Teaching *Great Expectations* to Ninth Graders: A Practical Approach

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EDTL 7100

# Rationale

Just mention the words “classic novel” or “Charles Dickens” to any high school teenager and the majority of them will absolutely cringe.

Students in our 2010 social culture have a great deal of difficulty opening their minds to the idea that anything 150 years old can in any way relate to the technology-rich, individually-styled world in which our teenagers exist today.

This modern-cultured way of thinking presents the ultimate challenge to teachers across the curriculum, but maybe none more so than the high school language arts teacher. After all, math is math, always constant. Science and history are consistent merely adding on new things as they occur or are discovered.

That leaves English as the evil step-sister. Writing and literature have evolved, but unfortunately, as our world continues to become one of instant-this and microwave-that, so too has the quality of the written and spoken word.

Show me a student who will sit down patiently and read a classic novel and grasp the meaning intended by the author and I will show you a freak, an outcast, a genetic anomaly. It is not that they do not exist anymore in the halls of American high schools. Rather they are the rarest of rare birds in the academic jungles of our society.

Just ask any “normal” student to partake in any way with one of the literary classics from history and you will get a reaction comparable to asking them to eat spinach or Brussels sprouts. They would prefer death to reading some incomprehensible 400-page ancient book.

That is the dilemma English teachers face when teaching literature and in particular, reading classic novels. It is with this idea in mind, I have researched and teamed with other English teachers to develop literature units that will grab the interest of today’s students and present material to them in a way that they can relate to story, its characters, and its literary conventions.

Teaching the works of Charles Dickens can be a challenge, and opportunity, and a joy. The challenge arises from persuading students to overcome their prejudices about reading a thick, nineteenth century novel with unfamiliar, difficult words.

As Don Gallo points out, “The classics are not about teenage concerns! They are about adult issues. Moreover, they were written for educated adults who had the leisure and the time to read them. They were incidentally, written to be enjoyed – not dissected, not analyzed, and certainly not tested.” (Gallo, 2001)

The joy comes when those barriers are crossed and my students begin to relate and actually enjoy the plot twists and unusual but interesting characters. Teenagers will still respond to such things as the terror and comedy of the convict on the moors, the abusive Mrs. Joe, Pip’s longing, self-absorption and egotistical short-sightedness, to the grotesque sight of Miss Havisham’s wedding table at Satis House, and to the final revelations about Magwitch, Joe, Biddy, Estella and Pip.

There is no question about it, getting students to find joy in the novel takes work. One of the big questions we must answer is “How can we help to make a connection between a 150-year-old novel and a 14 or 15-year old student?” Active, creative teaching is necessary to get past the barriers imposed by the distance of time and the unfamiliarity and difficulty of the language. Teaching any Dickens novel requires hands-on monitoring, mentoring, and imaginative lesson plans that will capture the interest of teenagers. One possible solution is the pairing of a classic with a young adult novel or a more modern version of a video version of the classic. (Porteus, 2009)

The ultimate goal in the Ninth Grade Language Arts at West Jefferson High School is to incorporate the above-mentioned challenge with the requirements of preparing students for the reading and writing portions of the Ohio Graduation Test and meeting state and national standards in the subject area. (National Council of Teachers of English, 1993) and (Ohio Department of Education, 2003)

The main purpose of this unit is to integrate creativity and requirements in a way that captures the interest, imagination and character of ninth grade students allowing them to learn contextually through skill development and critical thinking development. This type of teaching and learning becomes a win-win for all of the stakeholders involved in this process.

# Bibliography

Gallo, D. R. (2001). "How Classics Create an Alliterate Society". *English Journal* , 33-39.

National Council of Teachers of English. (1993). National Council of Teachers of English and International Reading Association Standards for English Language Arts. *Academic Content Standards* , 13-14.

Ohio Department of Education. (2003). Academic content standards for K-12 Language Arts. 76.

Porteus, K. (2009). Easing the Pain of the Classics. *Young Adult Library Services* , 16-18.

