

DAVID COPPERFIELD

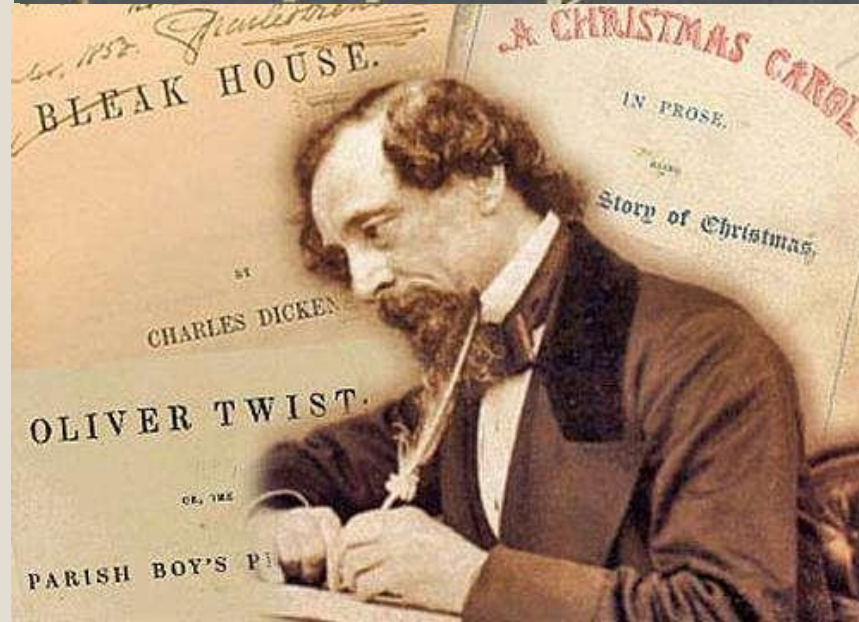
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查尔斯·狄更斯 200 周年诞辰



David
Copperfield



Chapter 1

Historical Background

I. Chapter I: A Bad Child

1. How do you understand the following sentence?



Art comes from **life** and goes beyond it.

Economy

Politics

Culture

Military

Religion

The 19th century is the century of greatest change in the history of Western civilization. The French revolution broke up the older of Europe. Almost all over Europe, the middle class established their effective rule, with monarchs having less power. The great political events caused great social and economic changes.

The great social chaos and urban poverty brought about by the social and economic changes created severe problems to which the political leaders reacted in many ways. They called for voting rights, freedom of speech, wanted independent countries and so on.

During 1830s and 1840s, the reformers led several revolutions, but all failed. Thus followed a time of loss of hope, and brought about revulsion (恶心) against Romanticism. The need was felt for a return to what was plain and real.

2. Why did people feel a return for the real and plain?

After the great wave of the international romantic movement had spent its force in the fourth decade of the 19th century, Europe literature moved in the direction of **realism**.

The realists wanted a truthful representation (表现) in their works of contemporary life. They thought of their method as observational and objective. “A novel is a mirror walking along the road,” said one writer.

If romanticism allows full play to the imagination and stress love of beauty and interest in the past, the realists focus on the real and plain life. Its language is usually simple, clear and direct, while the tone was often comic, frequently satiric (讽刺的).

3. What's the difference between romanticism and realism?

(You can compare them from the perspective of content and language)

3. Comparison between Romanticism and Realism.

| / | Realism | Romanticism |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Content | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· contemporary life· real and plain things | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· love of beauty· interest in the past· imagined things |
| Language | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· simple, clear, direct· comic and satiric | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· complex, indirect, beautiful |
| Representative writers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Charles Dickens· Mark Twain | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· William Wordsworth· Percy Bysshe Shelley |
| Works | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· <i>A City of Two Tales</i>· <i>The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· <i>I Wander Lonely as a Cloud</i>· <i>Ode to the West Wind</i> (If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?) |

• Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

1. Social Background

The period of realism in English literature corresponds roughly to the latter half of the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1900). This is the period when England was at the peak of its power, rapidly growing into a strong, industrialized nation.

