

### **The Pickwick Papers**

(Monthly serial, April 1836 to November 1837)

The novel's main character, Mr. Samuel Pickwick, is a kind and wealthy old gentleman, the founder of the Pickwick Club. Mr. Pickwick travels with his friends, Mr. Nathaniel Winkle, Mr. Augustus Snodgrass, and Mr. Tracy Tupman, and their peregrinations through the English countryside provide the chief theme of the novel.

Alfred Jingle provides the Papers with an aura of comic villainy. His misadventures repeatedly land the Pickwickians in trouble.

### **The Adventures of Oliver Twist**

(Monthly serial in Bentley's Miscellany, February 1837 to April 1839)

Oliver Twist is the first novel in the English language to center throughout on a child protagonist and is also notable for Dickens' unromantic portrayal of criminals and their sordid lives.

An early example of the social novel, the book calls the public's attention to various contemporary social evils, including the Poor Law that states that poor people should work in workhouses, child labor and the recruitment of children as criminals.

Oliver Twist is born into a life of poverty and misfortune in a workhouse in an unnamed town within 75 miles of London. Orphaned almost from his first breath by his mother's death in childbirth and his father's unexplained absence, Oliver is meagerly provided for under the terms of the Poor Law, and spends the first nine years of his life at a "baby farm" in the 'care' of a woman named Mrs. Mann. The story follows Twist through adulthood

### **The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby**

(Monthly serial, April 1838 to October 1839)

The novel centers around the life and adventures of Nicholas Nickleby, a young man who must support his mother and sister after his father dies and His Uncle Ralph, who thinks Nicholas will never amount to anything.

### **The Old Curiosity Shop**

(Weekly serial in Master Humphrey's Clock, April 25, 1840, to February 6, 1841)

The Old Curiosity Shop tells the story of Nell Trent, a beautiful and virtuous young orphaned girl. She lives with her mother's father (whose name we never learn) in his shop of curiosities. Her grandfather becomes entangled with Dickens' most evil villain, a dwarf named Daniel Quilp, forcing them to leave their home & go into hiding.

### **Barnaby Rudge: A Tale of the Riots of 'Eighty**

(Weekly serial in Master Humphrey's Clock, February 13, 1841, to November 27, 1841)

One of Dickens' 2 historically based novels, the plot is based on the "no-popery" or Gordon riots of 1780 seen through the eyes of the simple but good-hearted title character Barnaby Rudge, a local idiot, wanders in and out of the story with his pet raven, Grip (who is the basis for Poe's *The Raven* poem)

The first part of the story details the life of the residents of a small village in Epping Forest, just outside London, in the year 1775. During this first part, the book examines life in this village, including interpersonal relationships, in a traditionally Dickensian style.

The book ends 5 years after it begins as the stability of village life is interrupted, echoing the destruction that the riots in Gordon's name will cause in London itself; and the themes and characters that Dickens has built up become essential to the reader's understanding of the effects of the riots on society.

### **The Christmas books:**

A Christmas Carol (1843)

The Chimes (1844)

The Cricket on the Hearth (1845)

The Battle of Life (1846)

The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain (1848)

### **The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit**

(Monthly serial, January 1843 to July 1844)

The novel deals with the greed of Old Martin's relatives, chiefly Mr. Pecksniff, hoping to inherit his wealth. The main theme of the novel, according to a Preface by Dickens, is selfishness, portrayed in a satirical fashion using all the members of the Chuzzlewit family

Dickens has young Martin Chuzzlewit, the old man's grandson, go off to America. Dickens goes on to vent some of his ill feelings for the colonies which caused controversy in the States.

### **Dombey and Son**

(Monthly serial, October 1846 to April 1848)

Dombey and Son, considered Dickens first artistically mature work, he began using notes he called "mems" to outline how the novel would progress. It was after Dombey and Son was published that Dickens' reputation as a world class author was established.

The story concerns Paul Dombey, the wealthy owner of the shipping company of the book's title, whose dream is to have a son to continue his business.

The book deals with the then-prevalent common practice of arranged marriages for financial gain. Other themes to be detected within this work include child cruelty (particularly in Dombey's treatment of Florence), familial relationships, and as ever in Dickens, betrayal and deceit and the consequences.

