following activities are provided for each segment.

While the words in this reproducible do represent those necessary for a better understanding of the text, our primary concern is that we select words not only pertinent to the literature, but also useful in other aspects of the students' lives.

In addition, activities may vary slightly among the various chapters.

All page references come from the Prestwick House Literary Touchstone Press edition of *A Tale of Two Cities*, published 2005. Other editions may have different pagination.

#### Activity I

Objective: Using a dictionary to find definitions and interpret them

#### Activity II

Objective: Deciphering the meaning of vocabulary words using context clues  
Replacing the vocabulary word with appropriate definition or synonym(s)

#### Activity III

Objective: Writing definitions, synonyms, and/or sentences based on context clues

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**Activity III**  
**Writing Synonyms and Sentences**  
**Using Context Clues**  
**Section I (Pgs. 9-51)**

**Directions:** For each highlighted word, write a synonym that fits the context of the passage. Then, check the answers by looking the words up in the dictionary. Finally, write a sentence using each word.

1. It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the **superlative** degree of comparison only. (Pg. 9)

Synonym for **superlative**:

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2. ...thieves snipped off diamond crosses from the necks of noble lords at Court drawing-rooms; musketeers went into St. Giles's, to search for **contraband** goods, and the mob fired on the musketeers, and the musketeers fired on the mob, and nobody thought any of these occurrences much out of the common way. (Pg. 11)

Synonym for **contraband**:

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3. ...now, burning people in the hand at Newgate by the dozen, and now burning pamphlets at the door of Westminster Hall; to-day, taking the life of an atrocious murderer, and to-morrow of a wretched **pilferer** who had robbed a farmer's boy of sixpence. (Pg. 11)

Synonym for **pilferer**:

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9. Now, which of the **multitude** of faces that showed themselves before him was the true face of the buried person, the shadows of the night did not indicate; but they were all the faces of a man of five-and-forty by years, and they differed principally in the passions they expressed, and in the ghastrliness of their worn and wasted state. (Pg. 21)

Synonym for **multitude**:

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10. He wore an odd little sleek crisp flaxen wig, setting very close to his head: which wig, it is to be **presumed**, was made of hair, but which looked far more as though it were spun from **filaments** of silk or glass. His linen, though not of a fineness in **accordance** with his stockings, was as white as the tops of the waves that broke upon the neighbouring beach, or the specks of sail that glistened in the sun-light far at sea. A face **habitually suppressed** and quieted was still lighted up under the quaint wig by a pair of moist bright eyes, that it must have cost their owner, in years gone by, some pains to drill to the composed and reserved expression of Tellson's Bank. (Pg. 24)

Synonym for **presumed**:

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Synonym for **filaments**:

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Synonym for **accordance**:

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Synonym for **habitually**:

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Synonym for **suppressed**:

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*A Tale of Two Cities*

Activity V  
Roots and Prefixes  
Section I (Pgs. 9-51)

**Directions:**

A: The word *sonorous* comes from the Latin verb *sonare*, meaning “to make a sound.” For each of the *son* words below, choose the correct definition. Use a dictionary if you need help.

- sonic: A. having to do with sound  
B. silent  
C. too noisy
- sonnet: A. sound  
B. fourteen-line poem  
C. sound of pain
- unison: A. speaking together at once  
B. lonely sound  
C. lack of sound
- sonata: A. musical sound  
B. musical composition  
C. deep sound
- assonance: A. similarity of vowel sounds  
B. difference in sound  
C. silence
- consonant: A. sonnet  
B. speech sound that is not a vowel  
C. extra sound
- dissonant: A. making noise  
B. respectful  
C. not harmonious
- resound: A. to echo  
B. to be heard too many times  
C. to sing

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**Activity V**  
**Roots and Prefixes**  
**Section II (Pgs. 53-111)**

**Directions:** The word *affidavit* literally means “he has pledged.” It comes from the Latin verb *affidare*, which comes from *fidus*, meaning “faithful.” The chart below contains *fid* words. Use the information given to fill in the missing spaces.

Prefix	Prefix Meaning	Word	Meaning
<i>con</i>	very		
<i>con</i>			sure, certain
<i>dis</i>		defy	
<i>dif</i> (originally <i>dis</i> )			
_____	_____	fiancé	

*Convivial* comes from the Latin prefix *con*, “together,” + *vivere*, “to live.” In fact, for the Romans, a *convivium* was a banquet. For each of the *viv* words below, pick the best synonym. Use a dictionary if you need help.

- revive      A. resuscitate  
               B. remember  
               C. review
  
- vivacious    A. anarchic  
               B. annual  
               C. animated
  
- survive      A. indoctrinate  
               B. investigate  
               C. endure
  
- viand        A. mortal  
               B. morsel  
               C. mortify
  
- vivid         A. dreamlike  
               B. lifelike  
               C. unlike