Great Expectations by Charles Dickens

**Learning Outcomes**

**Unit Outcomes**

1. Students will develop enhanced ability in critical thinking by observing, comparing, and listing the basic elements of a novel. **(Synthesis)**
2. Students will learn to make personal connection with a character by analyzing the characters motivations, feelings, and goals and relating those experiences to the students’ own lives. **(Analysis)**
3. Students will explain and clarify character development based on how various characters and character types impact the plot and relate to the lead character in the novel. **(Knowledge)**
4. Students will identify sixty assigned vocabulary words through contextual meaning and use the words correctly thereby building their own vocabulary knowledge base. **(Comprehension)**
5. Students will develop an understanding of dialect and a comfort level and confidence in dealing with unfamiliar dialect words and phrases. **(Synthesis)**
6. Students will apply their knowledge and skill to reading and writing assignments in preparation for the Ohio Graduation Test. **(Application)**

**Sub Unit 1 – Double Vision (A Lesson in Critical Thinking)**

1. Students will read a novel to build an understanding of fictitious literary works, of themselves, and of other cultures. **(Knowledge)**
2. Students will read a novel from a different time period representing a specific genre to build an understanding of the many dimensions of human experience. **(Comprehension)**
3. Students will employ various writing strategies using different writing process elements appropriately to effectively communicate with their audience. **(Synthesis)**
4. Students will apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique and discuss literary works. **(Application)**
5. Students will analyze comparative lists of separate videos to determine changes in dramatic effect incurred by characters compared to the author’s intentions. **(Analyze)**

**Sub Unit 2 – Empathy Journal (A Lesson in Analysis)**

1. Students will define critical terms such as *empathy* as it relates to the novel’s main character. **(Knowledge)**
2. Students will identify experiences, opinions, beliefs, or emotions exhibited by Pip that relate to those of a contemporary adolescent. **(Comprehension)**
3. Students will develop a notebook or journal and list examples of empathy for the main character in the journal. **(Synthesis)**
4. Students will discuss their journal entries to determine which feelings were most common and which were less so to determine where Dickens was accurate in his depiction of the main character’s growth and where he was trying to create drama. **(Analysis)**

**Sub Unit 3 – We Need an Expert! (A Lesson in Character Development)**

1. Students will identify types of characters (lead, supporting, and cameo) by their roles and interaction with the main character. **(Comprehension)**
2. Students will analyze a character by what the character says, the character’s actions and/or the character’s interaction with other characters. **(Analysis)**
3. Students will report their findings through written and oral communication with the class. **(Synthesis)**
4. Students will apply the information gathered to determine the importance of the information to the unfolding of the story. **(Application)**

**Sub Unit 4 – “In a Word…A Young Fellow of Great Expectations!” (A Lesson in Vocabulary)**

1. Students will build vocabulary using a contextual approach. **(Knowledge)**
2. Students will combine traditional written exercises and active learning improvisation to comprehend word meaning. **(Synthesis)**
3. Students will draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics). **(Analysis)**
4. Students will apply vocabulary skills learned through weekly and cumulative quizzes on the words. **(Comprehension)**

**Sub Unit 5 – Are You A-Listening? (A Lesson in Dialect)**

1. Students will utilize strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate the novel. **(Comprehension)**
2. Students will draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics). **(Analysis)**
3. Students will apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique and discuss literary works. **(Application)**
4. Students will develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles. **(Synthesis)**

**Sub Unit 6 – Full-Length Personal Essay**

1. Students will display a general understanding of the novel *Great Expectations.* **(Knowledge)**
2. Students will express that knowledge and convey contextual learning through the written word. **(Comprehension)**
3. Students will utilize the five-paragraph writing process appropriately. **(Application)**
4. Students will organize thoughts and ideas in a concise, organized manner. **(Synthesis)**
5. Students will provide feedback through answering follow-up questions from the teacher. **(Analysis)**

**Pre-Assessment Questions**

There are several prominent themes in the novel *Great Expectations*. They include fear and fun, loneliness and luck, classism and social justice, and humiliation and honor.

Students will be divided into small groups of 5-6 students and each will be given a theme. On a sheet of paper, each group will list its theme in two columns with a line down the center of the paper (i.e., fear and fun will be separated by a line down the center of the paper). Each group will have 3-5 minutes to list as many words, phrases, or ideas as possible that relate to each theme. Groups take turns with each paper until each group has written its thoughts and ideas on each sheet. When this exercise is complete, each group takes its original sheet of paper and lists on the board what is written for discussion by the class.

In addition to this pre-assessment exercise, students will complete the following pre-assessment survey. Define the following terms to the best of your ability.

