



 Prestwick House

Activity Pack

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

BY CHARLES DICKENS



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Written by Debbie Newsome

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading**History****Objective:** Understanding the historical context of the novel**Activity I**

1. Choose one of the following topics about England during the late 18th century and research information on it. Use the Internet and your school or community libraries.
 - A. The legal system
 - B. Social classes
 - C. Economic Conditions
 - D. Weddings
 - E. Funeral and Burial Practices
 - F. Transportation
 - G. Banking

2. Present your research in the form of an informational brochure for the London Chamber of Commerce to distribute to visitors to the city in the 1770's. Your pamphlet should be colorful and include pictures and text. List your sources on the back of the pamphlet.

Activity II

Research the stages and causes of the French Revolution. Use the Internet and your school or community libraries. Present your findings in a power point presentation consisting of no more than 10 slides.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 4**Imagery**

Objective: Recognizing imagery
Understanding how imagery contributes to atmosphere

Activity

Re-read Chapter 4. As you read, list some of the things Dickens describes. Beside each item, write the descriptive detail given. For instance:

The coach: mildewed inside, damp and dirty straw, disagreeable smell, like a large dog kennel.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Book 2
Chapters 1–24

Theme

Objective: Identifying main ideas and themes

Activity:

Some authors use chapter titles to give an overview of a chapter's content or to point toward a significant incident or theme. Sometimes, a chapter title is taken directly from the dialogue or descriptions in the story. For example, Book 2, Chapter 1 of *A Tale of Two Cities* could have been entitled "The Odd-job Man" or "Flopping Isn't Necessary."

As you read Book 2, write a title for each chapter to help you summarize what you have read. After you finish Book 2, review your titles and come up with an original title for this section of the novel.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 1–6**Plot****Objective:** Predicting outcomes**Activity**

Based on the events through chapter six of Book Two and the suspense Dickens has created with the characters (their past experiences, actions, motives, and desires), what are your predictions for the roles they will play in the remainder of the story? Will the characters have more, less, or the same importance as they do now? Think in terms of a deck of cards with which Dickens is playing. What value or role in the coming action will each person below have? Assign each person to a face or number card and write a brief explanation of your choices.

Consider the following characters:

Mr. Jarvis Lorry, Jerry Cruncher, Miss Lucie Manette, Mr. Charles Darnay, Mr. Sydney Carton, Mr. Stryver, Miss Pross, Madame Defarge.

Example: I think Lucie is the Queen of Hearts because she seems to be so loving and compassionate toward her father. Dickens has spent a lot of time describing her tender spirit and her demure demeanor. She seems to love her father unconditionally, although she really knows very little about him. However, because she is so demure, I predict that she will have her spirit crushed or her heart broken.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 13**Soliloquy**

Objective: Understanding the use of soliloquy in dramatic literature

Activity

Dickens has often been accused of allowing his characters to be melodramatic. The soliloquies of Sydney Carton in Chapter 13 are sometimes viewed as overdone dramatics that tend to make his character unrealistic.

Present Carton as a more believable character by rewriting his dialogue into language that would be used by a 21st century gentleman.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 20

Dramatic Reading
Theme

Objective: Recognizing dramatic literature
Recognizing theme

Activity I

Dickens was an avid theatergoer, and while writing *A Tale of Two Cities*, he had begun giving public readings. His style in this novel reflects the fact that he had performance in mind. The repetitive speeches and supercharged emotions show the influence of Victorian drama.

Prepare a dramatic reading of the episode in Chapter 20 featuring Carton's visit to the newlywed Darnay and Carton's ensuing conversation with Lucie.

Activity II

The conversation between Sydney Carton and Charles Darnay implies that both are trying to do the honorable thing and be friends, if not for their own piece of mind, at least for Lucie. Her plea for Darnay to "be very generous with him always, and very lenient on his faults when he is not by" reflects her promise to Carton in Chapter 13. (Pg. 195) The three characters appear to choose honor over dishonor, an underlying theme of the novel.

1. Generate a list of qualities that characterize honorable behavior.
2. What occupations in modern society do we expect to be honorable? Explain your choices.
3. Are there any occupations we assume to be filled with dishonorable men or women? Explain your choices.
4. Generate a list of qualities that characterize dishonorable behavior.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 1–24**Theme**

Objective: Connecting literary texts
Understanding literary themes

Activity

An individual's responsibilities are often considered more important than his or her personal desires. However, there are times when a person will place desire before duty, as Charles Darnay does at the end of Chapter 24.

1. Explain why he chooses desire over duty.
2. Should desire ever be placed before duty?
3. Have you ever placed your personal desire before your responsibilities? What were the consequences?
4. Contrast Charles Darnay's dilemma with another character in literature who has faced a difficult decision involving family or friends, for example, Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*, Hamlet, George in *Of Mice or Men*, or Ma Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 6**Dramatic Literature
Reader Response**

Objective: Understanding dramatic literature
Responding to literature

Activity I

Some students easily envision the action in a novel; however, others require a visual presentation in order to complete their understanding of the situation.

Re-enact the second trial of Charles Darnay.

Activity II

1. Compare Charles Darnay's first trial in England to this second trial in France.

2. What involvement do the Manettes have in both trials?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 8-15**Allusion**

Objective: Interpreting allusions
 Understanding the value of allusions
 Using allusion to enrich descriptions

Activity I

Dickens uses many allusions to enrich our understanding of the novel.

For each of the allusions below,

- A. explain in detail the historical or literary event or person to which Dickens is referring.
 - B. explain how understanding the details of the reference adds to your understanding of the situation in the novel in which the reference occurs.
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1. “Here Mr. Lorry perceived the reflection on the wall to elongate, and Mr. Cruncher rose and stepped forward. His hair could not have been more violently on end, if it had been that moment dressed by the Cow with the crumpled horn in the house that Jack built.” (Pg. 283)