In spite of its stable government and greatly increased population, the country suffered **severe economic depression**. A revolt (反抗) began against optimism that had characterized the early days of the Victorian rule. Both the prosperity (繁荣) and the social troubles like unemployment left marks on the literature of the period.

2. Charles Dickens (1812-1870)



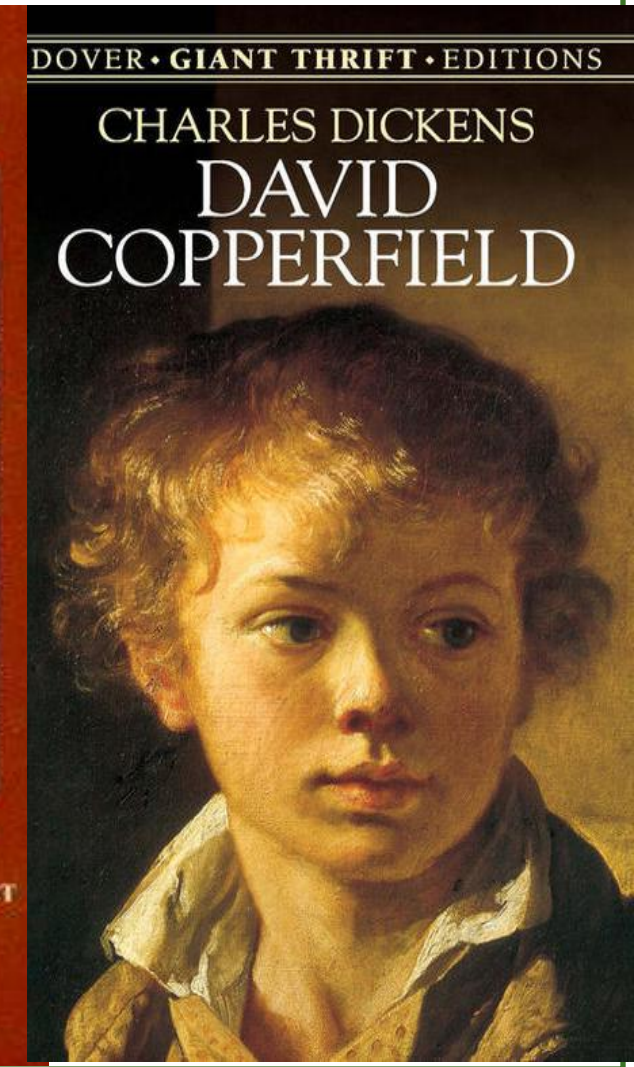
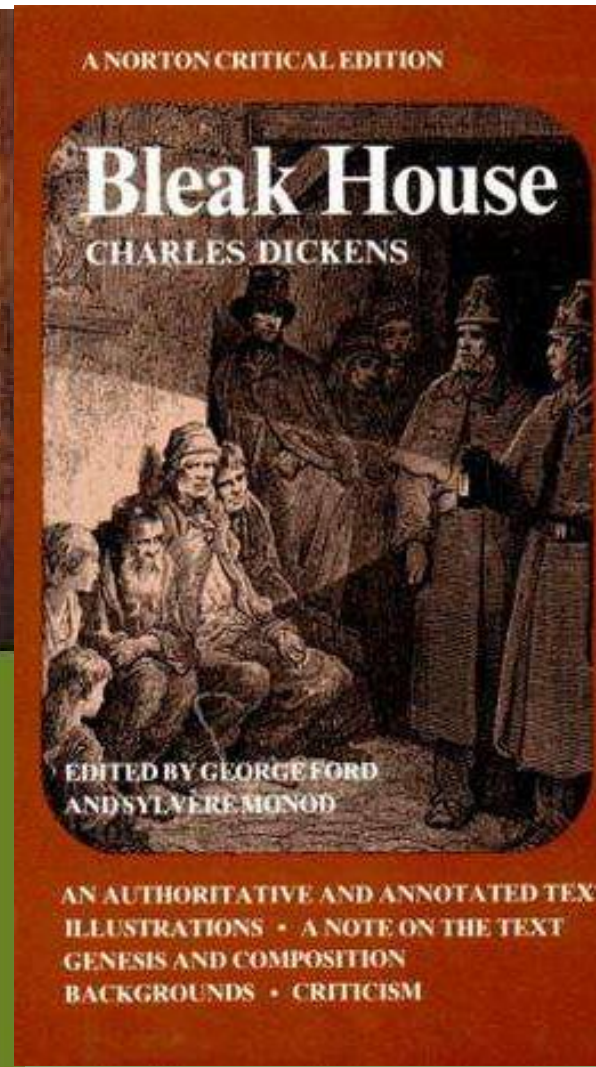
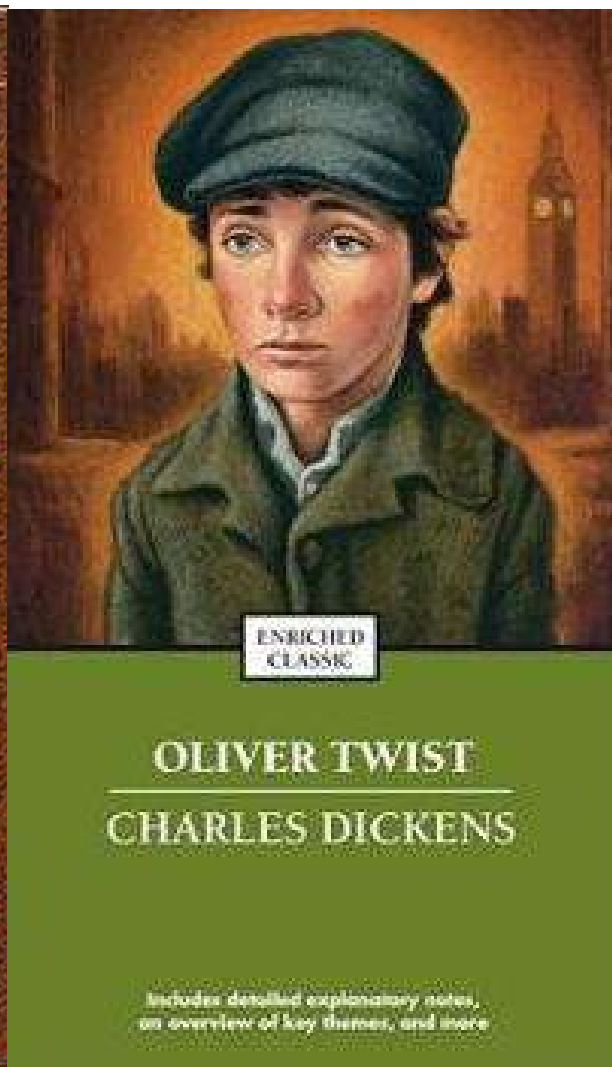
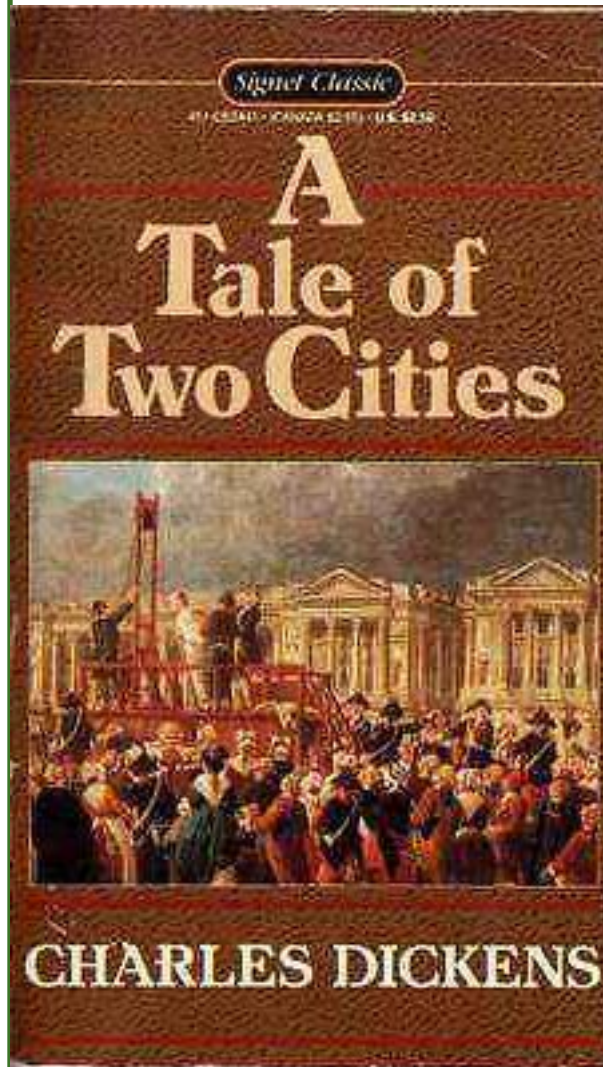
- a son of an impoverished government clerk
- father put into prison for debt
- little schooling
- working in a blacking factory at 12

