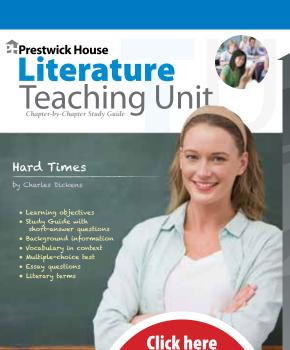


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# Literature Teaching Unit Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



# Prestwick House

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ISBN: 978-1-58049-297-3

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Item No: 300450

Hard Times TEACHING UNIT

# **Hard Times**

### <u>Objectives</u>

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

1. cite incidents from the text to support the following themes and discuss the ways the themes intertwine:

- An industrialized society sacrifices the welfare of the working class for economic gains.
- Children need more than a utilitarian education; they also need amusement and freedom to use their imaginations.
- Men and women of all social classes need a lawful way to obtain a divorce.
- Many of the upper class are unjustifiably arrogant, snobbish, lazy, and self-important.
- 2. recognize that *Hard Times* has elements of allegory in which classes of people in an industrialized society are representative; discuss what abstract ideas or moral qualities the characters might represent.
- 3. cite instances in the story illustrating the motif of watching or keeping someone under surveillance.
- 4. point out instances of the following literary devices:
  - foreshadowing
  - allusion
  - metaphor
  - simile
  - personification
- 5. recognize the many cliffhangers in the story and discuss why Dickens often ends chapters in this way.
- 6. discuss the significance of the chapter titles, including how the titles relate to the themes and why some of the titles are ironic.
- 7. recognize other instances of irony in the story.
- 8. discuss the significance of character names including the following:
  - how the names add humor to the story
  - the ways the names help to enhance characterization
  - Dickens' use of epithets to enhance characterization
- 9. define vocabulary words from the text.

3 OBJECTIVES

Hard Times TEACHING UNIT

# **Hard Times**

### **Questions for Essay and Discussion**

1. Assuming that *Hard Times* is an allegory, what might each of the following characters represent?

Bounderby

Mr. Gradgrind

Mr. Childers

Mr. Kidderminister

Mr. Sleary

Sissy

Tom, Bitzer

Louisa

Mrs. Sparsit

- 2. In what ways does Mrs. Sparsit unwittingly harm Bounderby?
- 3. The Notes at the beginning of the book discuss Charles Dickens' life and life in the Dickensian era. Answer the following questions based on the Notes.

Why did Dickens support easier divorce laws?

What impact did this novel have on the social issues of the time?

- 4. Read the table of contents which lists the chapter titles. Which titles are ironic? Which titles seem to point to Louisa's potential decline into immorality?
- 5. List three vocabulary words describing Bounderby's character.
- 6. Write a character sketch of Louisa. Be sure to include an explanation of why she is often described as staring into fire.
- 7. What are the two main plot lines in the story? Discuss the ways each plot line illustrates the following themes:

An industrialized society sacrifices the welfare of the working class for economic gains.

Children need more than a utilitarian education; they also need amusements and freedom to use their imaginations.

Men and women of all social classes need a lawful way to obtain a divorce.

Many of the upper class are unjustifiable arrogant, snobbish, lazy, and self-important.

8. Cite two instances of dramatic irony in the story.

# **Hard Times**

#### **BOOK THE FIRST – SOWING**

## Chapter I – The One Thing Needful

**VOCABULARY** 

cellarage - space in a cellar
commodious - offering plenty of room; spacious; roomy

1.	Hard Times was originally written in weekly installments for the magazine "Household"
	Words." In this first, brief chapter, Dickens introduces one of the major themes of the
	novel: the failure of the educational system to provide children with both a factual and
	an artistic, spiritual, imaginative education. Find a passage in this chapter reflecting this
	idea.

Use the following passage to answer the next two questions:

The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a schoolroom, and the speaker's square forefinger emphasized his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster's sleeve. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellarage in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's mouth, which was wide, thin, and hard set. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's voice, which was inflexible, dry and dictatorial. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's hair, which bristled on the skirts of his bald head, a plantation of firs to keep the wind from its shining surface, all covered with knobs, like the crust of a plum pie, as if the head had scarcely warehouse-room for the hard facts stored inside. The speaker's obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs, square shoulders, – nay, his very neckcloth, trained to take him by the throat with an unaccommodating grasp, like a stubborn fact, at it was, – all helped the emphasis.

	In what sense are Louisa and Thomas Gradgrind analogous to the people of Coketo
	<u>Chapter VI – Sleary's Horsemanship</u> VOCABULARY
1	abashed – made embarrassed and ill at ease absconded – ran away and hid bismuth – a hard, brittle metal carmine – a red or purplish-red pigment cheeking – disrespectful boldness, sauciness conciliate – to win over; soothe the anger of dudgeon – anger or resentment
<b>6</b>	ejaculated – to say suddenly ethereal – very light, airy, delicate obtrusive – calling attention to oneself in a displeasing way ponging – stinking
,	Supercilious – disdainful or contemptuous  The image of a horse is a recurring motif in this story. Find an example of this motithis chapter.

	th Louisa in the morning suggest to the reader?
Why do you t	hink Tom warns Louisa about her father's talk with Bounderby? Wha
Tom want from	
	Chapter XV – Father and Daughter
	Chapter XV — Father and Daughter  VOCABULARY
	VOCABULARY
discomfited – recumbent – l Mr. Gradgrind Bounderby?"	Whole; total made uncomfortable

## Chapter II - Mr. James Harthouse

#### **VOCABULARY**

appellation – a name or title
enervate – to deprive of strength
epitome – a short statement of the main points
jocular – joking; humorous
predilection – a preconceived liking
salubrious – promoting health or welfare; healthful
superscribed – written, marked, or engraved
wry – turned or bent to one side; twisted

How does	Mr. James Harthouse feel about Louisa when he meets her for the first time?
	sage in this chapter that supports the following statement: Mr. James e is a young man who has no strong opinions or convictions of his own.
Tom. Tom	of the chapter, Mr. Harthouse seems to be developing a relationship with makes faces to show his contempt for Bounderby. Mr. Harthouse "encouraged
	in the course of the evening, and showed an unusual liking for him" Why ink Mr. Harthouse is befriending Tom?