



VIRGINIA  
STAGE  
COMPANY  
AT THE  
Wells Theatre

PRESENTED IN COLLABORATION WITH **THE GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS**

DEVELOPED IN PART BY **ZEIDERS AMERICAN DREAM THEATER**

IN VIRGINIA BEACH, VA

# OLIVER TWIST

written by  
**CHARLES DICKENS**

adapted and directed by  
**PATRICK MULLINS**

study guide by **KAT MARTIN**

## STUDY GUIDE

SEPTEMBER 13 - OCTOBER 9  
TCC's ROPER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

#OLIVERwithaTWIST



# WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM VSC EDUCATION PROGRAMS

## Our Teaching Philosophy

We've witnessed firsthand what the creative process nurtures in children, teens and all lifelong learners:

- excitement, enthusiasm, and openness to explore their own creativity
- critical-thinking and problem solving skills
- enthusiasm for teamwork
- empathy and support toward peers
- strength in their ability to listen and express themselves effectively
- healthy self-image and awareness

Because it has such positive and far-reaching outcomes for our students, VSC's education model emphasizes process over product. We believe that students will emerge from their time with VSC's educational programs with skills that will serve them well in all areas of life.

## Benefits for Students

Students enrolled in VSC's education programs will:

- develop leadership qualities
- enhance communication skills
- develop an appreciation for the creative process
- learn to take ownership of their own ideas and concepts
- increase their knowledge of theatre terms
- develop greater confidence through the creative play experience
- develop a spirit of curiosity
- learn to develop and appreciate the value of kindness
- develop or expand spatial awareness
- use dramatic prompts to create imaginative movement
- cooperate with others in group sessions
- learn how to use their voice safely and effectively
- learn how to use their bodies effectively with character development
- work with peers to write scripts
- explore characters and settings
- rehearse in a positive, supportive environment
- practice respectful critique of others' work
- put it all together to create original theatre for others.

Virginia Stage Company's production of **Oliver Twist** adheres to the following Virginia's English Standards of Learning requirements for grades 5-12:

**Reading and Writing** – 5.4, 5.5., 5.7, 5.8, 6.4, 6.5, 6.7, 6.8, 7.4, 7.5, 7.7, 7.8, 8.5, 8.5, 8.7, 8.8, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.6, 10.7, 11.3, 11.4, 11.5, 11.6, 11.7, 12.3, 12.4, 12.5, 12.6, 12.7

**Theatre Arts** – 6.15, 6.16, 6.17, 6.20, 6.21, 6.23, 6.24, 6.25, 7.17, 7.18, 7.19, 7.20, 7.21, 7.22, 7.23, 8.15, 8.16, 7.17, 8.18, 8.19, 8.20, 8.21, 8.22, 8.23, 8.24, 8.25

**Introduction to Theatre** – TI. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18

**Theatre Arts II Dramatic Literature and Theatre History** – TII. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

# WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THIS STUDY GUIDE

## In This Guide...

You will find activities that are appropriate for grades 5-12.

Activities that are appropriate for middle school students will be marked with



Activities that are better suited for high school students will be marked with



Tie-In references to the production **Oliver Twist** will be marked with



Vocabulary Building Block terms and definitions will be marked with



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### For Teachers to Consider:

Basic Dickens Timeline ..... 3

Victorianism at a Glance ..... 5

### Middle School Activities:

Dressing The Artful Dodger ..... 6

A Day in the Life of a

Young Factory Worker ..... 9

Class is in the Clothing ..... 12

Family in Oliver Twist ..... 14

### High School Activities

Close Reading:

Chapter One of Oliver Twist ..... 18

Industrial Revolution

Creative Writing Activity ..... 22

What's in an Adaptation ..... 25

Dickensian Political Cartoon ..... 28

## ABOUT OLIVER TWIST:

This music-driven adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic takes us on a gritty journey of hope and the search for identity while exploring what it means to be born into a certain class. Told through a contemporary lens in collaboration with The Governor's School for the Arts, Twist's yearning for a better life still resonates.

# BASIC DICKENS TIMELINE



The ups and downs of Dickens' life help to illuminate the author's commitment to social progress as well as empathy to the plight of the poor. In his youth, Charles' family moved, continually "downgrading" as the family grew poorer and poorer. Charles' family often struggled financially because his father John lived beyond the family's needs. By looking at a brief timeline of his life, you can begin to see where the humanistic intention of *Oliver Twist* springs from. Dickens' work as an office boy connected him to newspapers, which would lead to his powerful observation skills that can be seen in *David Copperfield* as well as *Oliver Twist*.

## 1812

British novelist **Charles Dickens was born on February 7, 1812**, in Portsmouth, England. Over the course of his writing career, he wrote the beloved classic novels *Oliver Twist*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Great Expectations*.

## 1822

The Dickens family moved to Camden Town, a poor neighborhood in London. By then the family's financial situation had grown dire, as John Dickens had a dangerous habit of living beyond the family's means. Eventually, John was sent to prison for debt in 1824, when Charles was just 12-years-old. Following his father's imprisonment, Charles Dickens was forced to leave school to work at a boot-blackening factory alongside the River Thames. At the rundown, rodent-ridden factory, looking back on the experience, Dickens saw it as the moment he said goodbye to his youthful innocence, stating that he wondered "how [he] could be so easily cast away at such a young age."

## 1827

Much to his relief, Dickens was permitted to go back to school when his father received a family inheritance and used it to pay off his debts. But when Dickens was 15, his education was pulled out from under him once again. In 1827, he had to drop out of school and work as an office boy to contribute to his family's income. As it turned out, the job became an early launching point for his writing career.

## 1833

Dickens began submitting sketches to various magazines and newspapers under the pseudonym "Boz." In 1836, his clippings were published in his first book, *Sketches by Boz*. Dickens' first success caught the eye of Catherine Hogarth, whom he soon married. Catherine would grace Charles with a brood of 10 children before the couple separated in 1858.

Around this time, Dickens had also become publisher of a magazine called *Bentley's Miscellany*. In it, he started publishing his first novel, *Oliver Twist*, which follows the life of an orphan living in the streets.



# BASIC DICKENS TIMELINE

(CONT.)

1842

Dickens and his wife, Kate, embarked on a five-month lecture tour of the United States. Upon their return, Dickens penned *American Notes for General Circulation*, a sarcastic travelogue criticizing American culture and materialism.

1843

Dickens wrote his novel *The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit*, a story about a man's struggle to survive on the ruthless American frontier. The book was published the following year. Over the next couple of years, Dickens published two Christmas stories. In the *Pickwick* episode, a Mr. Wardle relates the tale of Gabriel Grub, a lonely and mean-spirited sexton, who undergoes a Christmas conversion after being visited by goblins who show him the past and future – the prototype of *A Christmas Carol*. *A Christmas Carol*, which features the timeless protagonist Ebenezer Scrooge, a curmudgeonly old miser, who, with the help of a ghost, finds the Christmas spirit.

1842

During his first US tour, Dickens designated himself as what many have deemed the first modern celebrity. He spoke of his opposition to slavery and expressed his support for additional reform. His 76 readings earned him no less than \$95,000, which, in the Victorian era, amounted to approximately \$1.5 million in current U.S. dollars.

1849

From 1849 to 1850, Dickens worked on *David Copperfield*, the first work of its kind; no one had ever written a novel that simply followed a character through his everyday life. In writing it, Dickens tapped into his own personal experiences, from his difficult childhood to his work as a journalist. Although *David Copperfield* is not considered Dickens' best work, it was his personal favorite. It also helped define the public's expectations of a Dickensian novel.

**June 9, 1870** | Dickens died of a stroke in Kent, England, leaving his final novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, unfinished.

1870

“My great ambition is to live in the hearts and homes of home-loving people, and to be connected with the truth of the truthful English life.”

*Charles Dickens*

# VICTORIANISM *at a glance*

During the Victorian Era (1830-1901), England was the world's superpower. During Victoria's reign England enjoyed a long period of peace known as the Pax Britannica. Although there was a growing disparity between classes within England, the growth of industry ensured economic dominance. During this time, the belief in the cultural and "natural" superiority of all things British led to new fields of pseudo science as well as an imperial imperative.

## **VICTORIAN HISTORY AT A GLANCE:**

- The Victorian era was a period of dramatic change that brought England to its highest point of development as a world power.
- The early Victorian period (1830–48) saw the opening of Britain's first railway and its first Reform Parliament, but it was also a time of economic distress.
- Although the mid-Victorian period (1848–70) was not free of harassing problems, it was a time of prosperity, optimism, and stability.
- In the later period (1870–1901) the costs of the Empire became increasingly apparent, and England was confronted with growing threats to its military and economic preeminence.