1. Character\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Setting\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Conflict\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
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2. Empathy\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Lead character \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. Cameo appearance\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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# Lesson: Double Vision

**Objectives:**

1. Students will read a novel to build an understanding of fictitious literary works, of themselves, and of other cultures. **(Knowledge)**
2. Students will read a novel from a different time period representing a specific genre to build an understanding of the many dimensions of human experience. **(Comprehension)**
3. Students will employ various writing strategies using different writing process elements appropriately to effectively communicate with their audience. **(Synthesis)**
4. Students will apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique and discuss literary works. **(Application)**
5. Students will analyze comparative lists of separate videos to determine changes in dramatic effect incurred by characters compared to the author’s intentions. **(Analyze)**

**Concepts/Skills:** Critical Thinking

**Materials:** Copy of *Great Expectations* for each student; two film versions of *Great Expectations* (1946 version and 1981 version); two good online sources for cast lists, reviews, and information about other film versions are <http://imdb.com> or [www.rottentomatoes.com](http://www.rottentomatoes.com)

**Procedures:** 1. Choose three scenes that the class has closely studied. Some possible choices:

Chapters 1-3 Pip meets the convict in the graveyard

Chapter 8 Pip’s first meeting with Estella and Miss Havisham

Chapter 21 Pip comes to London and meets Herbert Pocket

Chapter 39 Abel Magwitch returns

Chapter 49 Pip visits Miss Havisham; fire erupts at Satis House

Chapter 59 Pip returns to England

2. Bring to class the two film versions of *Great Expectations*.

3. Tell students the chapters and scenes they will watch the day before the film is to be shown. For each, ask them to go back to the chapter and create an “Anticipation List”. They will write down a description of the setting and objects they expect to see, the actions they anticipate occurring, and the reactions they expect by Pip and other characters. Ask them to think about weather conditions for outdoor scenes, lighting for interiors, and background music or noises.

4. Show one of the scenes. Pause and ask students to jot down, without discussion, details of what they saw. (15 minutes)

5. Call on students to share notes at the end of five minutes, and write them down on the board. (5 minutes)

6. Show the same scene in another version. Proceed as in step 4.

(15 minutes)

7. Have students share their notes again, and list them in a second column on the board. (5 minutes)

8. Compare homework lists with the board notes. What’s missing? Added? Do students like the changes? How do alterations to the text affect the film and the audience’s perception of the scene? Have the director and actors stayed true to Dickens? Have they introduced another theme or purpose? Can their decisions be justified? (10 minutes)

**Assessment:** What are the essential elements that must be kept to be true to character, plot, and Dickens’s intention?

How can elements of the novel be changed and still be effective?

# Lesson: Empathy Journal

**Objectives:**

1. Students will define critical terms such as *empathy* as it relates to the novel’s main character. **(Knowledge)**
2. Students will identify experiences, opinions, beliefs, or emotions exhibited by Pip that relate to those of a contemporary adolescent. **(Comprehension)**
3. Students will develop a notebook or journal and list examples of empathy for the main character in the journal. **(Synthesis)**
4. Students will discuss their journal entries to determine which feelings were most common and which were less so to determine where Dickens was accurate in his depiction of the main character’s growth and where he was trying to create drama. **(Analysis)**

**Concepts/Skills:** Analysis, Journal writing

**Materials:** Copy of *Great Expectations* for each student; copies of Handout #1

**Procedures:** 1. Explain to students what *empathy* means and tell them that they will be keeping an Empathy Journal as part of this exercise. A good working definition of *empathy* is “the act of imaginatively stepping into another person’s perspective and considering how things look from their point of view” (i.e., walking a mile in someone else’s shoes).

2. As students are reading the First and Second Stages of the novel (ending at Chapter 39), spend five to 10 minutes during the daily classroom discussion having students identify experiences, opinions, beliefs, or emotions that Pip has had that are similar to those of a contemporary young person. (5-10 minutes)

3. As part of these discussions, create a connections list on the board using the examples they share and have them write the list in their notebooks. (5 minutes)

4. After students have finished reading chapter 39, distribute Handout #1 and explain the analysis/journaling assignment. Let students know they can use examples from their connections lists (in their notebooks) as well as those listed on the handout. Have students complete the journal assignment as homework; students may be given more than one night to complete the assignment. (20 minutes)

