

Reflections:

*A Student Response Journal for...*

# *Great Expectations*

*by Charles Dickens*

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## *Great Expectations*

### Chapter 1

1. In the opening of *Great Expectations*, the main character, Pip, visits the graveyard where his parents and siblings are buried. A very frightening man approaches Pip and makes demands of him. List at least five reasons why Pip is extremely afraid of him.

### Chapter 2

2. We are introduced to Pip's sister, Mrs. Joe, and her husband, Joe, and quickly realize that Pip's sister treats Pip badly, whereas Joe looks out for Pip. Think of a person in your life who has been a menace to you or a person that has always helped you. Describe that person in one paragraph. In one or more paragraphs, describe at least one example where the person either treated you poorly or treated you well. In another paragraph, explain why you believe your relationship with this person was the way it was.

### Chapter 3

3. Even though Pip has been very frightened by the man in the graveyard, the author tells us that Pip pitied the man and was glad he enjoyed the food Pip brought him. Imagine yourself as Pip's friend when Pip is telling you about his experience with the man in the graveyard. From your knowledge of the text, write the conversation you would have with Pip; stay in character with the setting of the book. Your conversation might begin as follows:

**Friend:** I do not understand how you could feel pity for such a scary, old man who eats like a dog.

**Pip:** I felt as though...

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## Chapter 4

4. At Christmas dinner, all of the adults except Joe pick on Pip. At one point, Pip's sister gives a list of ways that Pip has been "trouble." List three or more of the reasons that she mentions. Then imagine you are an adult at the dinner table. Write what you would say to Mrs. Joe about her comments. Be sure to give reasons for your opinion.

## Chapter 5

5. At the end of the chapter, two characters act differently than we might expect. First, the convict lies and says he stole food from the blacksmith's house. Second, Joe tells the convict he was welcome to it, since he would not have wanted him to starve. Imagine that you get to interview Charles Dickens and ask him about these two things. Write the interview. If you prefer, you can ask him other questions about the book.

## Chapter 6

6. Pip says he thought about letting Joe in on all of his secrets, but was too cowardly to do so because he could not face losing Joe's confidence. Imagine that you are Joe and that you suspect Pip has secrets. Write a note to Pip letting him know this and suggesting that he talk to you. Your note might begin as follows:

Dear Pip,

I have noticed your behavior has been a little unusual as of late. I would like to talk to you...

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### **Chapter 7**

7. Joe explains to Pip that Mrs. Joe should not find out that Pip is teaching him, since she will be concerned that Joe will rebel against her. Write a speech that you would deliver to a group of adults who never graduated from high school. In the speech, explain the benefits of education and how it brings empowerment.

### **Chapter 8**

8. Pip observes that Mr. Pumblechook seems to work while watching the saddler across the street, and that the watchmaker is the only one in town who seems completely focused on his work. Interview one or more people about their jobs, and talk about their productivity and that of the others they have contact with. Ask the interviewee(s) for ideas on how to improve diligence at work.

### **Chapter 9**

9. At the end of chapter nine, Pip says the day of his trip to Miss Havisham's was a memorable one, "for it made great changes in me." Think of a memorable day in your life that brought about great change. Write a letter to Pip describing what happened to you that day, what made it outstanding, and how your life would be different if it had never happened.

### **Chapter 10**

10. Authors frequently provide clues to their readers. In this chapter, there are various clues about "the strange man" that provide an uneasy feeling. Write a list of those clues.

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### **Chapter 11**

11. When Pip repeatedly knocks down the boy at Miss Havisham's, he thinks: "He seemed so brave and innocent, that although I had not proposed the contest I felt but a gloomy satisfaction in my victory." Think of a time when you had a victory, but it did not make you happy. Describe this to a younger brother. Explain why the experience was not positive.

### **Chapter 12**

12. Mrs. Joe and Pumblechook would often discuss Pip's prospects and what might be gotten out of his visits to Miss Havisham's. Again, Pip is not a part of the conversations. Pumblechook rumples Pip's hair and grabs his sleeve. The boy seems to be hardly treated like a person and says he would like to burst into tears and pummel the man. Make a list of at least five characters in the book and next to each explain whether Pip has a positive or negative impression of that character and why.

### **Chapter 13**

13. When Joe visits Miss Havisham's house, he is so overwhelmed that he cannot speak to her directly, although Pip tries to get him to do so. Think of a time when you were stronger than an adult and handled a situation better than the adult did. Imagine that a person writing a book on parenting wants you to describe that experience. Write at least three paragraphs describing what the situation was, how the adult reacted, how you reacted, and why you think this occurred.

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### Chapter 14

14. After visiting Miss Havisham's house with Joe, Pip is ashamed of his own home and no longer wants to work with Joe as an apprentice. Remember a time when you were ashamed of something. Write a conversation between you and a younger brother or sister where you explain what brought on the feeling, how you reacted to it, if others found out about it, and if you still feel this way about it today. The conversation could begin as follows:

**Brother/Sister:** You seemed upset today after school.  
**You:** Yeah, I was ashamed of...

### Chapter 15

15. In this chapter, Pip says that his sister, like other violent women, would "consciously and deliberately" force herself into an uproar and become "blindly furious by regular stages." Think of a time when you saw a person become excessively angry. Write a letter to that person, describing how you perceived them, how their reactions affected others, and what could have happened if they had reacted differently.

### Chapter 16

16. Because of the attack on Pip's sister, she can no longer communicate except by writing, and Biddy moves in to help take care of her. Much has changed in the house as the result of the attack. Think of a situation where someone has become seriously sick or injured. Explain what happened to cause the change in the person, how the person must now live differently, and how the change has altered the lives of others who have contact with this person. If you do not know someone that this has happened to, do some research and write about a famous person like Michael J. Fox, Christopher Reeves, or Stephen King.