

# Topic - Research

This week you will research and create a fact file about the life and work of one of the most famous Victorians- Charles Dickens.

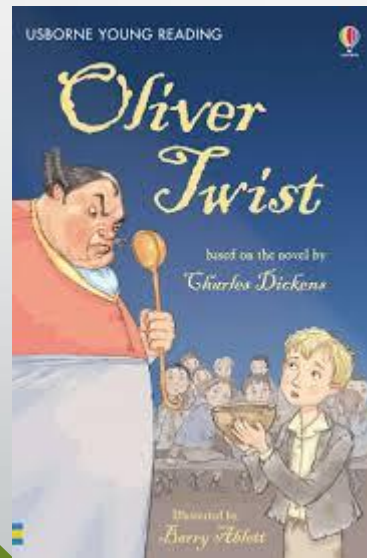
## Useful websites:

- [https://kids.kiddle.co/Charles\\_Dickens](https://kids.kiddle.co/Charles_Dickens)
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z7d7gwx/articles/z4j32sg>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3AB9poWDeDs>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=unKuZ2wINdw>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9dB9BZWDBU>

# Who Was Charles Dickens?

Charles Dickens is a famous British writer from Victorian times.

He is most famous for writing *Oliver Twist* and *A Christmas Carol* but he wrote many other famous books as well.



## Charles Dickens - Childhood

- His full name is Charles John Huffam Dickens.
- He was born in Portsmouth, Hampshire, on 7 February 1812.
- His father was a clerk in the navy pay office and his mother had wanted to be a teacher, although this didn't work out.
- Charles Dickens had 7 brothers and sisters.
- When he was 9 he began school but unfortunately was not able to stay there long. In 1822 when the family moved to London, they struggled for money. Charles' father was sent to prison for bad debts.
- Charles had to get a job. He worked in a factory putting labels on jars of blacking (used for polishing boots.) He was very unhappy but still managed to visit his father every Sunday in the prison.
- In 1824 Charles' father had enough money for him to return to school. Afterwards he got a job in a lawyers office.

## Charles Dickens - The Writer

- He began his writing career as a journalist for a newspaper, despite his lack of education (He left school to work in a factory when his father was incarcerated in a debtors' prison). He edited a weekly journal for 20 years, wrote 15 novels, five novellas, hundreds of short stories and non-fiction articles, lectured and performed readings and campaigned vigorously for children's rights, education, and other social reforms.
- In 1836, after marrying Catherine Hogarth, his stories started to become popular. The Pickwick Papers, a funny set of stories, were published weekly in the newspaper.
- Charles was becoming famous and in 1837 the first instalment of Oliver Twist, a story that became one of his most famous, was published.
- Oliver Twist is a story about an orphan boy who runs away to London and becomes involved with a gang of thieves.
- Dickens was now famous and wrote many more famous novels during his life such as: A Christmas Carol, David Copperfield and Great Expectations.
- People loved reading his books because in those days there was no TV or computer games, so most people read for entertainment.