5. During the next class period after the journal assignment has been completed, ask for volunteers to share one journal entry each. Have students read their entries. The essays should stimulate students into discussion of the novel; spend the rest of the class period determining which feelings were most common, and which were less so. Discuss where Dickens was accurate in his depiction of Pip’s growth and where he was “pushing” to create drama. (20-30 minutes)

**Assessment:** Why did Pip feel both frightened of the convict and guilting for helping him? Why does Pip distrust Orlick? What are Pip’s first impressions of Miss Havisham? Why doesn’t Estella return Pip’s affection? Why is Pip ashamed of his family and of his future profession? Why is Joe always loyal to and proud of Pip? What does Biddy think of Pip? What is the source of Pip’s good fortune? Why is he deceived about the source? Why do Pip and Herbert Pocket become friends? Why does Pip persist in trying to win Estella?

Handout #1

**Empathy Journal**

The purpose of this exercise is to understand events in Pip’s life and to find connections between his life and that of any teenager. The items below recount feelings that Pip had while growing up, as well as events that happened to him from his childhood to his late teens.

**Directions**: Choose five items below. For each, briefly describe the incident in the novel and Pip’s motivation or reaction. Then write a three-paragraph journal entry in which you discuss a similar event or feeling that occurred to you or someone you know. Some sample beginnings are given, but feel free to change the words.

1. Pip, as a small child, accidentally meets a mysterious and terrifying stranger. *[Ex.: Once, I met a frightening stranger…]*

2. When Pip is a very young boy, Orlick tells him a lie that badly frightens him and makes him distrust the journeyman. Orlick says that every seven years the fire in the forge is made up with a live boy. *[Ex.: When I was very young, a frightening lie that I heard…]*

3. Pip meets Miss Havisham, a very eccentric person. *[Ex.: An eccentric person I know…]*

4. Pip loves Estella and is not loved in return.

5. Pip becomes ashamed of his family and of the way they live.

6. Pip often condescends to Joe, but Joe’s affection for him never wavers.

7. Pip thinks he is better than Biddy.

8. Pip wants a better future than being an apprentice and then a blacksmith.

9. Pip feels secretly guilty for unknowingly providing the weapon used in the attack on his sister.

10. Pip underestimates Biddy’s intelligence and ability.

11. Pip has an amazing stroke of luck occur in his life: he wanted to be a gentleman and although it seemed impossible, money arrives to make his dream come true.

12. Pip leaves home for the first time with mixed emotions; he is eager for his new life to begin, but he is sad to leave what has been familiar and comforting.

13. Pip becomes close friends with Herbert Pocket several years after beating him up at Satis House.

14. When Pip returns to town all dressed up to visit Miss Havisham, he is made fun of by Trabb’s boy.

15. Although Pip is warned by many people that his love for Estella is hopeless, he persists in trying to win her affection.

# Lesson: We Need an Expert!

**Objective:**

1. Students will identify types of characters (lead, supporting, and cameo) by their roles and interaction with the main character. **(Comprehension)**
2. Students will analyze a character by what the character says, the character’s actions and/or the character’s interaction with other characters. **(Analysis)**
3. Students will report their findings through written and oral communication with the class. **(Synthesis)**
4. Students will apply the information gathered to determine the importance of the information to the unfolding of the story. **(Application)**

**Concepts/Skills:** Character development; types of characters (lead, supporting, cameo)

**Materials:** Copy of *Great Expectations* for each student; copies of Handout #2

**Procedures:** 1. Divide the class into expert groups of 3-4 students.

2. Assign a character to each group. Choose from Joe Gargery, Mrs. Joe, Biddy, Mr. Pumblechook, Wopsle, Abel Magwitch, Compeyson, Orlick, Estella, Miss Havisham, Drummle, Mr. Jaggers, Molly, Mr. Wemmick, Herbert Pocket. Major characters who appear throughout the novel may be assigned to several students. Minor characters can be grouped together. (5 minutes)

3. Remind students that we learn about characters through what they say and do and through what others say of them and to them. (1 minute)

4. Distribute Handout #2. (1 minute)

5. Tell students to complete (as a homework assignment) this form for each chapter in which their character appears. (1 minute)

6. As each chapter is completed, the expert group will report to the class on what they have discovered. Discuss how this new information affects our perception of Pip. (10-15 minutes)

7. Post completed chapter notes on a wall or bulletin board so students can reread them and follow the developing relationships.