### **David Copperfield**

(Monthly serial, May 1849 to November 1850)

Dickens' eighth novel is a thinly disguised autobiography with many of the story lines mirroring Dickens' own life. Dickens' friend and first biographer, John Forster, wrote that "Dickens never stood so high in reputation as at the completion of Copperfield", and that in the novel Dickens had cast the suspicion "that underneath the fiction lay something of the author's life".

In telling the story of the child David, Dickens displays the unique ability to make the reader see through the eyes of the child, capturing the very essence of childhood. The story follows David through adulthood.

### **Bleak House**

(Monthly serial, March 1852 to September 1853)

Dickens' ninth novel was intended to illustrate the evils caused by long, drawn-out suits in the Courts of Chancery. Dickens had observed the inner workings of the courts as a reporter in his youth and observed that "The one great principle of the English law is to make business for itself". Bleak House is often considered Dickens' finest work although not his most popular.

The case concerns a long-running legal dispute (Jarndyce and Jarndyce) which has far-reaching consequences for all involved and involves a convoluted will, monies and land surrounding the Manor of Marr in South Yorkshire.

### **Hard Times: For These Times**

(Weekly serial in Household Words, April 1, 1854, to August 12, 1854)

One of his most politically charged novels structured according to Galatians 6:7, "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Dickens wished to satirize radical Utilitarians whom he described in a letter to Charles Knight as "see[ing] figures and averages, and nothing else." He also wished to campaign for reform of working conditions. Dickens had visited factories in Manchester as early as 1839, and was appalled by the environment in which workers toiled. Drawing upon his own childhood experiences, Dickens resolved to "strike the heaviest blow in my power" for those who labored in horrific conditions.

### **Little Dorrit**

(Monthly serial, December 1855 to June 1857)

Dickens sets the novel in the 1820's, around the time his father was an inmate in the Marshalsea. Much of Dickens's ire is focused upon the institutions of debtor's prisons—in which people who owed money were imprisoned, unable to work, until they repaid their debts. The theme of imprisonment, both physical and psychological, carries throughout the novel

### **A Tale of Two Cities**

(Weekly serial in All the Year Round, April 30, 1859, to November 26, 1859)

The novel, which begins "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times", is set against the backdrop of the French Revolution. It's about the rising and falling fortunes as a result of the revolution.

### **Great Expectations**

(Weekly serial in All the Year Round, December 1, 1860 to August 3, 1861)

Pip, an orphan, is brought up by his abusive sister and her husband, Joe Gargery, the kindly village blacksmith. After a series of unexpected encounters, Pip becomes the benefactor of a gentleman's education. Pip's innocence contrasts with the hardened natures of the books other characters: Estella, Ms. Havisham, Magwich & Jaggers.

Great Expectations explores the themes of love, the journey from childhood to adult & the role of fate in shaping one's life. The story provides comic relief through the characters of Wemmick, Herbert Pocket & Bidley.

### **Our Mutual Friend**

(Monthly serial, May 1864 to November 1865)

Dickens' fourteenth novel was his last completed work. The story centers on the effects of greed and the corruption that money brings.

John Harmon, son of a wealthy dust contractor and heir to his father's fortune loses his fortune in a case of mistaken identity & goes to great lengths to try to recover it.

### **No Thoroughfare**

(1867 with Wilkie Collins)

Written as both a novel & stage play. Two boys from the Foundling Hospital are given the same name, with disastrous consequences in adulthood. After the death of one – now a proprietor of a wine merchant's company - the executors, to right the wrong, are commissioned to find a missing heir. Their quest takes them from fungus wine cellars in the City of London to the sunshine of the Mediterranean—across the Alps in winter. Danger and treachery would prevail were it not for the courage of the heroine, Marguerite, and a faithful company servant.

### **The Mystery of Edwin Drood**

(Monthly serial, April 1870 to September 1870. Only six of twelve planned numbers completed)

The story is a murder mystery in which Edwin Drood is supposedly murdered and suspicion is cast on his uncle. Dickens left exactly half of the monthly installments unfinished when, after a day of working on the completion of chapter 22, he suffered a stroke on June 8, 1870 and died the next day.