At home on English soil, the growth of cities and factory based industry created an environment in which culture struggled to catch up to technological advancement. The English middle class began to slowly grow as the gap between the wealthy and the masses grew. During Victorian times, cities crammed together the very poor and the very wealthy into a geographically small and polluted space.

**"Literature cannot be too faithful to the people, cannot too ardently advocate the cause of their advancement, happiness and prosperity."**

*Charles Dickens*





# DRESSING THE Artful Dodger



In Virginia Stage Company's *Oliver Twist*, when we first meet Jack Dawkins, AKA The Artful Dodger, Oliver has walked for 7 straight days all the way to London from the country. Dodger approaches Oliver and offers him a bit of food. Dodger becomes Oliver's first friend and introduces him to Fagin's world of the slums:

**DODGER:** I suppose you want some place to sleep in to-night, don't you?

**OLIVER:** I do, indeed. I have not slept under a roof since I left the country.

**DODGER:** Don't fret your eyelids on that score. I've got to be in London to-night; and I know a 'spectable old gentleman as lives there, wot'll give you lodgings for nothink, and never ask for the change. Me name's Jack Dawkins, but me friends call me - The Artful Dodger.



## VICTORIAN TIME MACHINE



People call the time of Queen Victoria (1830-1901), Victorian times. During this time, England was one of the most powerful countries in the world. Stories like, *Peter Pan*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* were written during this era.

**"Nobody has done more harm in this single generation than everybody can mend in 10 generations."**

*Charles Dickens*

# DRESSING THE *Artful Dodger*

## ACCORDING TO DICKENS

In the novel, *Oliver Twist or a Parish Boy's Progress*, Dickens describes The Artful Dodger as a gloomy boy who acts more like an adult than a child. Take a look...

"The Artful, meantime, who was of a rather saturnine disposition, and seldom gave way to merriment when it interfered with business, rifled Oliver's pockets with steady assiduity."

"He was a snub-nosed, flat-browed, common-faced boy enough; and as dirty a juvenile as one would wish to see; but he had about him all the airs and manners of a man. He was short of his age: with rather bow-legs, and little, sharp, ugly eyes. His hat was stuck on the top of his head so lightly, that it threatened to fall off every moment--and would have done so, very often, if the wearer had not had a knack of every now and then giving his head a sudden twitch, which brought it back to its old place again. He wore a man's coat, which reached nearly to his heels. He had turned the cuffs back, half-way up his arm, to get his hands out of the sleeves: apparently with the ultimate view of thrusting them into the pockets of his corduroy trousers; for there he kept them. He was, altogether, as roystering and swaggering a young gentleman as ever stood four feet six, or something less, in the bluchers."

### saturnine

moody, glum, gloomy

### adaptation

a movie, book, play, etc., that is changed so that it can be presented in another form

### merriment

cheer, joy

### disposition

a person's normal mood/personality

### parish

district

### assiduity

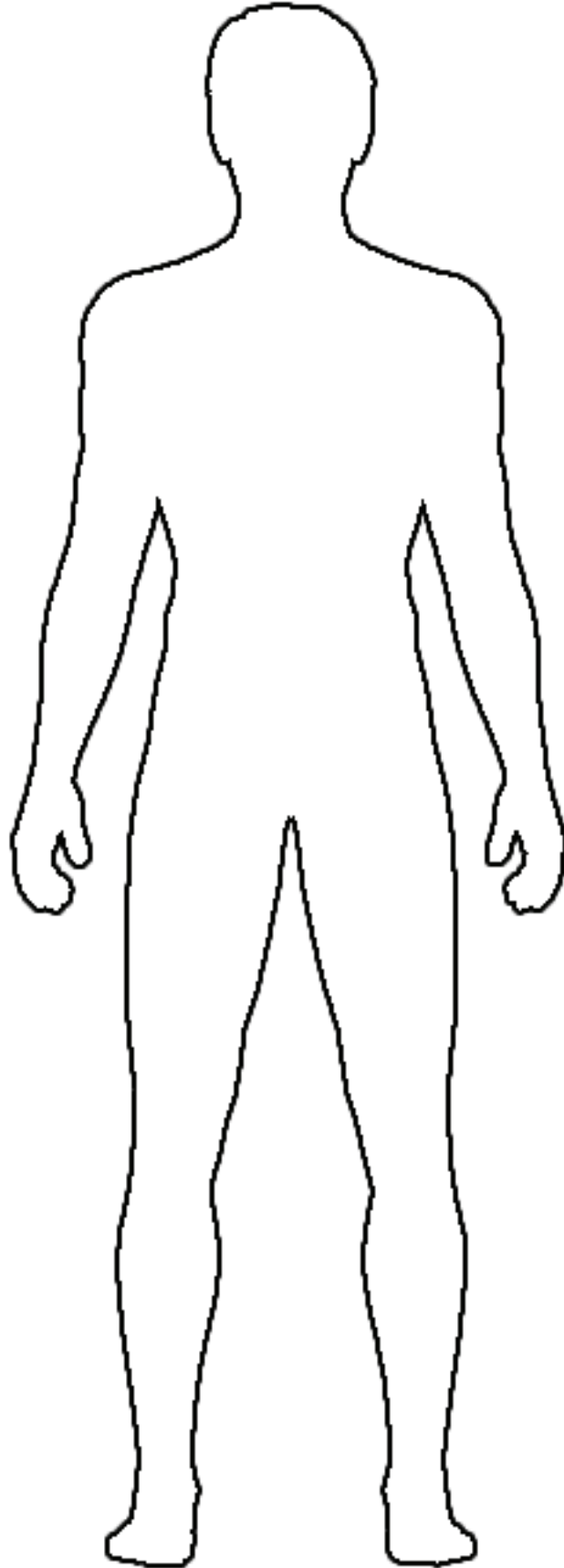
extreme focus and concentration





# DRESSING THE *Artful Dodger* ACTIVITY

Can you imagine The Artful Dodger in your head? What does his clothing look like? What expression does he have on his face? Remember you are creating an adaptation, so use what Dickens wrote as a guide while you make your own artistic decisions. Use your creativity to draw a costume for The Artful Dodger.





# THE DIARY OF A *Young Factory Worker*



Before Oliver leaves the country, he is living in Mrs. Mann's workhouse. For poor children and families in Victorian England, there were not many options. Children as young as 5 worked in busy and dangerous factories to help their parents bring in money. If a family couldn't pay for their home, they were split up and had to live in dirty, loud, and cramped workhouses. The kids in Fagin's gang like Charley Bates and The Artful Dodger are picking pockets to keep out of horrible factory work and workhouses that were more like a prison than a home.



## VICTORIAN TIME MACHINE



As a class, look at the pictures of Victorian children. Robert is a young child that worked in a factory. For the first time ever in Victorian times, factories began to do the jobs people used to do in their

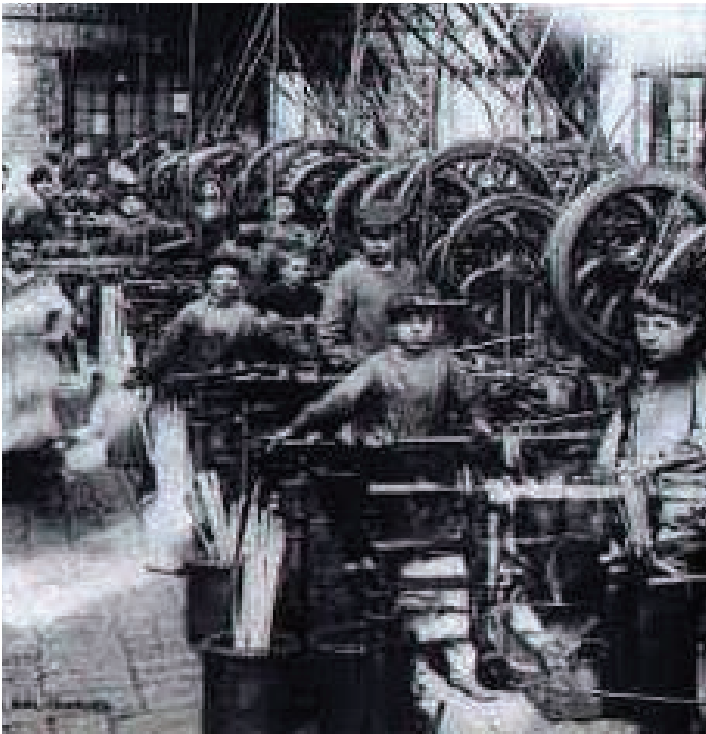
homes. "Factories were noisy. People had to shout above the rattle and hiss of machinery. They breathed air full of dust, oil and soot. Iron and steel works got so hot that workers dripped with sweat. Flames and sparks lit up the sky darkened by smoke from factory chimneys." Factory owners employed children because they were cheap. The new machines also needed a lot of attention to continue working, and little kids were the perfect size to climb in and under machines for repairs. This work was very dangerous because kids could get caught in the machines, and for a long time there were no laws to protect the children.

