

Charles Dickens 200 Years

DID YOU KNOW THAT 1

Ex.1. Speaking

In pairs or groups of three answer the following questions.

1. What do you know about Charles Dickens?
2. What do you imagine Charles Dickens family was like?
3. What do you know about the times he lived in?
4. What do you think were fallen women in Dickens' times?
5. Do you know any famous British kings or queens?
6. Who invented concentration camps?
7. Would you like to have 10 brothers or sisters?
8. Do you like brass bands?
9. Is it better to go to a private or a public [state] school?

Ex.2. Reading and Vocabulary

Read the text and discuss in pairs the words and phrases in bold.

Ex.3. Reading and Discussion

Read the text again and tick any piece of information that you found new or interesting. Compare with your partner.

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Charles John Huffam Dickens was born on the 7th of February 1812 and died on the 9th of June 1870 at the age of 58. He was one of the most famous and prolific novelists of the Victorian period. Many of his books were published serially in magazines, which explains the frequent suspense effect at the end of individual chapters. Charles Dickens has been respected worldwide as a writer for his concern for the poor, unique characters he created and for his sense of humor. In 2012 we are celebrating the 200th anniversary of his birthday.

Did you know that...

- Charles Dickens went to a private school in Kent? Yes he did, but after a while his father could not pay for the school anymore and the family moved from Kent to London. In fact, in London, Charles' father was **imprisoned** as unable to pay his **debts** and Charles had to find a job.
- David Copperfield is **to a great extent** an autobiographical novel? Dickens writes in it: "I had no advice, no counsel, no **encouragement**, no consolation, no assistance, no support, of any kind, from anyone, that I can call to mind, as I hope to go to heaven!"
- Charles Dickens had 10 children? Yes, indeed, all with his wife Catherine whom he married in 1836. Though there are **rumors** that...
- A Christmas Carol was inspired by Dickens' trip to Manchester to see the conditions **manufacturing workers** lived and worked in there? As he says, while writing the book he "**wept and laughed**, and wept again".
- Dickens was a **philanthropist** and was involved in setting up a home for 'fallen' women?

Did you know that...

- Queen Victoria **reigned** for almost 64 years? She did, from 20 June 1837 until her death on 22 January 1901.
- The Victorian period was preceded by the Georgian period and succeeded by the Edwardian period?
- The population of England **doubled** during the Victorian period. Yes, and the population of Ireland decreased by about 50%, due to **starvation** and emigration.
- Brass bands became popular and could be heard when taking a walk in parks.

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- Towards the end of Queen Victoria's reign, during the **Boer Wars**, over 26 000 Boer women and children **perished** in British concentration camps in South Africa.

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Teachers' Notes

Before asking students to read the text ask them to discuss the questions in Ex.1..

You can use the following technique:

- Students stand in two lines facing each other.
- Teacher writes the questions on board.
- Students answer the first question with the person opposite.
- Then the teachers ask students in one line to move one person to the right.
- Everybody has a new partner now.
- With new partners students discuss the second question.
- They change partners at the teacher's signal, before every question.

Try it, it's fun. And students don't have to sit at their desks all the time.

You can then ask the group what they think all the questions have in common.

Then ask the students to read the text and do exercises 2 and 3.

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