

Charles Dickens



- a) His life
- b) “A Christmas Carol”

“Dickens' Dream” by Robert W. Bus



Some information about the author

Charles John Huffam Dickens (1812–1870) was an English writer and social critic. He created some of the world's most memorable fictional characters and is generally regarded as the greatest novelist of the Victorian period. During his life, his works enjoyed much fame, and by the twentieth century his literary genius was broadly acknowledged by critics and scholars. **His novels and short stories continue to be widely popular.**

Some information about the author

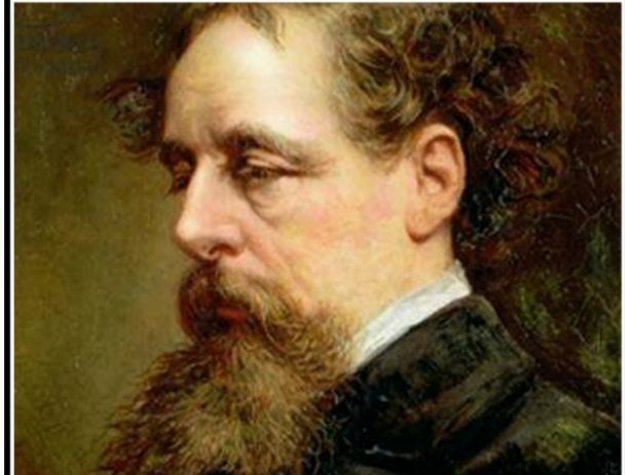
He was born on February 7, 1812, in Portsmouth, England. Over the course of his writing career, he wrote the beloved classic novels *Oliver Twist*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Great Expectations*.

On June 9, 1870, Dickens died of a stroke in Kent, England, leaving his final novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, unfinished.

Charles Dickens

and the making of

A Christmas Carol



Michael Norris

Early life

He was the second of eight children. His father, [John Dickens](#), was a naval clerk who dreamed of striking it rich. Charles Dickens' mother, [Elizabeth Barrow](#), aspired to be a teacher and school director. Despite his parents' best efforts, the family remained poor. Nevertheless, they were happy in the early days. In 1816, they moved to [Chatham, Kent](#), where young Charles and his siblings were free to roam the countryside and explore the old [castle at Rochester](#).