miserable **tragic** **unhappy**

“He is a sympathizer to the poor, the suffering, the oppressed; and by his death, one of England’s greatest writers is lost to the world.”

- inheriting money from his uncle
- paying off his father’s debt
- learning shorthand and becoming a reporter
- starting writing fiction in his spare time

3. Works by Charles Dickens



...Of all my books, I like this the best...But, like many fond parents I have in my heart of hearts a favorite child. And his name is **DAVID COPPERFIELD**.
——Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens' best book is *David Copperfield*, a kind of **autobiographical** romance, in which his power over our everyday emotion is unrivalled. Within one page he can make the reader burst with laughter and soon wet the book with honest tears.

But whatever he wrote he has some basis on his own experience. In his youth he had been familiar with the most humble surroundings and the most poverty-stricken districts.

As a novelist of genius, he has created a whole world of beings mirroring the movement of life, with unforgettable scenes and full of good humor, tender emotions and loving-kindness.
——*European Culture: An Introduction*

Chapter 2

A Bad Child

II. Chapter 2: A Bad Child

My life has been full of ups and downs, and during my childhood the downs seemed to rain on me like a never-ending storm. When I look back on those years, I can't believe that any grown-up would behave in **that way** to a child. But **they** did.

1. What's the function of this paragraph in Chapter 1?

to lead the following content; to set the narrative tone

2. How do you understand “ups and downs”?

happy and miserable time

3. Try to translate the first sentence.

**Miserable and
tragic childhood**

4. Read Chapter 1 and figure out who they are.

| Name | Who they are |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Betsey Trotwood | great-aunt |
| Peggotty | housekeeper |
| Clara | mother |
| Mr. Murdstone | stepfather |
| Dan Peggotty | Peggotty's brother |
| Emily | Dan Peggotty's orphaned niece |
| Ham | Dan Peggotty's orphaned nephew |
| Miss. Murdstone | Mr. Murdstone's sister |



Peggotty



Emily



David Copperfield



Betsey Trotwood



Clara



Dan Peggotty



Miss Murdstone



Mr Murdstone

5. What does David think of his early childhood?

happy and full of joy

6. Why was David's early childhood happy?

| name | appearance | What they did | character |
|----------|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Peggotty | plain (not pretty) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· reading picture books with me· bring me to Dan's | kind and loving |
| Emily | pretty with a wildness | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· playing with me | bold and friendly |
| Ham | a tall lad with a smile | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· playing with me· looking after me | friendly |

7. What did David's childhood become unhappy later?

Mr. Murdstone—his stepfather—entered our happy life with his sister **Miss Murdstone**.