"For the rest of his life, Oliver Twist remembers a single word of blessing spoken to him by another child because this word stood out so strikingly from the consistent discouragement around him."

- Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*



# THE DIARY OF A *Young Factory Worker*



# THE DIARY OF A *Young Factory Worker*

**Extract from Messrs. Williams & Jones  
Tobacco Manufactory, Chester.  
Robert Johnson, aged 11**

**How long have you been at work?**

Two years and a half.

**What is your work?**

I turn the wheel, and pick and spread the tobacco-leaves.

**Is it healthy?**

Yes, I have always found it so. I had some swellings lately about the neck, but I am much better.

**Do you think the work you are engaged in brought them on?**

No, I don't think so.

**How many hours a day do you work?**

We go to work at seven a.m. and work till six p.m.

**Do you work overtime?**

No, never.

**Do you go home to dinner?**

Yes.

**What wages have you?**

2s. a-week.

**What use do you make of the money?**

I give all to my mother for my food, clothing, &c.

**Have you sufficient food and good clothes?**

We have bread and butter at breakfast, and potatoes and bacon for dinner, and in the evening we have tea or coffee and bread and butter or we have bread and milk. I have very poor clothes, scarcely more than what I have on, except a shirt or two.

**Is your father alive?**

Yes, he is a skinner.

**What wages has he?**

I think from 16s. to 18s. a-week.

**Were you ever at school?**

Yes, at the free-school.

**What were you taught there?**

I learnt very little there though I was a year at school, and have been a year at Sunday-school.

**Can you read?**

No, not yet.

**What is taught in the Sunday-school?**

Spelling, the Reading Made Easy, and questions on religion.

**Is your cottage comfortable?**

Yes, I think so.

**Have you knives and forks and a table-cloth at dinner?**

No, we use a spoon and our fingers.

**Is there a clock in the house?**

No.

**How many beds are there?**

Two beds, they are in one room.

**Does your father daily say prayers aloud for the family?**

Yes, every night before we go to bed.

**How do you employ yourself after work?**

My father reads when he does not work over-time, and we walk out, if not kept at home by my father, who gives us a lesson very often.

**How do you spend Sunday evening?**

We stay at home; my father won't let us play; both he and my mother often read aloud to us.

**Can you read?**

No.

**Can you spell your name?**

No, I can't.

**Are you inclined to learn?**

Yes, if I had time.

**Together try to imagine what it would be like to work in a Victorian factory and answer these questions:**

- 1) How old is Robert?
- 2) What grade were you in when you were his age?
- 3) How old was Robert when he began working?
- 4) What do you normally have for dinner with your family? How does that compare to Robert's meal?
- 5) How does Robert describe his job?
- 6) How would you describe the children in the pictures? What things do the children have in common?



## skinner

a person who prepares animal skins for making clothing

## 2s

2 shillings, a shilling is a coin that was used in Oliver's time. It is similar to a nickel.

## ACTIVITY

Try to imagine yourself as a poor Victorian child. Do you live with your family? Or in a workhouse? Do you work in a factory? Or maybe you are a chimney sweep? Use your imagination and draw a short comic strip about a day in your imaginary life as a child worker.



# THE CLASS IS IN THE *clothing*



In *Oliver Twist*, we meet characters from both the lower class and the upper class. Brownlow and Rose are from the upper class, while Bill Sykes and Nancy are from a low class. While you watch the show, think about how these characters look and sound different from each other. Class was very important in Oliver's world. It determined what a person was allowed to do, where they were allowed to live, and what type of job they were allowed to have.

## ACCORDING TO DICKENS

"And what an example of the power of dress young Oliver Twist was! Wrapped in the blanket which had hitherto formed his only covering, he might have been the child of a nobleman or a beggar;—it would have been hard for the haughtiest stranger to have fixed his station in society. But now he was enveloped in the old calico robes, that had grown yellow in the same service; he was badged and ticketed, and fell into his place at once—a parish child—the orphan of a workhouse—the humble, half-starved drudge—to be cuffed and buffeted through the world, despised by all, and pitied by none."

- Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*

### haughty

arrogant, proud

### station in society

social class

### cuff

hit, strike, smash

### calico

a patterned cotton fabric

### drudge

worker, slave

### buffeted

to knock someone off course

### despised

hated

### pitied

feel sorry for



# THE CLASS IS IN THE *clothing*

Activity: Below there are two pictures of two different families from Victorian England. Look at these pictures closely and think about how they compare to each other. Then decide which family is from a high class and which one is from a low class.



**A**



**B**

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- 1) Where was the picture taken? Inside a home or outside?
- 2) Who is in the picture? What is their relationship to each other?
- 3) Look at the woman in picture A and then the woman in picture B? Do they have similar or different expressions on their faces?
- 4) What is similar about the clothing in the pictures? What's different?
- 5) Look closely at the fit of the clothing the boys are wearing in picture A? Do their clothes and shoes seem to fit them?
- 6) What about the children's clothes in the second picture? Do they seem to fit them?
- 7) What does the fit of the clothing tell you about the family?
- 8) Which family do you think came from a higher class?

## ACTIVITY

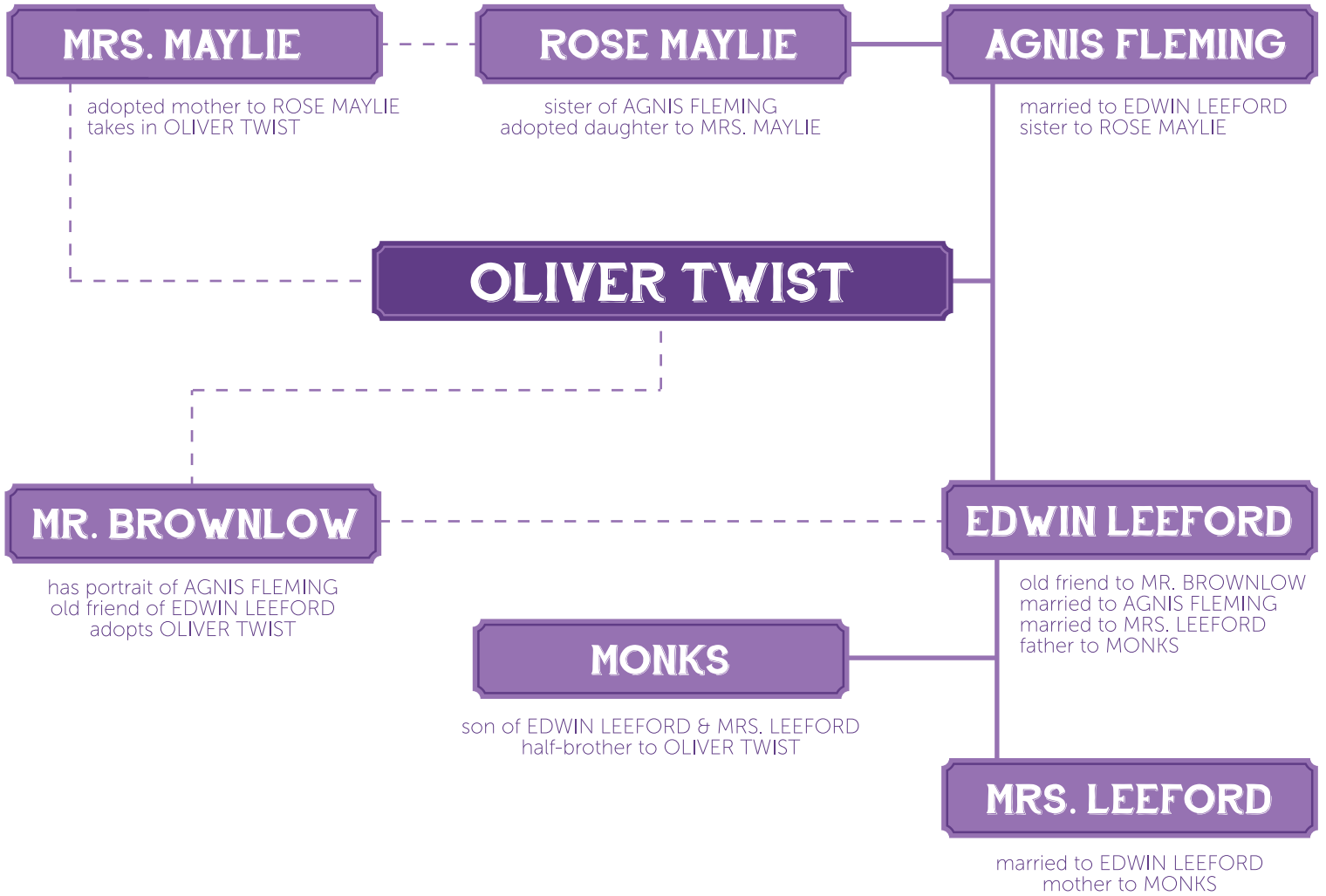
**Draw a picture of your family in Victorian costumes.**