8. Ask the class to determine the two most significant quotes from each character at the end of each Stage of the book. Choices must be justified by their expression of the innate nature of the character and by their importance to Pip’s unfolding story. (15 minutes)

**Assessment:** When this lesson is completed students should be able to explain how supporting characters impact the plot and help the reader determine the whys and the ways in which the protagonist changes.

Handout #2

**We Need an Expert!**

Character: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Key Quote(s) or Action(s): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Importance to Pip: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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# Lesson: “In a Word…A Young Fellow of Great Expectations!”

**Objectives:**

1. Students will build vocabulary using a contextual approach. **(Knowledge)**
2. Students will combine traditional written exercises and active learning improvisation to comprehend word meaning. **(Synthesis)**
3. Students will draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics). **(Analysis)**
4. Students will apply vocabulary skills learned through weekly and cumulative quizzes on the words. **(Comprehension)**

**Concepts/Skills:** Vocabulary

**Materials:** Copy of *Great Expectations* for each student; copies of Handout #2; Index cards with the names of all the characters from the novel; Index cards with a variety of settings (for example, the graveyard, Joe’s forge, Satis House, Mr. Jaggers’s house, the Aged P’s castle, the marshes at night; some non-text suggestions include a baseball game, school cafeteria, school bus, line at the grocery store)

**Procedures:** 1. Distribute Handout #3, which includes 60 vocabulary words from *Great Expectations*. (1 minute)

2. Tell students they will learn 15 words from the list each week. The class will focus on words 1-15 the first week, 16-30 the second week, and so forth. (15 minutes)

Each week, students should:

a. Write out definitions in their notebooks and on index cards. (Each card should have a vocabulary word on one side and a definition on the other.)

b. Make up a matching exercise (vocabulary words in column A, scrambled definitions in column B).

c. Review the vocabulary index cards at least 3 times a day for 5 minutes each time.

3. Have students switch exercises with each other and complete the matches without looking at the definitions. (10 minutes)

4. Copy two of the matching exercises and duplicate them for use on subsequent days as review; or put exercises on an overhead.

5. Play the following active-learning improvisation game daily during the first week. It requires students to use their new vocabulary.

a. Designate 3 students as actors.

b. Give them 3 of this week’s words (they may use their index cards) and two minutes (timed) to devise an impromptu two-minute scene in which their words are appropriately used.

c. Have students present their scene to the class.

d. Correct any misuse of the words gently.

6. Hone in on the text after the first week. Tell students that from now on when they present their scenes, they will represent characters in *Great Expectations* and should try to capture something of the character’s essence. When students come up, assign a setting (it need not be in the book), a character card, and three vocabulary words.

For example, students might receive character cards for Pip, Estella, and Joe Gargery. The setting might be a baseball field. The words might be commiserate, larceny, and consternation.

7. Give the students weekly and cumulative quizzes on the words.

**Assessment:** When the lesson is completed students should be able to identify meanings of the sixty assigned vocabulary words and use them correctly.

Handout #3

***Great Expectations:* Selected Vocabulary**

1. explicit (adj.) very clear (as directions); free from vagueness

2. prodigious (adj.) enormous

3. vicarious (adj.) performed or experienced by one person as a substitute for another

4. ravenous (adj.) very hungry

5. disconsolate (adj.) sad; unable to be consoled

6. commiserate (v.) to sympathize

7. larceny (n.) theft

8. consternation (n.) amazement or dismay that throws one into confusion

9. gloat (v.) to observe or think about something with triumphant or malicious satisfaction or delight

10. abhorrence (n.) hatred

11. appall (v.) to overcome with shock or dismay

12. omnipotent (adj.) all-powerful

13. imperious (adj.) commanding; dominant; masterful

14. desolation (n.) grief; sadness; loneliness; devastation; ruin

15. execrate (v.) to declare someone or something to be evil or detestable

16. grovel (v.) to act subservient; to humble oneself

17. allude (v.) to refer to someone or something

18. expend (v.) to pay out

19. diabolical (adj.) devilish

20. coherent (adj.) sensible; rational

21. conciliatory (adj.) becoming friendly or agreeable; willing to reconcile

22. morose (adj.) gloomy; sad

23. aversion (n.) strong dislike causing one to turn away

24. ignominious (adj.) shameful

25. surmise (n.) guess

26. corroborate (v.) support with evidence or authority; make more certain

27. indiscriminate (adj.) random; without definite aim, direction, rule, or method

