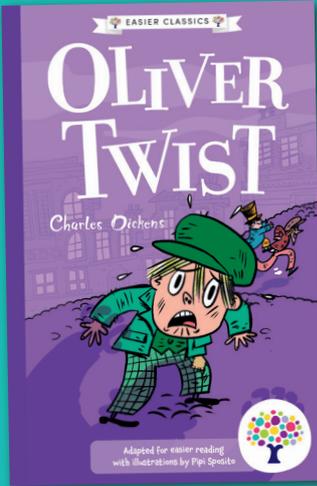




Big stories, fewer barriers.



OLIVER TWIST

Teaching and Learning Resources

Summary

Oliver Twist grew up without a family. After being kicked out of the workhouse and sold to an Undertaker, Oliver escapes to start a new life in London. There, he meets The Artful Dodger who makes money by stealing. The Dodger introduces him to an old man named Fagin, who has trained many boys to steal for him. Oliver has to become part of their group without having a choice.

One day, Oliver is caught by the police for stealing. But he is lucky because Mr Brownlow, who the police think Oliver stole from, stands up for Oliver. Instead, Mr Brownlow decides to look after him at his home.

When Fagin and his accomplice, Bill Sikes, go looking for Oliver again, Oliver finds himself in more trouble. Luckily Mr Brownlow helps Oliver and tells him that they are family.

Context

Oliver Twist was the second story written by Charles Dickens. It was originally a series in a magazine before being rewritten as a story in 1838.

Oliver Twist was originally known as the Parish Boys Progress before changing its name. It is believed that Charles Dickens used some of his own childhood experiences to write the story, as he worked in a workhouse for 2 years when he was 12, missing out on school.

The book has since been made into a musical, many films and has become a well-known classic.

Glossary

Undertaker

A person whose job is to prepare dead bodies for a funeral.

Stealing

Taking something that belongs to someone else.

Activity 1: Listen to some of the music from the film *Oliver*. What do you think of when you hear the music? How does it make you feel?

Activity 2: *Oliver* was set in London during the Victorian Era. Research London during Victorian times and present your research as a poster, booklet, or verbally.

2. Questions based on the book cover

Activity 1: Front Cover Analysis

Label the book cover, looking for:

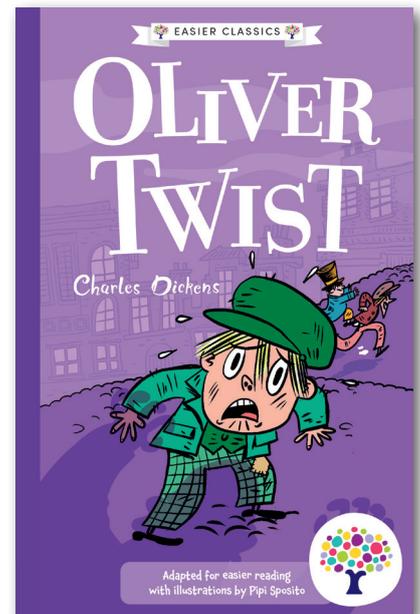
- Its main features.
- Potential main themes.
- Genre clues.
- Inferences about the text.

Discussion questions:

- What does the title tell us about the story?
- Who is the main character and what do you think they will be like?
- Who wrote the book?

Activity 2: Back Cover Analysis

- What have you learnt already about the story?
- What genre do you think the story is? Why do you think this?
- Why do you think Oliver isn't safe? Explain your answer.



Challenge: Can you think of two predictions for the story? Your predictions can be presented verbally, written, drawn or painted.

Activity:

As you read the story, collect examples for each theme on a post-it note and add them to a working wall.

Children as Slaves

Oliver Twist was an orphan who is made to work in a workhouse. Children weren't treated kindly in workhouses and were given only a small amount of food each day. The food wasn't nice to eat. Children weren't allowed to ask questions, as this was seen as rude and ungrateful. So, when Oliver asked for more food, he was in a lot of trouble. When Oliver got in trouble, he was sold to a family to work for them. Children were seen as items to own and do a job, rather than people to be looked after.

Stealing and Crime

When Charles Dickens wrote *Oliver Twist* crime was a big problem in London. In the story, it explores how people commit crimes because they have no money. Then they train children to help them steal. Fagin and Bill Sikes wanted Oliver to work for them because he was small enough to fit through small windows and steal from people.

Poverty and Social Class

The book explores how poor people were treated badly. Children from poor families were expected to work in horrible conditions for hardly any money. Poor people also didn't have access to a lot of food, and Oliver went for days without eating. It also wasn't common for people to help out poor people, so it is a surprising twist when Oliver is looked after by Mr Brownlow. There is a clear difference between the different social classes as some people wear dirty clothes and others are dressed smartly. Throughout the book the theme of higher and lower social class is shown.