# FAMILY IN OLIVER TWIST

In *Oliver Twist*, family is a very important theme. Take a look at Oliver’s family tree below. Then draw your own family tree.



## theme

the big idea, similar to a moral or a life lesson

# FAMILY IN OLIVER TWIST

## My Family Tree Book



This project is very creativity-flexible. Be sure to read through all of the below instructions, then determine the size of and number of pages you want for the book!

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

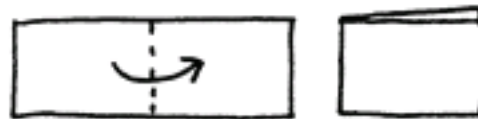
- Colorful Paper/ Decorative Paper
- Family Pictures, Magazines and Postcards for cutouts
- Markers, Crayons, or Color Pencils
- Scissors and Glue
- Large Sheets of Heavy weight Paper (poster size or from a brown paper bag)
- Decorative Materials: Fabric, Beads, Raffia, Ribbon (Optional)

## CONSTRUCTING YOUR ACCORDION BOOK

Step 1: Cut your poster size sheet of paper in half, long-ways, so you now have 2 long strips of paper.

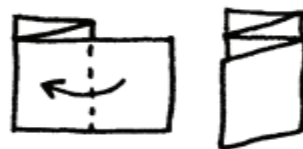
Step 2: Glue the 2 long pieces together lengthwise to make an even larger sheet of paper.

Step 3: Gently fold the paper in half, lengthwise. And refold again lengthwise and again until all edges are even, and you are left with one rectangle.



Step 4: Open the folded pages. (The number of panels will indicate the length of your book. For more length, add on paper, for less cut away some paper.)

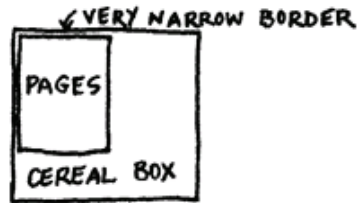
Step 5: Using those creases, now begin to fold your paper backwards and forwards like an accordion.



Step 6: Place your rectangle on a piece of cardboard (or cereal box) and trace and cut out of the front and back cover. (Leave a slightly larger border around the pages, so the cover is slightly larger.)

# FAMILY IN OLIVER TWIST

Step 7: Glue front and back covers to the front and back panels of your book and press firmly!



Step 8: Decorate!

## WRITING & ILLUSTRATING YOUR BOOK

### Side A.

- Discuss, the story of Oliver Twist! Who can follow the story of his family line?
- Use the 1st panel as a “Book Cover” for your Oliver Twist Family Tree. Be creative!
- Use the inside panels to depict Oliver’s journey and family Tree. Be sure to use the names of his family members. Don’t forget to include locations! Be creative!

### Side B.

- Next, discuss, your own life story. Where were you born? Who are the people in your family tree? What has been your own journey?
- Use 1st panel as a “Book Cover” for your personal family tree. Be creative!
- Use the inside panels to depict your own journey and family tree. Feel free to use actual photos. Be creative!!

When the book is complete, it can be flipped page by page, or stretched straight to show one long journey. Can you find any connections between your family, your journey, and Oliver’s?

# FAMILY IN OLIVER TWIST



EXAMPLES







# CLOSE READING: OLIVER TWIST

## CHAPTER XVI

### RELATES WHAT BECAME OF OLIVER TWIST, AFTER HE HAD BEEN CLAIMED BY NANCY

The narrow streets and courts, at length, terminated in a large open space; scattered about which, were pens for beasts, and other indications of a cattle-market. Sikes slackened his pace when they reached this spot: the girl being quite unable to support any longer, the rapid rate at which they had hitherto walked. Turning to Oliver, he roughly commanded him to take hold of Nancy's hand.

'Do you hear?' growled Sikes, as Oliver hesitated, and looked round.

They were in a dark corner, quite out of the track of passengers. Oliver saw, but too plainly, that resistance would be of no avail.

He held out his hand, which Nancy clasped tight in hers.

'Give me the other,' said Sikes, seizing Oliver's unoccupied hand.

'Here, Bull's-Eye!'

The dog looked up, and growled.

'See here, boy!' said Sikes, putting his other hand to Oliver's throat; 'if he speaks ever so soft a word, hold him! D'ye mind!'

The dog growled again; and licking his lips, eyed Oliver as if he were anxious to attach himself to his windpipe without delay.

'He's as willing as a Christian, strike me blind if he isn't!' said Sikes, regarding the animal with a kind of grim and ferocious approval. 'Now, you know what you've got to expect, master, so call away as quick as you like; the dog will soon stop that game. Get on, young'un!'

Bull's-eye wagged his tail in acknowledgment of this unusually endearing form of speech; and, giving vent to another admonitory growl for the benefit of Oliver, led the way onward.

It was Smithfield that they were crossing, although it might have been Grosvenor Square, for anything Oliver knew to the contrary.

The night was dark and foggy. The lights in the shops could scarcely struggle through the heavy mist, which thickened every moment and shrouded the streets and houses in gloom; rendering the strange place still stranger in Oliver's eyes; and making his uncertainty the more dismal and depressing.

They had hurried on a few paces, when a deep church-bell struck the hour. With its first stroke, his two conductors stopped, and turned their heads in the direction whence the sound proceeded.

'Eight o' clock, Bill,' said Nancy, when the bell ceased.

'What's the good of telling me that; I can hear it, can't I!' replied Sikes.

'I wonder whether THEY can hear it,' said Nancy.

'Of course they can,' replied Sikes. 'It was Bartlemy time when I was shopped; and there warn't a penny trumpet in the fair, as I couldn't hear the squeaking on. Arter I was locked up for the night, the row and din outside made the thundering old jail so silent, that I could almost have beat my brains out against the iron plates of the door.'

'Poor fellow!' said Nancy, who still had her face turned towards the quarter in which the bell had sounded. 'Oh, Bill, such fine young

chaps as them!'

'Yes; that's all you women think of,' answered Sikes. 'Fine young chaps! Well, they're as good as dead, so it don't much matter.' With this consolation, Mr. Sikes appeared to repress a rising tendency to jealousy, and, clasping Oliver's wrist more firmly, told him to step out again.

'Wait a minute!' said the girl: 'I wouldn't hurry by, if it was you that was coming out to be hung, the next time eight o'clock struck, Bill. I'd walk round and round the place till I dropped, if the snow was on the ground, and I hadn't a shawl to cover me.'

'And what good would that do?' inquired the unsentimental Mr. Sikes. 'Unless you could pitch over a file and twenty yards of good stout rope, you might as well be walking fifty mile off, or not walking at all, for all the good it would do me. Come on, and don't stand preaching there.'

The girl burst into a laugh; drew her shawl more closely round her; and they walked away. But Oliver felt her hand tremble, and, looking up in her face as they passed a gas-lamp, saw that it had turned a deadly white.

They walked on, by little-frequented and dirty ways, for a full half-hour: meeting very few people, and those appearing from their looks to hold much the same position in society as Mr. Sikes himself. At length they turned into a very filthy narrow street, nearly full of old-clothes shops; the dog running forward, as if conscious that there was no further occasion for his keeping on guard, stopped before the door of a shop that was closed and apparently untenanted; the house was in a ruinous condition, and on the door was nailed a board, intimating that it was to let: which looked as if it had hung there for many years.

'All right,' cried Sikes, glancing cautiously about.