28. altercation (n.) quarrel; fight

29. imperceptible (adj.) unable to be seen; extremely slight, gradual, or subtle

30. discernible (adj.) able to be seen

31. plaintive (adj.) expressing suffering or woe; melancholy

32. disinterest (n.) lack of self-interest

33. stipulation (n.) condition, requirement

34. condescend (v.) to assume an air of superiority

35. dexterous (adj.) skillful and competent with hands or mind

36. magnanimous (adj.) generous

37. beguile (v.) (1) engage someone’s interest by deception;

(2) entertain

38. acquiesce (v.) to agree

39. constrain (v.) to restrict; repress one’s feelings, behavior, or actions

40. discomfit (v.) to put into a state of embarrassment and unease

41. discretion (n.) cautiousness in speech; power of free decision

42. adversary (n.) enemy

43. impartial (adj.) not taking sides

44. copious (adj.) plentiful amount

45. waive (v.) to give up one’s right to something

46. injudicious (adj.) unwise

47. paroxysm (n.) sudden violent emotion or action; outburst

48. culminate (v.) to reach a climactic or decisive point

49. thwart (v.) to prevent

50. relinquish (v.) to give up

51. singularity (n.) unusual or distinctive manner or behavior

52. diffidence (n.) shyness; uncertainty

53. reiterate (v.) to repeat

54. animosity (n.) hatred; enmity

55. brazen (adj.) bold

56. irresolute (adj.) unsure; unable to make a decision

57. ineffectual (adj.) having no effect; useless

58. supercilious (adj.) snobbish

59. demeanor (n.) behavior toward others: outward manner

60. elate (v.) to make happy

# Lesson: Are You A-Listening?

**Objectives:**

1. Students will utilize strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate the novel. **(Comprehension)**
2. Students will draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics). **(Analysis)**
3. Students will apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique and discuss literary works. **(Application)**
4. Students will develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles. **(Synthesis)**

**Concepts/Skills:** Dialect; Regional Language; Proniunciation

**Materials:** Copy of *Great Expectations* for each student; copies of Handout #4

**Procedures:** 1. Begin by defining dialect on the whiteboard. A helpful working definition is “a variation in pronunciation, meaning or usage from standard language whose origin may be attributed to geography, social class, or culture.” (2 minutes)

2. Discuss regional language differences with students. Giving the part of the country we live in, explain the way we use or pronounce certain words in an idiosyncratic way. For example, in different parts of the country people use: hero, submarine sandwich, grinder, and hoagie. (2 minutes)

Consider the pronunciation of these common words: water, gas, and tomato. In parts of Connecticut, “water” is pronounced “waahter”; in Philadelphia drivers put “gaz” in the car; and Bostonians eat “tomahtos” while Midwesterners eat “tomaytos.” Whether students say “you” or “you-all” or “yawl” when talking to a group also depends on the region of the country in which they live.

3. Ask students to suggest additional examples of variants in pronunciation or meaning. (5 minutes)

4. Distribute Handout #4, which is drawn from Chapters 1-10.

(1 minute)

5. Have students work in pairs to complete the assignment in class. (35 minutes)

6. Discuss the results. Have students consider why the dialogue of speakers at Miss Havisham’s house is different from that of Joe, Mrs. Joe, and the convict. (5 minutes)

7. Suggest they keep Handout #4 handy as a reading reference.

8. Direct students to write their own paragraphs using at least ten of the dialect words.

**Assessment:** When the lesson is completed students should be able to answer these questions:

Why is the speech of Joe, Magwitch, Pumblechook, and the other villagers different from the speech of Miss Havisham, Estella, and Mr. Jaggers?

What is the effect on the reader?

Handout #4

**Dickens Dialect Practice**

Charles Dickens not only wanted his readers to **see** his characters in their minds, he also wanted readers to be able to **hear** them. In fact, when Dickens was writing his books, he often acted out the parts of his characters, looking in a mirror while he spoke. Then, he wrote out words the way he felt his speakers would say them. This technique both creates humor and tells the reader about the social class and educational level of the speaker. Unfortunately, it may also make modern readers scratch their heads in confusion as they try to figure out the meaning of these oddly spelled words.

