

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens was born on February 7, 1812 in Landport, Portsmouth. Charles was one of eight children born to John and Elizabeth. His father was a clerk in the Navy Pay Office. However, Charles' father was imprisoned because of debt, so at the age of 12, Charles was separated from his family and forced to work in a factory. His work included pasting labels on jars of shoe polish. Those years in the factory were very hard on Charles and eventually became the inspiration for many of his writings later on in his life.

In addition to his factory work, Charles was able to attend the Wellington House Academy in North London. Several years later, he was able to get out of the factory and landed a new job as an office boy at an attorney's office.

In 1829, at the age of 17, Charles became a freelance reporter at Doctor's Common Courts. By 1832, he had become a successful shorthand reporter of Parliamentary debates in the House of Commons. Writing for a newspaper, Charles wrote short texts to accompany a series of sports illustrations by Robert Seymour.

On April 2, 1836, Charles married Catherine Hogarth, the daughter of editor of the *Evening Chronicle*. They had 10 children together.

Charles eventually made a career out of writing, specifically writing novels. He became one of the most popular English novelists to have ever lived. His books which continue to be read today include *A Christmas Carol*, *Great Expectations*, *Hard Times*, *David Copperfield*, *Oliver Twist*, and *A Tale of Two Cities*. His writings were usually written in weekly or monthly installments which were published in newspapers or journals first and then eventually put together in a book made available to the public.

Charles writings are classified as works of social commentary. His opinion of poverty and the struggle between social classes of his time were reflected in his writings.

On June 9, 1865, Charles was involved in the Staplehurst rail crash while returning from a trip from France. The first seven carriages of the train plunged off of a bridge. Miraculously, the only first class carriage that remained on the tracks was the one Charles was in.

Later in life, Charles spent much of his time with public readings from his best loved novels in England, Ireland and Scotland. He also made several trips to America for this reason as well. In 1869, Charles had a stroke. A year later, on June 9, 1870, Charles suffered a second stroke and died in his home.

Today, there are museums and festivals celebrating the life of Charles Dickens. In the United States, there are Dickens festivals held each year in California, Texas and New York.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Charles Dickens Questions

1. When was Charles Dickens born? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many siblings did he have? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where did his father work? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What happened to Charles when his father was imprisoned? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What kind of work did Charles do in the factory? \_\_\_\_\_
6. At the age of 17, where did Charles become a free-lance reporter? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Who did Charles marry on April 2, 1836? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What did Charles do for a living? \_\_\_\_\_
9. List 2 books that Charles wrote. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What are Charles's writings classified as? \_\_\_\_\_
11. In 1865, Charles was in a train crash. What happened? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Name the four countries that Charles gave public readings of his novels. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. On June 9, 1870, what happened to Charles? \_\_\_\_\_
14. In what states are there festivals celebrating the life of Charles Dickens \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Charles Dickens Answers

1. When was Charles Dickens born? **February 7, 1812**
2. How many siblings did he have? **7**
3. Where did his father work? **Navy Pay Office**
4. What happened to Charles when his father was imprisoned? **Charles had to work in a factory.**
5. What kind of work did Charles do in the factory? **Put labels on jars of shoe polish**
6. At the age of 17, where did Charles become a free-lance reporter? **Doctor's Common Courts**
7. Who did Charles marry on April 2, 1836? **Catherine Hogarth**
8. What did Charles do for a living? **He was a writer**
9. List 2 books that Charles wrote. **A Christmas Carol, Great Expectations, Hard Times, David Copperfield, Oliver Twist, and A Tale of Two Cities**
10. What are Charles's writings classified as? **Social Commentary**
11. In 1865, Charles was in a train crash. What happened? **The first seven carriages of the train plunged off of a bridge. Miraculously, the only first class carriage that remained on the tracks was the one Charles was in.**
12. Name the four countries that Charles gave public readings of his novels. **England, Scotland, Ireland and the United States.**
13. On June 9, 1870, what happened to Charles? **He suffered a stroke and died.**
14. In what states are there festivals celebrating the life of Charles Dickens? **California, Texas and New York**