



**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 9-12**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# Great Expectations

Charles Dickens



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# Great Expectations

Charles Dickens

## TEACHER GUIDE

**NOTE:**

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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## Novel Units: Rationale

How do you ensure that the needs of individual students are met in a heterogeneous classroom? How do you challenge students of all abilities without losing some to confusion and others to boredom?

With the push toward “untracking” our schools, there are questions that more and more educators need to examine. As any teacher of “gifted” or “remedial” students can attest, even “homogeneous” classrooms contain students with a range of abilities and interests. Here are some of the strategies research suggests:

- cooperative learning
- differentiated assignments
- questioning strategies that tap several levels of thinking
- flexible grouping within the class
- cross-curriculum integration
- process writing
- portfolio evaluation

*Novel Units Teacher Guides* and *Student Packets* are designed with these seven facets in mind. Discussion questions, projects, and activities are framed to span all of the levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy. Graphic organizers are provided to enhance critical thinking and comprehension. Tests and quizzes (included in the Student Packets) have been developed at two levels of difficulty (Level 1=lower; Level 2=higher). While most of the activities in the Teacher Guides and Student Packets could be completed individually, many are ideal vehicles for collaborative effort.

Throughout the guides, there is an emphasis on collaboration: students helping other students to generate ideas, students working together to actualize those ideas, and students sharing their products with other students. Extension activities link literature with other areas of the curriculum—including writing, art, music, science, history, geography, and current events—and provide a basis for portfolio evaluation.

Finally, teachers are encouraged to adapt the guides to meet the needs of individual classes and students. The open-ended nature of many of the activities makes them useful for most any level.

You know your students best; we are offering you some tools for working with them. On the following page are some of the “nuts and bolts” for using these “tools”: a glossary of some of the terms used above that will facilitate your use of the guides.

## Vocabulary, Discussion Questions, Writing Ideas, Activities

### Chapters 1-7

pages 35-83

#### Vocabulary

(Please see pages 30-32 for an extensive vocabulary list. The words listed for each section correlate to vocabulary activities in the Student Packet, but there are many words in this novel with which students will not be familiar.)

trenchant 42	remonstrance 43	augmented 45	emphatic 46
reproachful 46	imprecations 52	dissuading 54	contumaciously 59
imperiously 60	execrating 67	pilfering 71	exonerated 71
venerated 74	erudition 7	perspicuity 77	sagaciously 78
ablutions 83			

#### Vocabulary Activity

Word mapping is an activity that lends itself to any vocabulary list. For words that have clear antonyms, the following framework is suitable:



*Variation:* Instead of listing antonyms, students can provide line drawings, symbols, or magazine cut-outs to illustrate the target word.

#### Discussion Questions

1. Who is the narrator and what is your impression of him? *The narrator is Philip—Pip, an orphan now grown; the well-spoken narrator describes his boyhood fears with a wry, self-deprecating sense of humor.*
2. With what frightening childhood memory does the narrator begin his tale? *While examining his parents' and brothers' graves, Pip is accosted by a fearsome escaped convict who commands him to procure food and a file.*
3. What is Pip's home life like? How is he treated? *Pip lives with his harsh older sister and her gentle blacksmith husband, Joe Gargery; Pip's sister constantly criticizes and punishes Pip while Joe loves and tries to protect the boy.*
4. Why does Joe think that Pip has been "bolting his food"? Why does that bother Joe? *Joe notices that Pip's bread—which he is secretly saving for the convict—has disappeared; Joe is worried that eating so fast might injure Pip's health.*