# Charles Dickens - Later Life

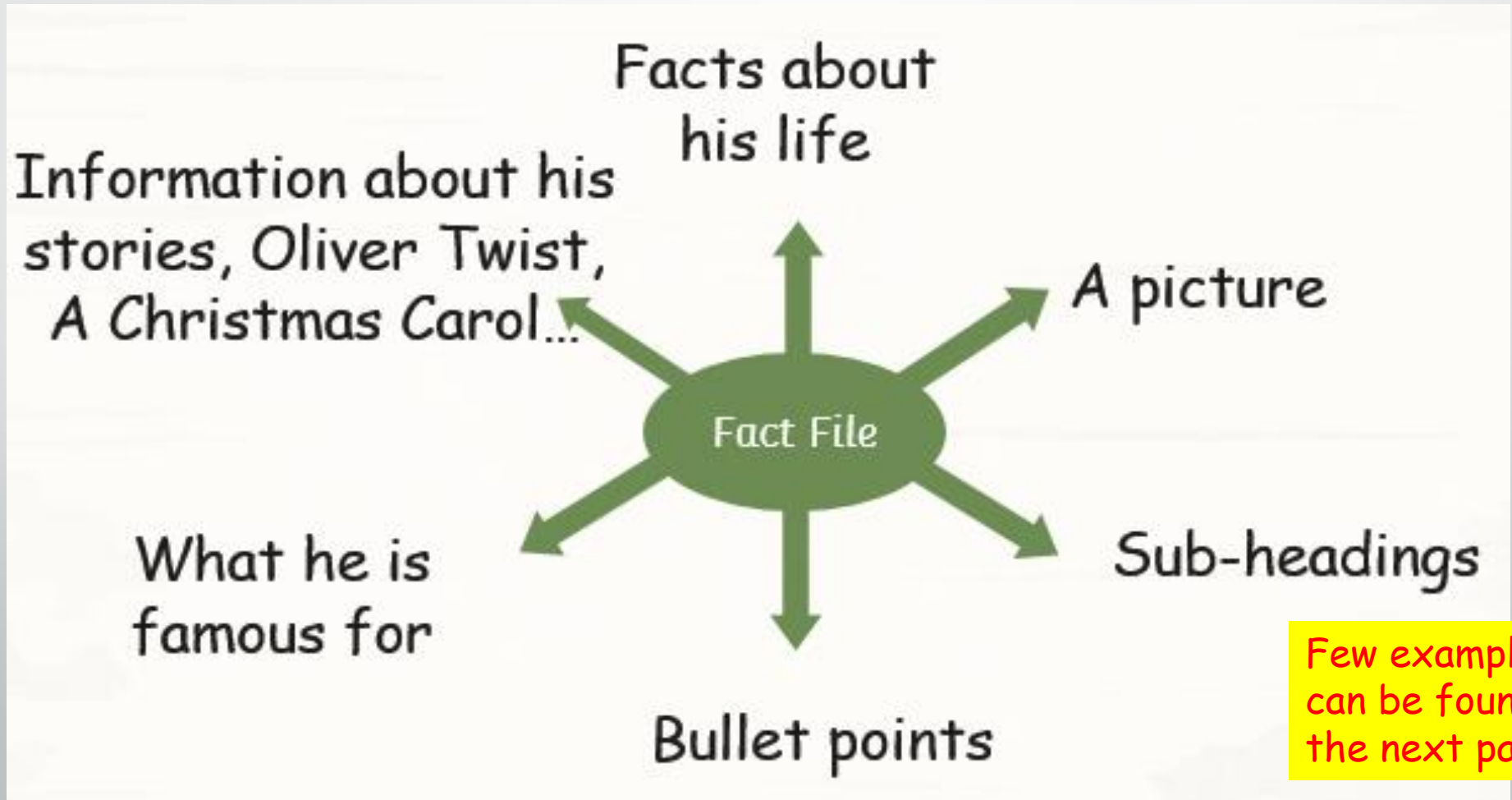
- Within a few years he had become an international literary celebrity, famous for his humour, satire, and keen observation of character and society. He visited America twice where he was treated like a pop star!
- On 9 June 1865, while returning from Paris, Dickens was involved in the Staplehurst rail crash. Although he survived he never quite got back to full health.
- On 9 June 1870 he died at his home in Kent.
- He left his final novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* unfinished.
- Dickens was the most popular novelist of his time, and remains one of the best-known and most-read of English authors. His works have never gone out of print, and have been adapted continually for the screen since the invention of cinema.
- His picture has appeared on a £10 note



# Activity 1 in your book

Put together a fact file on Charles Dickens using the Fact File Example pdf or Simple Charles Dickens Fact File Example pdf.

What to include:



Few examples can be found on the next pages.



# William Shakespeare



## William Shakespeare's Family

William Shakespeare is thought to have been born on 23rd April, 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. It is not known exactly when he was born, but historians know that he was baptised on April 26th and at that time, people were often baptised three days after their birth.

William was the third child of John and Mary Shakespeare. His father was a leather merchant and his mother was a local-landed heiress, which basically meant that she came from a wealthy family.

## Shakespeare, the Young Man

On November 28th, 1582, at the age of 18, William married Anne Hathaway. Anne was 26 years old when they got married.

They had a daughter called Susanna in 1583. Two years later, Anne gave birth to twins - a boy called Hamnet and a girl called Judith. Tragically, at the age of 11, Hamnet died, supposedly from the bubonic plague.

## Shakespeare the Playwright

The Lord Chamberlain's Men was an acting company that William partly owned. Their name was changed to The King's Men after King James I was crowned the new king of England.

By now, William was beginning to sell some of his written work and by 1597, Shakespeare was beginning to earn a lot

of money so he bought the second-largest house in his hometown of Stratford. However, as it took about four days to get from London to Stratford by horse, William only ever went home during the forty days of Lent when the theatres were closed!

By 1592, he was earning money as an actor and a playwright.

## Shakespeare's Plays

Shakespeare wrote heartrending plays called tragedies and comedy plays. Several of his plays were performed in front of Queen Elizabeth I.