The 38 words alphabetically arranged on the following pages are puzzling, but here are some of the clues to help you get started.

* An “a-“ in front of a word signifies an ongoing action
* Words with apostrophes in the middle are often contractions – two words run together. (Think of “can’t” can + not).
* Words with apostrophes at the beginning or end signify that some letters have been left off. Try inserting g, h, I, o, th or ve.
* An odd-looking word containing a “w” can often be understood if you substitute a “v” for the “w.”
* Simply saying the sentence aloud often suggests the meaning.
* Finally, look at the context for a clue.

**Directions:** Read the sentences below while examining the content carefully. A page number is provided so you can consider the word within the context of the scene if you need additional clues. Using context and the guidelines provided, write the meaning of the italicized words in the space provided.

1. *Pint* out the place! (p. 5)

2. You young dog, what fat cheeks you *ha*’ got. (p. 5)

3. Darn me if I couldn’t eat *‘em* … and if I *han’t* half a mind *to’t.* (p. 5)

4. Now *lookee* here! (p. 5)

5. And is that your father *alonger* your mother? (p. 5)

6. Who *d’ye* live with – *supposin’ ye’re* kindly let to live, which I *han’t* made up my mind about? (p. 6)

7. …never dare to say a word or dare to make a sign concerning your having seen such a person as me, or any person *sumever* …(p. 7)

8. You fail, or you go from my words in any *partickler*, no matter how small it is, and your heart and your liver shall be tore out, roasted and ate. (p. 7)

9. That young man has a secret way *pecooliar* to himself of getting at the boy … (p. 7)

10. It is in *wain* for a boy to attempt to hide himself from that young man. (p. 7)

11. I am *a-keeping* that young man from harming of you at the present moment with great difficulty. (p. 7)

12. I find it *wery* hard to hold that young man off of your inside. (p. 7)

13. She *sot* down… and she got up, and she made a grab at Tickler, and she *ram-paged* out. (p. 10)

14. Tell me directly what you’ve been doing to wear me away with fret and fright and *worrit* … (p. 11)

15. If it *warn’t* for me, you’d have been to the churchyard long ago…. (p. 11)

16. You’ll drive me to the churchyard *betwixt* you, one of these days…. (p.12)

17. You can’t have *chawed* it, Pip. (p. 13)

18. Manners is manners, but still your *‘elth’s* your *elth*. (p. 14)

19. There’s another *conwict* off. (p. 16)

20. You’d be but a fierce young hound indeed, if at your time of life you could help to hunt a wretched *warmint,* … (p. 23)

21. *Thankee*, my boy, I do. (p. 23)

22. *Ye* are now to declare it! (p. 28)

23. *Naterally wicious.* (p. 31)

24. I hope, Joe, we *shan’t* find them. (p. 41)

25. And he hammered at me with a *wigour* only to be equaled by the *wigour* with which he didn’t hammer at his anvil. (p. 57)

26. You’re *a-listening* and understanding, Pip? (p. 57)

27. Well, … somebody must keep the pot *a-biling*. (p. 58)

28. Which I *meantersay* the government of you and myself. (p. 60)

29. Is the house *afire*? (p. 63)

30. What was she *a-doing* of when you went in today? (p. 83)

31. Well, Pip … be it so, or be it *so’nt,* you must be a common scholar *afore* you can be a *oncommon one. (p.88)*

a-biling\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a-doing\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ afire\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

afore\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a-keeping\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a-listening \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

alonger\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ betwixt\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ chawed\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

conwict\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ d’ye \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ‘elth \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

‘em\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ha’ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ han’t\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ lookee\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Meantersay\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ naturally\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ oncommon\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Partickler\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ pecooliar\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ pint\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

ram-paged \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ shan’t \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ So’nt\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

sumever \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ supposin’ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ thankee\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

to’t \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ wain \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ warmint\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

warn’t \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ wery \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ wicious\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

wigour \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ worrit \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ye\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ye’re\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Post-Assessment Questions**

As an extension post-assessment exercise for this unit, students will develop one of their journal entries into a full-length personal essay.

In addition to this post-assessment exercise, students will complete the following post-assessment survey. Define the following terms to the best of your ability.

1. Character\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Setting\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Conflict\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Plot\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Point of View \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Theme\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Empathy\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Lead character \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Supporting character\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Cameo appearance\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Dialect\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_