8. How does the writer describe them?

| Name | appearance | character |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Mr. Murdstone | having black hair and a hard, cold, handsome face | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· unpleasant· stern |
| Miss. Murdstone | having a face full of gloom and cruelty | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· harsh |

9. What was David's feeling toward them? How does he describe it?

He was very **afraid** of them.

David was **afraid** of them.

actions

I shivered with fear, knowing that if... (para. 14)

My body was shaking with fear. (para. 24)

I walked up the stairs with my knees trembling. (para. 26)

I shook with terror. (para. 27)

words

“I don’t know,” I whispered nervously. (para. 12)

“I...I...can’t do my work,” I spluttered. (para. 28)

appearance

He had black hair and a hard, cold, handsome face. (para. 4)

10. Why was I so afraid of Mr. Murdstone? What did he do to me?

① Mr. Murdstone said I was a bad child and that he was determined to **crush** me. (para. 10)

② "...What do you think I do if I have a dog or horse that doesn't do what I tell them? I beat it." he replied, with an

③ I wasn't allowed to play with other children

④ Mr. Murdstone insisted I did lessons with my mother, but he and Miss Murdstone would stand over me, **frowning** and telling my mother to be firmer, and even **beat** me on one occasion. (para. 19)

verbal
abuse

harsh, stern,
cruel, unpleasant,

physical
abuse

11. Did I subject myself to his cruelty? What did I do?

No. I fought back on one occasion.

No sooner had these words left my mouth than he grabbed hold of my head and began slapping me. I *had* to fight back – I had to. All those weeks of bullying and loneliness exploded in me.

I sank my teeth deep into his right hand – the one holding my neck – and tasted the salty and sour texture of his skin. He yelped in pain and sprang backwards, letting go of my head in shock. He stared down in horror at the deep bite marks on his hand.

The next instant, he rushed at me, hitting me with both hands on my head, on my back, on my chest. I held my arms over my face, dizzy with pain and shock. I was only ten years old, and I couldn't defend myself against a fully-grown man.

I heard my mother and Peggotty screaming on the stairs outside my room, begging Mr Murdstone to stop. But he took no notice. How long the attack lasted, I don't know, but by the time he finished, I collapsed in a heap on my

12. Try to find the phrases indicating time.

No sooner...than...→the next instant→by the time...

13. How does the writer describe such a fierce fight?

Actions. By mainly using verbs.

left→grabbed hold of→slapping→sank teeth into→
tasted→yelped→sprang backward→stared down→
rushed→hitting→held arms→screaming→begging
→took no notice→collapsed in a heap (15 verbs)

14. What's the advantage of using many verbs in a scene?

15. Appreciate the two underlined words and sentences

16. Try to find the sentence describing the following feelings: “happy”, “unhappy”, “angry”, “desperate”, and “frightened”

happy

My mother seemed to **light up** in his company.

unhappy

I had **a very heavy heart** when Peggotty and I had to return home.

angry

She got up **in a rage** and stormed out, with the **slamming** of the door.

desperate

I felt as if the air had been **strangled** out of me. Mr. Murdstone was the kind of man that **smothers** all hope and happiness.

I **shivered with fear**, knowing that if I gave him the slightest excuse, he would beat me.

frightened

My body was **shaking with fear**.

I walked up the stairs with **my knees trembling**

I **shook with terror**.

SHOW and
not TELL

He stared down **in horror** at the deep bite marks on his had.

17. Try to find the words indicating “say sth”.

whisper

“I don’t know,” I **whispered** nervously.

reply

“I beat it,” he **replied**, with an evil glint in his eyes.

shout

Mr. Murdstone jumped up, **shouting**, “We can’t expect...”

order

“Stop it at once, Clara!” **ordered** Mr. Murdstone.

demand

“Why are you doing so badly in your lessons?” he **demanded**.

splutter

“I...I...can’t do my work,” I **spluttered**.

beg

I heard my mother **begging** Mr. M

ask

—“When am I going?” I **asked**.

answer

—“Tomorrow,” she **answered**, “first thing in the morning.”

**Expressing
different feelings**