Nancy stooped below the shutters, and Oliver heard the sound of a bell. They crossed to the opposite side of the street, and stood for a few moments under a lamp. A noise, as if a sash window were gently raised, was heard; and soon afterwards the door softly opened. Mr. Sikes then seized the terrified boy by the collar with very little ceremony; and all three were quickly inside the house. The passage was perfectly dark. They waited, while the person who had let them in, chained and barred the door.

'Anybody here?' inquired Sikes.

'No,' replied a voice, which Oliver thought he had heard before.

'Is the old 'un here?' asked the robber.

'Yes,' replied the voice, 'and precious down in the mouth he has been. Won't he be glad to see you? Oh, no!'

The style of this reply, as well as the voice which delivered it, seemed familiar to Oliver's ears: but it was impossible to distinguish even the form of the speaker in the darkness.

'Let's have a glim,' said Sikes, 'or we shall go breaking our necks, or treading on the dog. Look after your legs if you do!'

'Stand still a moment, and I'll get you one,' replied the voice. The receding footsteps of the speaker were heard; and, in another minute, the form of Mr. John Dawkins, otherwise the Artful Dodger, appeared. He bore in his right hand a tallow candle stuck

# CLOSE READING: OLIVER TWIST

in the end of a cleft stick.

The young gentleman did not stop to bestow any other mark of recognition upon Oliver than a humourous grin; but, turning away, beckoned the visitors to follow him down a flight of stairs. They crossed an empty kitchen; and, opening the door of a low earthy-smelling room, which seemed to have been built in a small back-yard, were received with a shout of laughter.

'Oh, my wig, my wig!' cried Master Charles Bates, from whose lungs the laughter had proceeded: 'here he is! oh, cry, here he is! Oh, Fagin, look at him! Fagin, do look at him! I can't bear it; it is such a jolly game, I can't bear it. Hold me, somebody, while I laugh it out.'

With this irrepressible ebullition of mirth, Master Bates laid himself flat on the floor: and kicked convulsively for five minutes, in an ecstasy of facetious joy. Then jumping to his feet, he snatched the cleft stick from the Dodger; and, advancing to Oliver, viewed him round and round; while the Jew, taking off his nightcap, made a great number of low bows to the bewildered boy. The Artful, meantime, who was of a rather saturnine disposition, and seldom gave way to merriment when it interfered with business, rifled Oliver's pockets with steady assiduity.

'Look at his togs, Fagin!' said Charley, putting the light so close to his new jacket as nearly to set him on fire. 'Look at his togs! Superfine cloth, and the heavy swell cut! Oh, my eye, what a game! And his books, too! Nothing but a gentleman, Fagin!' 'Delighted to see you looking so well, my dear,' said the Jew, bowing with mock humility. 'The Artful shall give you another suit, my dear, for fear you should spoil that Sunday one. Why didn't you write, my dear, and say you were coming? We'd have got something warm for supper.'

At his, Master Bates roared again: so loud, that Fagin himself relaxed, and even the Dodger smiled; but as the Artful drew forth the five-pound note at that instant, it is doubtful whether the sally of the discovery awakened his merriment.

'Hallo, what's that?' inquired Sikes, stepping forward as the Jew seized the note. 'That's mine, Fagin.'

'No, no, my dear,' said the Jew. 'Mine, Bill, mine. You shall have the books.'

'If that ain't mine!' said Bill Sikes, putting on his hat with a determined air; 'mine and Nancy's that is; I'll take the boy back again.'

The Jew started. Oliver started too, though from a very different cause; for he hoped that the dispute might really end in his being taken back.

'Come! Hand over, will you?' said Sikes.

'This is hardly fair, Bill; hardly fair, is it, Nancy?' inquired the Jew. 'Fair, or not fair,' retorted Sikes, 'hand over, I tell you! Do you think Nancy and me has got nothing else to do with our precious time but to spend it in scouting arter, and kidnapping, every young boy as gets grabbed through you? Give it here, you avaricious old skeleton, give it here!'

With this gentle remonstrance, Mr. Sikes plucked the note from between the Jew's finger and thumb; and looking the old man coolly in the face, folded it up small, and tied it in his neckerchief. 'That's for our share of the trouble,' said Sikes; 'and not half enough, neither. You may keep the books, if you're fond of

reading. If you ain't, sell 'em.'

'They're very pretty,' said Charley Bates: who, with sundry grimaces, had been affecting to read one of the volumes in question; 'beautiful writing, isn't it, Oliver?' At sight of the dismayed look with which Oliver regarded his tormentors, Master Bates, who was blessed with a lively sense of the ludicrous, fell into another ecstasy, more boisterous than the first.

'They belong to the old gentleman,' said Oliver, wringing his hands; 'to the good, kind, old gentleman who took me into his house, and had me nursed, when I was near dying of the fever. Oh, pray send them back; send him back the books and money. Keep me here all my life long; but pray, pray send them back. He'll think I stole them; the old lady: all of them who were so kind to me: will think I stole them. Oh, do have mercy upon me, and send them back!'

With these words, which were uttered with all the energy of passionate grief, Oliver fell upon his knees at the Jew's feet; and beat his hands together, in perfect desperation.

'The boy's right,' remarked Fagin, looking covertly round, and knitting his shaggy eyebrows into a hard knot. 'You're right, Oliver, you're right; they WILL think you have stolen 'em. Ha! ha!' chuckled the Jew, rubbing his hands, 'it couldn't have happened better, if we had chosen our time!'

'Of course it couldn't,' replied Sikes; 'I know'd that, directly I see him coming through Clerkenwell, with the books under his arm. It's all right enough. They're soft-hearted psalm-singers, or they wouldn't have taken him in at all; and they'll ask no questions after him, fear they should be obliged to prosecute, and so get him lagged. He's safe enough.'

Oliver had looked from one to the other, while these words were being spoken, as if he were bewildered, and could scarcely understand what passed; but when Bill Sikes concluded, he jumped suddenly to his feet, and tore wildly from the room: uttering shrieks for help, which made the bare old house echo to the roof.

'Keep back the dog, Bill!' cried Nancy, springing before the door, and closing it, as the Jew and his two pupils darted out in pursuit.

'Keep back the dog; he'll tear the boy to pieces.'

'Serve him right!' cried Sikes, struggling to disengage himself from the girl's grasp. 'Stand off from me, or I'll split your head against the wall.'

'I don't care for that, Bill, I don't care for that,' screamed the girl, struggling violently with the man, 'the child shan't be torn down by the dog, unless you kill me first.'

'Shan't he!' said Sikes, setting his teeth. 'I'll soon do that, if you don't keep off.'

The housebreaker flung the girl from him to the further end of the room, just as the Jew and the two boys returned, dragging Oliver among them.

'What's the matter here!' said Fagin, looking round.

'The girl's gone mad, I think,' replied Sikes, savagely.

'No, she hasn't,' said Nancy, pale and breathless from the scuffle; 'no, she hasn't, Fagin; don't think it.'

'Then keep quiet, will you?' said the Jew, with a threatening look.

'No, I won't do that, neither,' replied Nancy, speaking very loud.

'Come! What do you think of that?'

# CLOSE READING: OLIVER TWIST

Mr. Fagin was sufficiently well acquainted with the manners and customs of that particular species of humanity to which Nancy belonged, to feel tolerably certain that it would be rather unsafe to prolong any conversation with her, at present. With the view of diverting the attention of the company, he turned to Oliver. 'So you wanted to get away, my dear, did you?' said the Jew, taking up a jagged and knotted club which lay in a corner of the fireplace; 'eh?'

Oliver made no reply. But he watched the Jew's motions, and breathed quickly.

'Wanted to get assistance; called for the police; did you?' sneered the Jew, catching the boy by the arm. 'We'll cure you of that, my young master.'

The Jew inflicted a smart blow on Oliver's shoulders with the club; and was raising it for a second, when the girl, rushing forward, wrested it from his hand. She flung it into the fire, with a force that brought some of the glowing coals whirling out into the room. 'I won't stand by and see it done, Fagin,' cried the girl. 'You've got the boy, and what more would you have?—Let him be—let him be—or I shall put that mark on some of you, that will bring me to the gallows before my time.'

The girl stamped her foot violently on the floor as she vented this threat; and with her lips compressed, and her hands clenched, looked alternately at the Jew and the other robber: her face quite colourless from the passion of rage into which she had gradually worked herself.

'Why, Nancy!' said the Jew, in a soothing tone; after a pause, during which he and Mr. Sikes had stared at one another in a disconcerted manner; 'you,—you're more clever than ever to-night. Ha! ha! my dear, you are acting beautifully.'

