

CHARLES DICKENS

Pre-reading task:

1. Check the meaning of these words before reading the text.

novelist(n) clerk(n) debt(n) prison(n) factory(n) popular(adj)
experience(n) law court(n) abroad(adv) successful(adj)

Now put one of the words into each gap:

- a. All the students like Anna. She's a very _____ girl.
- b. My mother writes books, but she isn't a famous _____.
- c. Alan started work in a bank last week. He's a _____.
- d. He has ten clothes shops. He's a rich, _____ businessman.
- e. I don't like borrowing money. I hate being in _____.
- f. I live near a big _____ that makes cars.
- g. I went round the world for a year. It was a wonderful _____.
- h. She often goes _____ in her job, sometimes to Hong Kong, sometimes to Canada.

Reading

Read the text about the life of Charles Dickens.

CHARLES DICKENS (1812-1870)

Charles Dickens is one of the greatest novelists in the English language. He wrote about the real world of Victorian England and many of his characters were not rich, middleclass ladies and gentlemen, but poor and hungry people.

Dickens the child _____

His family lived in London. His father was a clerk in an office. It was a good job, but he always spent more money than he earned and he was often in debt, there were eight children in the family, so life was hard.

Charles went to school and his teachers thought he was very clever. But suddenly, when he was only eleven, his father went to prison for his debts and the family went, too. Only Charles didn't go to prison. He went to work in a factory, where he washed bottles. He worked ten hours a day and earned six shillings (30p) a week. Every night, after work, he walked four miles back to his room. Charles hated it and never forgot the experience. He used it in many novels, especially *David Copperfield* and *Oliver Twist*.

Dickens the writer

When he was sixteen, he started work for a newspaper. He visited law courts and the Houses of Parliament. Soon he was one of the *Morning Chronicle's* best journalists. He also wrote short stories for magazines. These were funny descriptions of people that he met. Dickens' characters were full of colour and life. His books became popular in many countries and he spent a lot of time abroad.

Dickens the man

Dickens had ten children, but he didn't have a happy family life. He was successful in his work but not at home, and his wife left him. He never stopped writing and travelling, and he died very suddenly in 1870.

Comprehension check

1. Are the sentences true (✓) or false (×)? Correct the false sentences:

- a. Charles Dickens wrote novels.
- b. Charles never went to school.
- c. He went to prison when he was eleven.
- d. His first job was in a factory.
- e. He became a journalist when he was fifteen.
- f. He never married.

2. Answer the questions.

- a. How old was Charles Dickens when he died?
- b. How many brothers and sisters did he have?
- c. Was he good at school?
- d. Why did he leave school when he was eleven?
- e. Who was in prison?
- f. What did Charles do in his first job?
- g. What was his first job?
- h. Was he happy at home?
- i. When did he stop writing?



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