Dickens guarded the mystery very closely while writing the story. Much conjecture about the actual outcome of the novel has taken place and The Mystery of Edwin Drood remains a mystery to this day

START				END				
Year	Mo	Dt	Dy	TITLE	Year	Mo	Dt	Dy
1833	12			"Dinner at Poplar Walk" in <i>Monthly Magazine</i> .				
1836	02	07	Su	Sketches by Boz				
1836	03	31	Th	Pickwick Papers	1837	11	18	Sa
1837	01	31	Tu	Oliver Twist	1839	04		
1838	03	31	Sa	Nicholas Nickleby	1839	09	30	Mo
1840	06			Master Humphrey's Clock	18			
1840	04	27	Mo	The Old Curiosity Shop	1841	02		
1841	02	13	Sa	Barnaby Rudge	1841	11	27	Sa
1842	10			American Notes				
1843	01			Martin Chuzzlewit	1844	07	01	
1843	12	19		A Christmas Carol				
1844	12			The Chimes				
1845	12	01		The Cricket on the Hearth				
1846	12			The Battle of Life				
1846	01			Pictures from Italy				
1846				Dombey and Son	1848	04		
1848	12			The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain				
1849	05	01		David Copperfield	1850	11		
1852				A Child's History of England	1854			
1852	03			Bleak House	1853			
1854	04	01		Hard Times	1854	08	12	
1855	12			Little Dorrit	1857	05		
1859	04	30		A Tale of Two Cities	1859	11	26	
1860	12			Great Expectations	1861	06		
1861				The Uncommercial Traveller	1861			
1864	05			Our Mutual Friend	1865	11		
1870				The Mystery of Edwin Drood	1870	09		

### **Short stories**

"Dinner at Poplar Walk" (Monthly Magazine, 1833)  
"A Child's Dream of a Star" (1850)  
"Captain Murderer"  
"George Silverman's Explanation"  
"Holiday Romance"  
"The Queer Chair"  
"The Ghosts of the Mail"  
"The Baron of Grozwig"  
"Hunted Down"  
"The Lamplighter"  
"The Perils of Certain English Prisoners" (with Wilkie Collins)  
"A Madman's Manuscript"  
"The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain"  
"A Ghost in the Bride's Chamber"  
"The Signal-Man" (1866)  
"Sunday Under Three Heads"  
"The Trial for Murder"  
"A House to Let" (1858)  
"The Long Voyage" (1853)  
"The Goblins who stole a Sexton"  
"To be Read at Dusk"

### **Short story collections**

Sketches by Boz (1836)  
Master Humphrey's Clock (1840-41)  
Boots at the Holly-tree Inn: And Other Stories (1858)  
Reprinted Pieces (1861)  
The Haunted House (1862) (with Wilkie Collins, Elizabeth Gaskell, Adelaide Proctor, George Sala and Hesba Setton)  
The Mudfog Papers (1880) aka Mudfog and Other Sketches  
To Be Read At Dusk (1898)

### **Articles and essays**

"A Coal Miner's Evidence"  
"Frauds on the Fairies"  
"In Memoriam W. M. Thackeray the first!"  
"The Lost Arctic Voyagers" (1854)

### **Christmas short stories**

"A Christmas Tree" (1850)  
"What Christmas is, as We Grow Older" (1851)  
"The Poor Relation's Story" (1852)  
"The Child's Story" (1852)  
"The Schoolboy's Story" (1853)  
"Nobody's Story" (1853)  
"The Seven Poor Travellers" (1854)  
"The Holly-tree Inn" (1855)  
"The Wreck of the Golden Mary" (1856)  
"The Perils of Certain English Prisoners" (1857)  
"Going into Society" (1858)  
"The Haunted House" (1859)  
"A Message from the Sea" (1860)  
"Tom Tiddler's Ground" (1861)  
"Somebody's Luggage" (1862)  
"Mrs Lirriper's Lodgings" (1863)  
"Mrs Lirriper's Legacy" (1864)  
"Doctor Marigold's Prescriptions" (1865)  
"Mugby Junction" (1866)  
"No Thoroughfare" (1867)

### **Nonfiction, poetry, and plays**

The Village Coquettes (Plays, 1836)  
The Fine Old English Gentleman (poetry, 1841)  
American Notes: For General Circulation (1842)  
Pictures from Italy (1846)  
The Life of Our Lord: As written for his children (1849)  
A Child's History of England (1853)  
The Frozen Deep (play, 1857)  
Speeches, Letters and Sayings (1870)  
Letters of Charles Dickens to Wilkie Collins (1851-1870, pub. 1982)  
The Complete Poems of Charles Dickens (1885)  
The Poems and Verses of Charles Dickens (1903)  
Complete Plays and Selected Poems (1974)