'Am I!' said the girl. 'Take care I don't overdo it. You will be the worse for it, Fagin, if I do; and so I tell you in good time to keep clear of me.'

There is something about a roused woman: especially if she add to all her other strong passions, the fierce impulses of recklessness and despair; which few men like to provoke. The Jew saw that it would be hopeless to affect any further mistake regarding the reality of Miss Nancy's rage; and, shrinking involuntarily back a few paces, cast a glance, half imploring and half cowardly, at Sikes: as if to hint that he was the fittest person to pursue the dialogue.

Mr. Sikes, thus mutely appealed to; and possibly feeling his personal pride and influence interested in the immediate reduction of Miss Nancy to reason; gave utterance to about a couple of score of curses and threats, the rapid production of which reflected great credit on the fertility of his invention. As they produced no visible effect on the object against whom they were discharged, however, he resorted to more tangible arguments.

'What do you mean by this?' said Sikes; backing the inquiry with a very common imprecation concerning the most beautiful of human features: which, if it were heard above, only once out of every fifty thousand times that it is uttered below, would render blindness as common a disorder as measles: 'what do you mean by it? Burn my body! Do you know who you are, and what you are?'

'Oh, yes, I know all about it,' replied the girl, laughing hysterically; and shaking her head from side to side, with a poor assumption of

indifference.

'Well, then, keep quiet,' rejoined Sikes, with a growl like that he was accustomed to use when addressing his dog, 'or I'll quiet you for a good long time to come.'

The girl laughed again: even less composedly than before; and, darting a hasty look at Sikes, turned her face aside, and bit her lip till the blood came.

'You're a nice one,' added Sikes, as he surveyed her with a contemptuous air, 'to take up the humane and gen—teel side! A pretty subject for the child, as you call him, to make a friend of!' 'God Almighty help me, I am!' cried the girl passionately; 'and I wish I had been struck dead in the street, or had changed places with them we passed so near to-night, before I had lent a hand in bringing him here. He's a thief, a liar, a devil, all that's bad, from this night forth. Isn't that enough for the old wretch, without blows?'

'Come, come, Sikes,' said the Jew appealing to him in a remonstratory tone, and motioning towards the boys, who were eagerly attentive to all that passed; 'we must have civil words; civil words, Bill.'

'Civil words!' cried the girl, whose passion was frightful to see. 'Civil words, you villain! Yes, you deserve 'em from me. I thieved for you when I was a child not half as old as this!' pointing to Oliver. 'I have been in the same trade, and in the same service, for twelve years since. Don't you know it? Speak out! Don't you know it?'

'Well, well,' replied the Jew, with an attempt at pacification; 'and, if you have, it's your living!'

'Aye, it is!' returned the girl; not speaking, but pouring out the words in one continuous and vehement scream. 'It is my living; and the cold, wet, dirty streets are my home; and you're the wretch that drove me to them long ago, and that'll keep me there, day and night, day and night, till I die!'

'I shall do you a mischief!' interposed the Jew, goaded by these reproaches; 'a mischief worse than that, if you say much more!'

The girl said nothing more; but, tearing her hair and dress in a transport of passion, made such a rush at the Jew as would probably have left signal marks of her revenge upon him, had not her wrists been seized by Sikes at the right moment; upon which, she made a few ineffectual struggles, and fainted.

'She's all right now,' said Sikes, laying her down in a corner. 'She's uncommon strong in the arms, when she's up in this way.'

The Jew wiped his forehead: and smiled, as if it were a relief to have the disturbance over; but neither he, nor Sikes, nor the dog, nor the boys, seemed to consider it in any other light than a common occurrence incidental to business.

'It's the worst of having to do with women,' said the Jew, replacing his club; 'but they're clever, and we can't get on, in our line, without 'em. Charley, show Oliver to bed.'

'I suppose he'd better not wear his best clothes tomorrow, Fagin, had he?' inquired Charley Bates.

'Certainly not,' replied the Jew, reciprocating the grin with which Charley put the question.

Master Bates, apparently much delighted with his commission, took the cleft stick: and led Oliver into an adjacent kitchen, where there were two or three of the beds on which he had slept before;



# CLOSE READING: OLIVER TWIST

and here, with many uncontrollable bursts of laughter, he produced the identical old suit of clothes which Oliver had so much congratulated himself upon leaving off at Mr. Brownlow's; and the accidental display of which, to Fagin, by the Jew who purchased them, had been the very first clue received, of his whereabouts.

'Put off the smart ones,' said Charley, 'and I'll give 'em to Fagin to take care of. What fun it is!'

Poor Oliver unwillingly complied. Master Bates rolling up the new clothes under his arm, departed from the room, leaving Oliver in

the dark, and locking the door behind him.

The noise of Charley's laughter, and the voice of Miss Betsy, who opportunely arrived to throw water over her friend, and perform other feminine offices for the promotion of her recovery, might have kept many people awake under more happy circumstances than those in which Oliver was placed. But he was sick and weary; and he soon fell sound asleep.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SELECTION:

1. What has happened just before this selection?
2. What effect does the written dialect have on the reader?
3. Why do you think Nancy stands up for Oliver?
4. Why does Dickens refer to Fagin as The Jew? What does that tell you about the period he was writing in? Is Dickens making a political statement?
5. What words in the selection were unfamiliar to you? Make a list of unfamiliar vocabulary words, then do some research to discover their meaning.
6. What overall themes do you see represented in this selection?
7. Look closely at the character of Nancy in this selection. Is she an archetypal Victorian Woman? Why or why not?
8. What do we learn about the relationship between Bill and Nancy in this selection?





# INDUSTRIAL Revolution



The population of London more than doubled during the reign of Queen Victoria as the rural poor moved into cities. The world of Oliver is incredibly classist. The newly arrived Londoners soon took up jobs within the grimy and dangerous factories of the Industrial Revolution. These factories employed children as young as 6, who enjoyed no legal protection as workers. As you can see by the behavior and treatment of The Artful Dodger and Charley Bates, the idea of a “childhood” was not a part of Victorian society. Children were seen as small adults and were expected to pull their weight. If poor kids didn’t wind up in street gangs like Fagin’s, they were put to work in work houses, factories, mines, or as chimney sweeps (as Mr. Sowerberry intends to use Oliver).

In 1842–43, a parliamentary commission investigated the conditions of the employment of children in mines and factories; the commission's report was written by R. H. Horne, a friend and collaborator of the poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806–1861). Many of the details of Browning's 1843 poem are taken from the report of the commission.

## “The Cry of the Children”

- Elizabeth Barrett Browning

“For oh,” say the children, “we are weary,  
 And we cannot run or leap.  
 If we cared for any meadows, it were merely  
 To drop in them and sleep.  
 Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping,  
 We fall on our faces, trying to go;  
 And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,  
 The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.  
 For, all day, we drag our burden tiring  
 Through the coal-dark, underground —  
 Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron  
 In the factories, round and round.”

# INDUSTRIAL Revolution

## ACTIVITY | THE DIARY OF A CHILD LABORER

Conditions for children workers were deplorable. They worked long hours for little pay in jobs that were incredibly dangerous. Look at the photos below. Imagine the cacophony, grime, and smells that accompany these photos. How would you feel going into work at 6am as a 9-year-old? Read the Phillips Hughes' account from *The Condition and Treatment of the Children employed in the Mines and Colliers of the United Kingdom*. Put yourself in the shoes of a child worker. Write a diary entry based on a typical day in your life in early Victorian England.