Much Ado About Nothing, The Taming of the Shrew and A Midsummer Night's Dream are comedies which are based on misunderstandings and mishaps. The tragedies are based around misery, loss and disillusionment. Some of these are Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet and

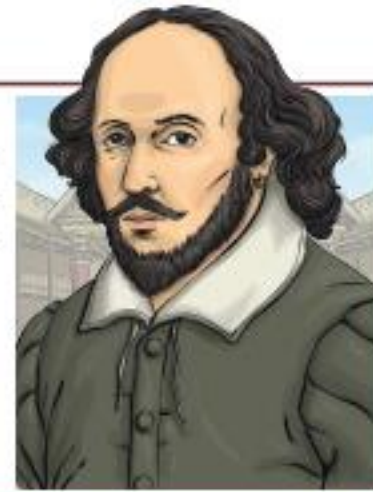
King Lear. Some of his plays have been made into films and cartoons, such as Gnomeo and Juliet, which is the story of Romeo and Juliet retold with two garden gnomes as the main characters!

He wrote about themes which people could relate to: jealousy, anger, love, romance, religion and war.

## A Lasting Legacy

Because of Shakespeare, there are over three hundred words and well-known phrases in the English language that he invented. Some of them are:

all that glitters is not gold	fair-play
barefaced	bedazzled
hobnob	watchdog
wild goose chase	lacklustre



William Shakespeare died on April 23rd, 1616, which was the same day as his birthday, at the age of 52.

Although the cause of Shakespeare's death is not recorded, some years later, a vicar reported that he died of a fever. Shakespeare had written his will a few months before he died and famously, and rather strangely, left his wife his 'second best bed' and all his other possessions to his daughter.

Each year around the 23rd April, the streets of Stratford-upon-Avon are filled with music, song and performers in celebration of the life of William Shakespeare.

Writing fact File  
Template pdf


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# Roald Dahl Fact File

Roald Dahl was born in Wales to Norwegian parents. He had an older sister called Asti who sadly died when she was 7 years old. Roald's father was so upset, he fell ill with pneumonia and died a few weeks after Asti. Roald's mother was pregnant, and gave birth to Roald's younger sister, Asta.

Roald did not like school, and after getting into trouble in his Welsh primary school, his mother sent him to boarding school - first in Weston-Super-Mare and then Repton Public School in Derbyshire. He was very homesick at first, but then began to enjoy the experience. Whilst at the Repton School, Roald and his friends were often asked to be chocolate testers for a large company, and this later gave him the inspiration to write Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.

After school, Roald wanted to travel and have adventures, so he worked for the Shell oil company. He was sent to Africa to work, but after a year, the Second World War broke out and Roald signed up to join the Royal Air Force. He became a pilot.

Dahl flew a Tiger Moth plane in Nairobi and then was posted to Libya, where he flew a Gloster Gladiator. In the September of 1940, his plane crashed in the Western Desert. He suffered terrible injuries to his head and back, so had to be flown to a hospital in Egypt. It took him 6 months to recover. He eventually returned to the RAF, but after a while, he began having violent headaches. As a result, he returned to England to live with his mother and sister.

He began writing in an old cottage, where he wrote his first novel 'Some Time Never: A Fable for Supermen' - a book for adults. It was not a cheerful book and writing it exhausted Roald so much that he had to go back to hospital.

In 1951, he met the actress Patricia Neal and they were soon married. They lived in Great Missenden in Buckinghamshire. They had five children: Olivia, Tessa, Theo, Ophelia and Lucy. Sadly, Olivia died when she was 7 years old.

Roald told his children stories at bedtime, and decided to start writing them down

## Birth:

13th September 1916,  
Llandaff Wales

## Death:

23rd November 1990,  
Oxford, UK

## Occupation:

Writer/ author



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# Roald Dahl Fact File

for all children to enjoy. During the 1980s, Dahl had 11 children's books published and The BFG was turned into an animated film.

During his lifetime, Roald Dahl wrote 20 books for children and had 48 books published altogether. He has had 6 books turned into films, and both Matilda and Charlie and the Chocolate Factory are now theatre shows.

He died on 23rd November 1990, aged 74, from a disease of the blood. He is buried in Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire. A short distance away, there is now a Roald Dahl Museum. 2016 sees the 100 year celebration of Roald Dahl's life.



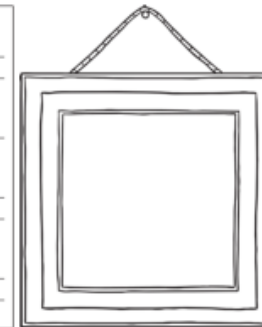
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# Charles Dickens Fact File

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Famous for: \_\_\_\_\_  
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About Charles Dickens

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Simple Charles Dickens Fact File Template pdf



## Challenges:

1. Evaluate the life and work of Charles Dickens (How did his books change lives?)
2. Use the internet to research some of Charles Dickens' stories, then have a go at writing your own!