Glossary

Slave

A slave is someone who is the property of another person and has to work for that person.

Think about the character of Oliver and how he acts in the story.



Starter Activity:

- Get into the role of Oliver. Think about how you would feel. Add these ideas to a role on the wall as a group.

Monologue:

- In the role of Oliver, think of what you would say if somebody asked you where you wanted to live. Think about the place you want to live, the people you will live with and how you would feel. Would it feel different to when he was in the workhouse or undertakers?

Diary:

- In the role of Oliver, write a diary entry about how you felt when you first met Fagin and the other street children.

Challenge: Can you create a character spotlight for Oliver Twist using all the information you gathered?

Challenge 2: Complete the same activities in the role of Fagin.



Challenge: Can you create a character spotlight for Oliver Twist using all the information you gathered for your drama piece?

Word Bank

Draw a Picture

Character Description



- Why did Oliver work in the workhouse?
- What did Oliver get in trouble for in the workhouse?
- Write a list of words to describe Mr Bumble.
- How do you think Oliver felt when he went to live at the undertakers? Think about how the family treated him.
- **Page 38** - Why did Oliver shiver as he walked past the workhouse?
- Why do you think that Oliver decided to walk to London to find a new life?
- How were Oliver and Dodger similar when they first met?
- **Page 54** - What does the author want you to think about where Dodger lives?
- **Page 60** - Where do you think the handkerchiefs were from?
- Why do you think Mr Brownlow decided to look after Oliver?
- Why did Bill Sikes take Oliver?
- **Page 118** - What did Oliver think that Mr Brownlow would think?
- **Page 140** - How do you think Nancy felt about Oliver?
- What did Oliver find out about his family at the end of the story?

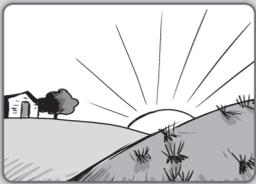
Chapter 4

Oliver woke up early as the sun started to rise.

He tiptoed out of the workshop, unlocked the front door and stepped out into the street.

He turned left up the hill and walked across the fields.

He **shivered** as he walked past the orphanage.



shivered - Shake a little, usually because of being cold or frightened.

38
39

Chapter 13

Nancy had visited Mr Brownlow's house to tell him that Oliver was in danger. Mr Brownlow went straight to the police.

But it was too late for Nancy. Bill Sikes found out what she had done and killed her.

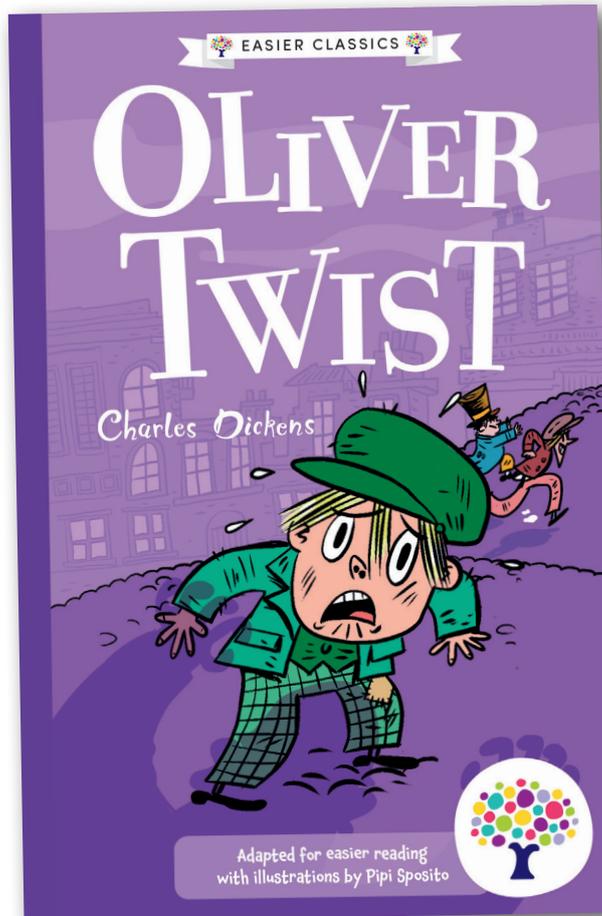
Fagin was arrested, but Oliver was glad that Dodger had got away.



140
141

Activities:

1. Create story map or story mountain for the book- verbally retell the story to a friend.
2. Gruel was food given to children in workhouses. It was cheap and was easy to cook but it tasted horrible! Make your own recipe for what you think might be in gruel. Then write instructions for how to make it.
3. Design your own book cover for the story.



*This Teaching and Learning Resource has been written by
Katie Corrigan as part of Every Cherry Publishing.*

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