# INDUSTRIAL *Revolution*

## ACTIVITY | THE DIARY OF A CHILD LABORER

No. 7. *Philip Hughes* states:—

I am about nine years old ; I have been two years and a half at work in this factory ; I live with my parents ; I am in very good health, but I sometimes have a head-ache from the noise in the work-room, and the smell of the colour ; I do not like the work. I am a tierer ; it is not hard work ; I am obliged to come to work, my mother makes me. I get 2s. a-week when I am at full work ; I am not at work to-day ; I would rather stay here than at home ; I might go home now if I liked, if the gate-keeper was in good humour and would let me out ; I am not obliged to stay here. I go to chapel on Sundays ; I don't go to school ; there is only a Sunday-school for the girls about here ; I live close by here ; there is an evening school about here, but I am too tired on leaving work to go to it. There is no machinery in the work-room where I work. I come to work, at this time of year, at about eight o'clock—a little before—go to breakfast at ten o'clock, have three-quarters of an hour ; go to dinner at about five o'clock, as it gets dark, have three-quarters of an hour for that, and work till eight o'clock. I have to clean the sieve, and brush and oil cloth and the moulds ; we have to do this before we leave the works ; we have about ten minutes before we leave off work—that is before the bell rings, to do this. I get bread, or potatoes and milk for my meals, and about three times a-week I get meat, bacon. There is no regular room for washing—we sometimes wash our hands and faces in the work-room ; I do not change my clothes after working : hardly any of the boys do. I have a sore head, I don't know how it came : it is not from the work. The blockers sometimes give us slaps on the head, they slap us on our hands with the brush ; they are not allowed to beat us—if the overseer were to see them beating us they would be fined ; I have no fault to find with the treatment, except the blockers striking us with the prints and the brushes. Mr. Duffy treats us very kindly : so also does Mr. Downey, the foreman ; Mr. Downey is generally liked by the boys. The overseers sometimes give us a cut with their sticks when we are not attentive. I am in good health, and have always had good health since I have been at work here.







# What's in an ADAPTATION



*Oliver Twist* at Virginia Stage Company was adapted for the stage by Patrick Mullins. There have been many adaptations of Dickens' classic story. This adaptation uses contemporary music to help tell the story and highlight the issues of social justice and class that already exist in *Oliver Twist* or *The Parish Boy's Progress*.



Disney's musical, animated adaptation, featuring Oliver the cat!



Masterpiece Theatre's more traditional live-action film.



There are even comic books and graphic novels based upon Dickens' book!



Illustration for a children's book by EMMA CHINNERY



# What's in an ADAPTATION ACTIVITY

In pairs or small groups read Chapter One of *Oliver Twist* (below). Then create your own adaptation of the first chapter that you can share with the rest of your class.

**TIP:** As you read through the chapter, highlight or underline things that stand out to you. Maybe you want to include bits of the dialogue, or maybe you are more interested in visual elements.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Who are the main characters in the piece?
2. Where is the story set?
3. Describe the basic plot in a few sentences.
4. What are some themes of the original piece?
5. Which theme would you like to focus on?
6. What medium do you think tells the story the best and highlights your theme? Theatre? Comic? Poetry? Painting?

## TREATS OF THE PLACE WHERE OLIVER TWIST WAS BORN AND OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING HIS BIRTH

Treats of the place where Oliver Twist was born, and of the circumstances attending his birth.

Among other public buildings in a certain town, which for many reasons it will be prudent to refrain from mentioning, and to which I will assign no fictitious name, there is one anciently common to most towns, great or small: to wit, a workhouse; and in this workhouse was born; on a day and date which I need not trouble myself to repeat, inasmuch as it can be of no possible consequence to the reader, in this stage of the business at all events; the item of mortality whose name is prefixed to the head of this chapter.

For a long time after it was ushered into this world of sorrow and trouble, by the parish surgeon, it remained a matter of considerable doubt whether the child would survive to bear any name at all; in which case it is somewhat more than probable that these memoirs would never have appeared; or, if they had, that being comprised within a couple of pages, they would have

possessed the inestimable merit of being the most concise and faithful specimen of biography, extant in the literature of any age or country.

Although I am not disposed to maintain that the being born in a workhouse, is in itself the most fortunate and enviable circumstance that can possibly befall a human being, I do mean to say that in this particular instance, it was the best thing for Oliver Twist that could by possibility have occurred. The fact is, that there was considerable difficulty in inducing Oliver to take upon himself the office of respiration,- a troublesome practice, but one which custom has rendered necessary to our easy existence; and for some time he lay gasping on a little flock mattress, rather unequally poised between this world and the next: the balance being decidedly in favour of the latter. Now, if, during this brief period, Oliver had been surrounded by careful grandmothers, anxious aunts, experienced nurses, and doctors of profound wisdom, he would most inevitably and indubitably have been

# What's in an ADAPTATION ACTIVITY

killed in no time. There being nobody by, however, but a pauper old woman, who was rendered rather misty by an unwonted allowance of beer; and a parish surgeon who did such matters by contract; Oliver and Nature fought out the point between them. The result was, that, after a few struggles, Oliver breathed, sneezed, and proceeded to advertise to the inmates of the work-house the fact of a new burden having been imposed upon the parish, by setting up as loud a cry as could reasonably have been expected from a male infant who had not been possessed of that very useful appendage, a voice, for a much longer space of time than three minutes and a quarter.

As Oliver gave this first proof of the free and proper action of his lungs, the patchwork coverlet which was carelessly flung over the iron bedstead, rustled; the pale face of a young woman was raised feebly from the pillow; and a faint voice imperfectly articulated the words, "Let me see the child, and die."

The surgeon had been sitting with his face turned towards the fire: giving the palms of his hands a warm and a rub alternately. As the young woman spoke, he rose, and advancing to the bed's head, said, with more kindness than might have been expected of him:

"Oh, you must not talk about dying yet."

"Lor bless her heart, no!" interposed the nurse, hastily depositing in her pocket a green glass bottle, the contents of which she had been tasting in a corner with evident satisfaction. "Lor bless her dear heart, when she has lived as long as I have, sir, and had thirteen children of her own, and all on 'em dead except two, and them in the wurkus with me, she'll know better than to take on in that way, bless her dear heart! Think what it is to be a mother, there's a dear young lamb, do."

Apparently this consolatory perspective of a mother's prospects failed in producing its due effect. The patient shook her head, and stretched out her hand towards the child.

The surgeon deposited it in her arms. She imprinted her cold white lips passionately on its forehead; passed her hands over her face; gazed wildly round; shuddered; fell back- and died. They chafed her breast, hands, and temples; but the blood had stopped for ever. They talked of hope and comfort. They had been strangers too long.

"It's all over, Mrs. Thingummy!" said the surgeon at last.

"Ah, poor dear, so it is!" said the nurse, picking up the cork of the green bottle, which had fallen out on the pillow, as she stooped to take up the child. "Poor dear!"

"You needn't mind sending up to me, if the child cries, nurse," said the surgeon, putting on his gloves with great deliberation. "It's very likely it will be troublesome. Give it a little gruel if it is." He put on his hat, and, pausing by the bed-side on his way to the door, added, "She was a good-looking girl, too; where did she come from?"

"She was brought here last night," replied the old woman, "by the overseer's order. She was found lying in the street. She had walked some distance, for her shoes were worn to pieces; but where she came from, or where she was going to, nobody knows." The surgeon leaned over the body, and raised the left hand. "The old story," he said, shaking his head: "no wedding ring, I see. Ah! Good night!"

"If I were soured [on writing],  
I should still try to sweeten the  
lives and fancies of others; but  
I am not—not at all."