5. What sort of “elixir” does Mrs. Joe give Pip? Why? *She gives him Tar-water to counteract the effects of bolting his food.* Does Mrs. Joe’s faith in elixirs remind you of any other characters you have met in literature? *perhaps Tom Sawyer’s Aunt Polly*
6. What does Pip steal from his sister’s house? Why? *He steals a file, some bread, cheese, mincemeat, brandy, a pork pie; the convict has threatened to send someone after him if he doesn’t bring food and a file.* Would you have done the same thing, in his place? What do you think would have happened if he had been caught?
7. Pip meets someone on the marsh and thinks “It’s the young man.” (p. 49) What young man? Why does Pip “dare say I should have felt a pain in my liver, too, if I had known where it was.” In what tone of voice do you imagine the adult Pip saying this? *The adult Pip mocks himself gently for his childish fear of the young man the convict threatened to send after Pip to pluck out his heart and liver.*
8. How does the convict act when Pip brings the food? Are you surprised by his reaction? Is Pip surprised? Do you feel any sympathy for the convict at this point? Does Pip? *He gobbles the food and tears come to his eyes; Pip is frightened still but pities the convict.*
9. What is the Christmas celebration at Pip’s house like? Does he enjoy it? Would you? *Pip’s aunt makes a special dinner and invites guests; Pip is too worried about the discovery of the stolen food to enjoy dinner; besides, the adults continually criticize and correct him.*
10. Why do the soldiers come to the door? What do you think would have happened to Pip if the soldiers hadn’t shown up at that moment? *The soldiers need Joe to apply his blacksmithing skills to a broken pair of handcuffs they plan to use on the convicts when they are captured.*
11. After the soldiers arrive, how can you tell that both Pip and Joe feel pity for the convicts? Why do you think that is? *As the search gets underway, both say they hope the convicts aren’t found.* If there were an escaped convict around your house, wouldn’t you want him or her captured?
12. What are the two convicts doing when they are discovered? How do they seem to feel about each other? *“Pip’s convict” is struggling with the other one, who claims “he tried to murder me.”* Why do you suppose that is?
13. What lie does the convict tell before he is put on the prison boat? How do you know it is a lie? Why do you think he tells it? What does that show you about him? *Apparently wanting to shield Pip from getting into trouble, the convict announces that he stole food from the blacksmith’s.*

14. Pip experiences internal conflict after stealing the food and file. How is he “torn”? Why doesn’t he tell Joe the truth? Based on what you know of Joe so far, how do you think he would respond to Pip’s admission of the truth? *He wants to tell Joe about stealing the items, but is afraid that Joe will never trust him again if he does.*
15. What is Pip’s schooling like? Do you think he enjoys it? From whom does he learn the most? *He attends an evening school taught by a confused, sleepy old woman; it is her orphaned granddaughter, Biddy, who teaches Pip most of what he learns about reading, writing, and spelling.*
16. How does Joe feel about his wife? Why do you think he puts up with the way she treats him? *Joe speaks admiringly of his wife and doesn’t complain of her abuse; Joe remembers how his father abused his mother, and Joe doesn’t ever want to risk doing wrong by his own wife. Would you consider him an “abused husband”? What advice would you give him, if he were a friend of yours in today’s world?*
17. Who is Miss Havisham and why does she want to see Pip? Why is Pip’s sister so anxious that he should go? How does Pip feel about going? *Miss Havisham is an eccentric, reclusive, wealthy old woman who has decided she wants to see a boy play; Pip’s sister hopes the visit will make Pip’s fortune; Pip is puzzled and confused.*

**PREDICTION:** What will Miss Havisham be like? How will Pip “play” at Miss Havisham’s?

**Writing Activity: Interior Monologue**

Write what you sense to be Pip’s thoughts and feelings as he sits at the Christmas table, anticipating that his sister will discover the theft at any moment.

**Critical Thinking: Character Attribute Webs**

Attribute webs are simply a visual representation of a character’s traits. They provide a systematic way for students to organize and recap the information they have about that particular character. Attribute webs may be used after reading the story or completed gradually as information unfolds—done individually, or finished as a group project—as the basis for discussion, or as a pre-writing activity.

Writers tell readers about their characters by showing—

- what the characters themselves do,
- what the characters themselves say,
- how other characters react to them, and
- how they look and act through direct description in expository passages.

Using one type of attribute web, students organize thoughts and details around these four categories. In another type, students use separate webs for separate categories of traits, such as traits revealed by character's actions, traits revealed by character's appearance, and traits revealed by what others say about the character. Advanced students can add extensions for citation of specific details and examples.

Examples of both types of webs appear below.