*Charles Dickens*

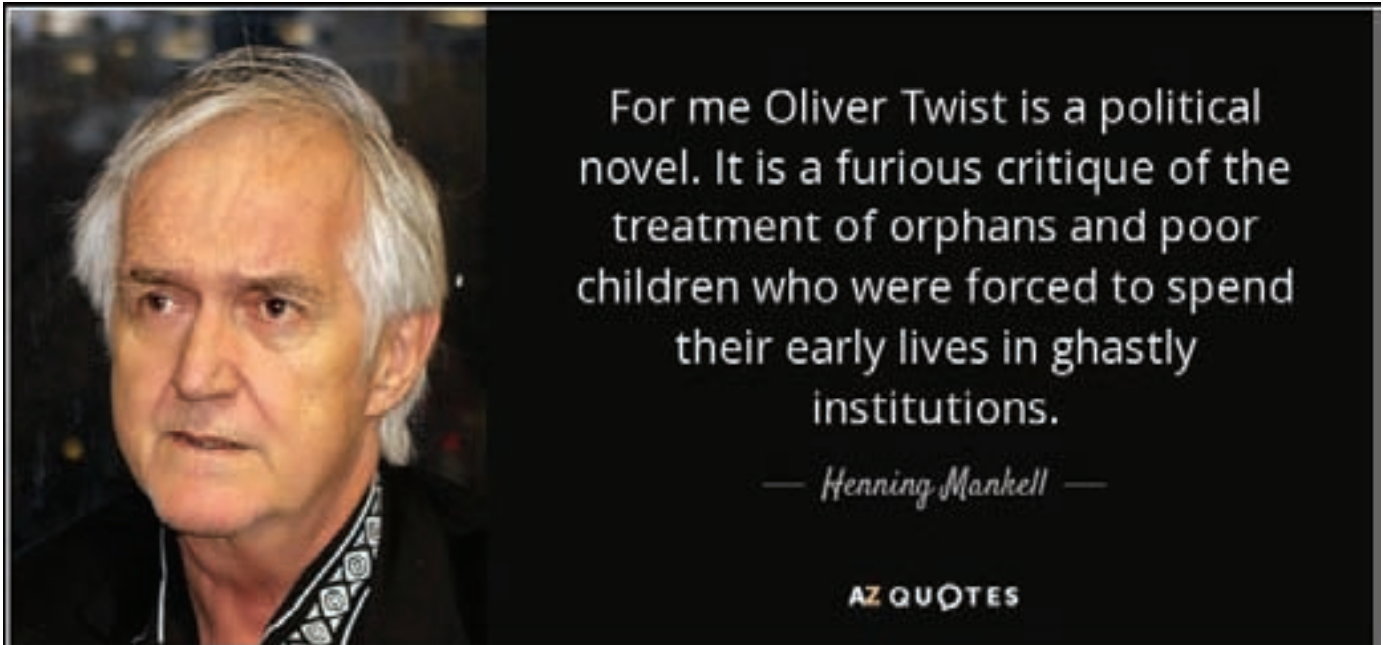


## Dickensian POLITICAL CARTOON

### ACCORDING TO DICKENS

“Oh! If, when we oppress and grind our fellow-creatures, we bestowed but one thought on the dark evidences of human error, which, like dense and heavy clouds, are rising, slowly it is true, but not less surely, to Heaven, to pour their after-vengeance on our heads; if we heard but one instant, in imagination, the deep testimony of the dead men’s voices, which no power can stifle, and no pride shut out; where would be the injury and injustice: the suffering, misery, cruelty, and wrong: that each day’s life brings with it!”

- Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*





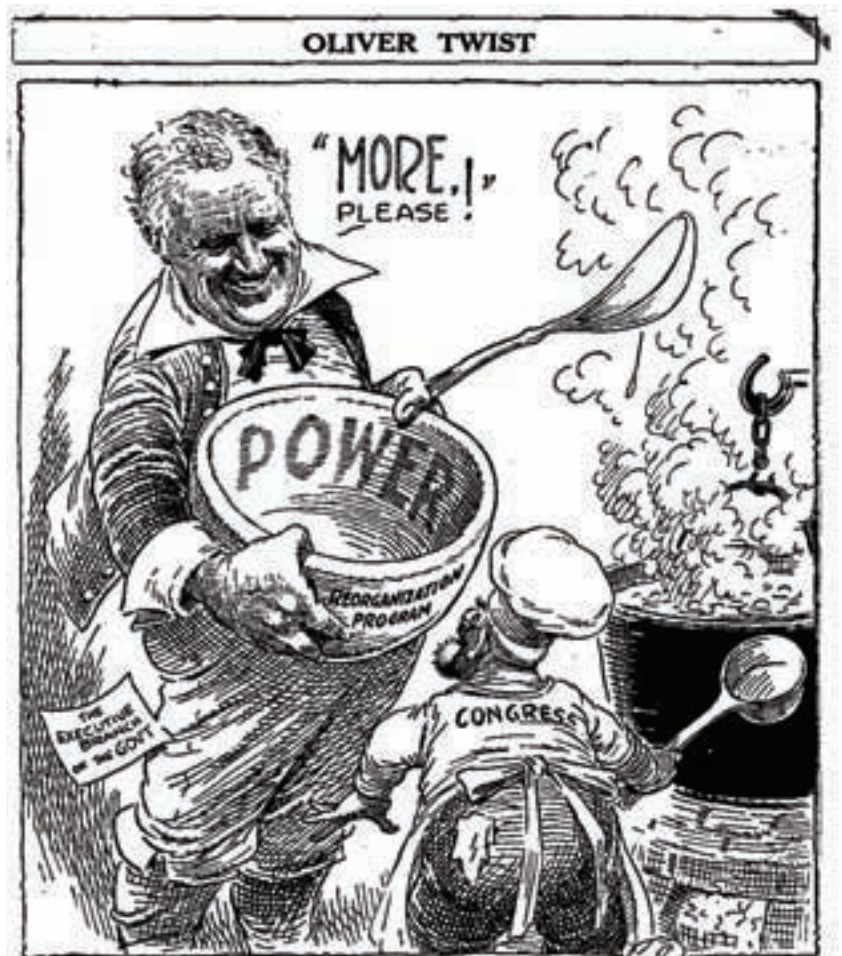


## VICTORIAN TIME MACHINE



Victorian times conjure images of petticoats, ruffles, and afternoon teas. This vision of Victorian sensibilities and manners can be seen in

the Romantic art of the period as well as a growing sense of liberal ideology. For the English men and women that existed in the under belly of industrial cities, the sooty, overcrowded world they lived in bore little resemblance to the well mannered Victorian ideal. The social stratification of the time inspired Charles Dickens. As a writer, Charles Dickens is known for his focus on social commentary. The plight of the poor and the injustice suffered by lower classes (particularly children) is a common theme throughout the Dickensian canon. His socially conscious subject matter has become iconic. Dickens has become an inspiration for political artists, writers, and cartoonists. Take a look at political cartoons below.







"PLEASE, SIR, I WANT SOME MORE..."



OLIVER TWIST, 2011 EDITION

*Dickensian*  
**POLITICAL CARTOON**  
**ACTIVITY**

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

1. Can you determine the issues each cartoonist is representing?
  - a. What is the cartoonist's position on the issue?
2. What symbols are used by the cartoonist?
3. What are the similarities in how characters are portrayed?
4. What tools are used by the cartoonist?
  - a. What things are exaggerated?
  - b. Does the cartoonist use color? Why or why not?
  - c. What artistic style does the artist use? How would you describe the style of drawing?

**DRAW YOUR OWN POLITICAL CARTOON:**

1. What issue would you like to address?
2. What is your position on the issue?
3. What symbols can you use?
4. Will you use language, images, or a combination?
5. What tools will you use?
  - a. Exaggeration
  - b. Color
  - c. Style

**"Such is the influence which the condition of our own thoughts, exercises, even over the appearance of external objects. Men who look on nature, and their fellow-men, and cry that all is dark and gloomy, are in the right; but the sombre colours are reflections from their own jaundiced eyes and hearts. The real hues are delicate, and need a clearer vision."**

*Charles Dickens, Oliver Twist*





VIRGINIA STAGE COMPANY

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## OLIVER TWIST

OCTOBER 28 - NOVEMBER 13 | TCC's ROPER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2 at 10AM  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9 at 10:30AM

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

DECEMBER 7 - 24 | THE WELLS THEATRE  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 16 at 10AM  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15 at 10:30AM

## A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

JANUARY 17 - FEBRUARY 5 | THE WELLS THEATRE  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 1 at 10AM

## THE WIZ

APRIL 11 - 30 | THE WELLS THEATRE  
TUESDAY, APRIL 19 at 10AM  
TUESDAY, APRIL 26 at 10:30AM

For more information, visit [vastage.org/student-matinees/](http://vastage.org/student-matinees/)

# STUDENT MATINEES

VSC would like to thank  
**The Batten Educational Achievement Fund  
of the Hampton Roads Community Foundation**

and the following supporters of our Education programs:

Bank of Hampton Roads  
Blue Star Families  
Business Consortium for Arts Support  
Capital Group Companies Charitable Foundation  
CHKD – Children’s Hospital of the King’s Daughters  
Chesapeake Fine Arts Commission  
The City of Norfolk  
The City of Portsmouth  
The City of Suffolk  
The Dailis Foundation  
The D.B. Ames Charitable Foundation  
The E.K. Sloane Fund of the Hampton Roads Community Foundation  
Franklin Southampton Charities  
G.S. Arts – The Governor’s School for the Arts  
The Hampton Roads Community Foundation  
The Helen G. Gifford Foundation  
The James Perkins Trust  
Kohl’s Cares  
Larchmont Elementary PTA  
Old Dominion University – The Department of Communication & Theater Arts  
The Patricia and Douglas Perry Foundation  
Newport News Arts Commission  
The Norfolk Academy  
Norfolk Commission on the Arts and Humanities  
Norfolk Southern  
Sertoma Club of Norfolk  
Southeast Virginia Community Foundation  
Theater Communication Group  
Virginia Commission for the Arts  
Virginia Beach Arts and Humanities Commission  
Virginia Symphony Orchestra  
Wells Fargo Foundation  
York County, Virginia



**VIRGINIA  
STAGE  
COMPANY**