Dickens' birthplace



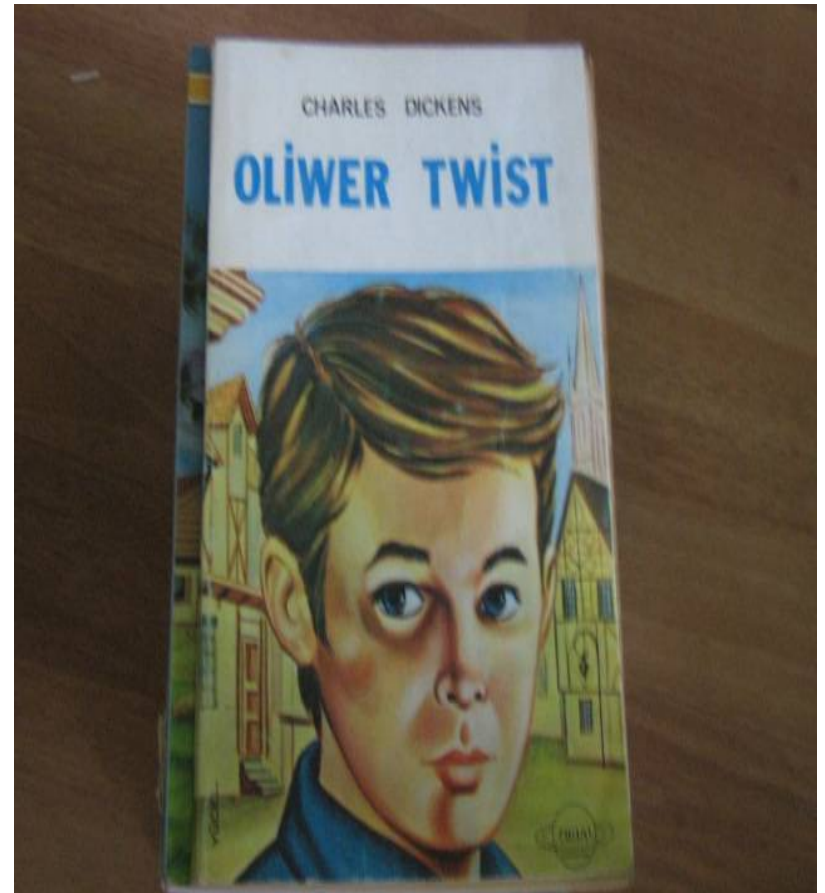
Early life

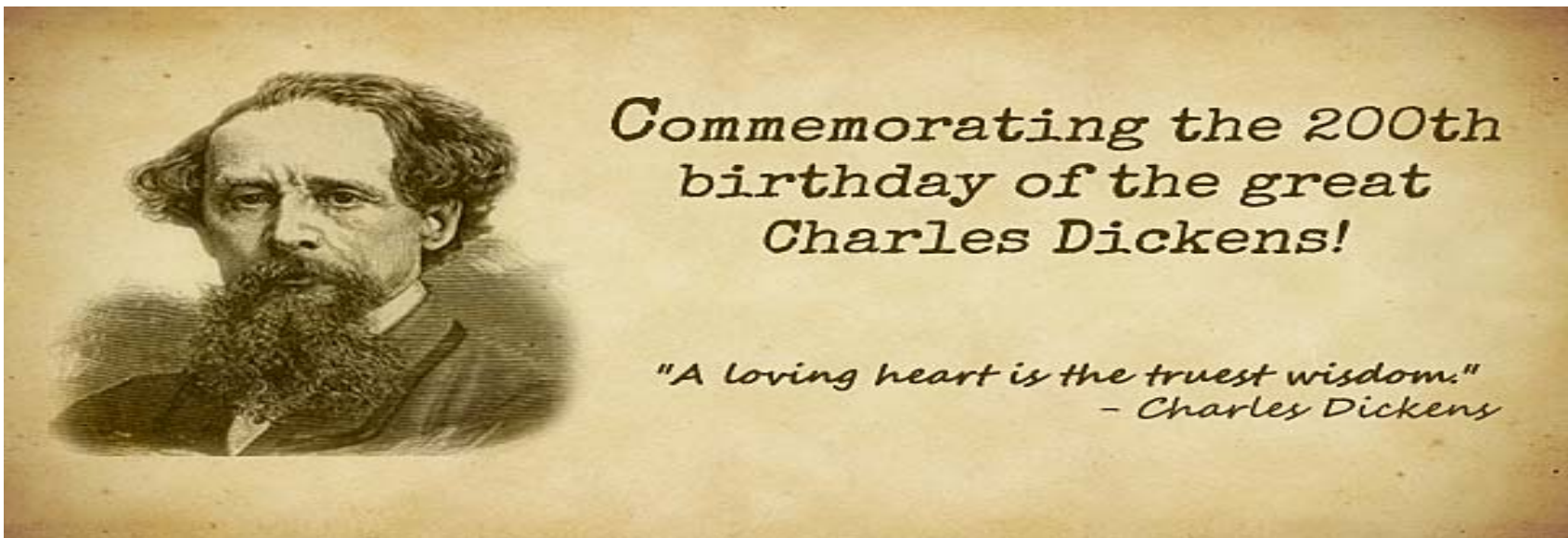
- In 1822, the Dickens family moved to **Camden Town**, a poor neighborhood in **London**. By then the family's financial situation had grown dire, as **John Dickens** had a dangerous habit of living beyond the family's means. Eventually, John was sent to prison for debt in 1824, when Charles was just 12 years old.



Early life

After his father's imprisonment, **Charles Dickens** was forced to leave school to work at a factory alongside the **River Thames**. At the factory, **Dickens** earned six shillings a week labeling pots of "blacking," a substance used to clean fireplaces. It was the best he could do to help support his family.



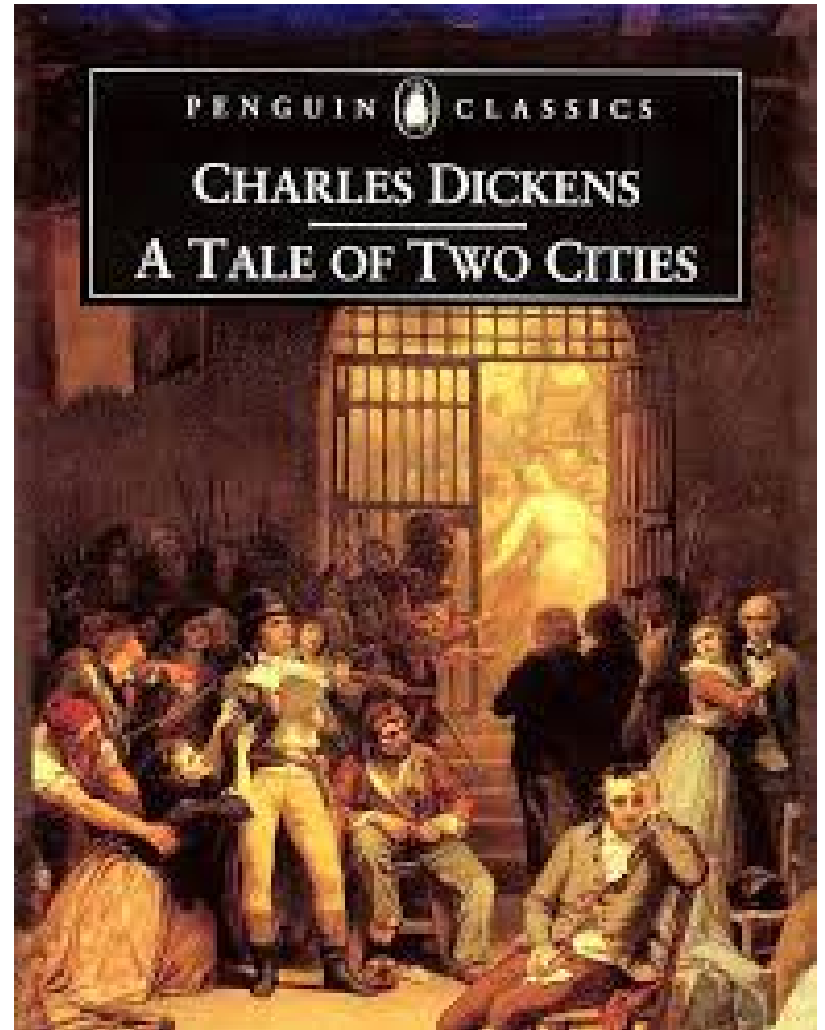


Dickens was permitted to go back to school when his father received a family inheritance and used it to pay off his debts. But when **Dickens** was 15, his education was pulled out from under him once again. In 1827, **he had to drop out of school** and work as an office boy to contribute to his family's income.

Early life

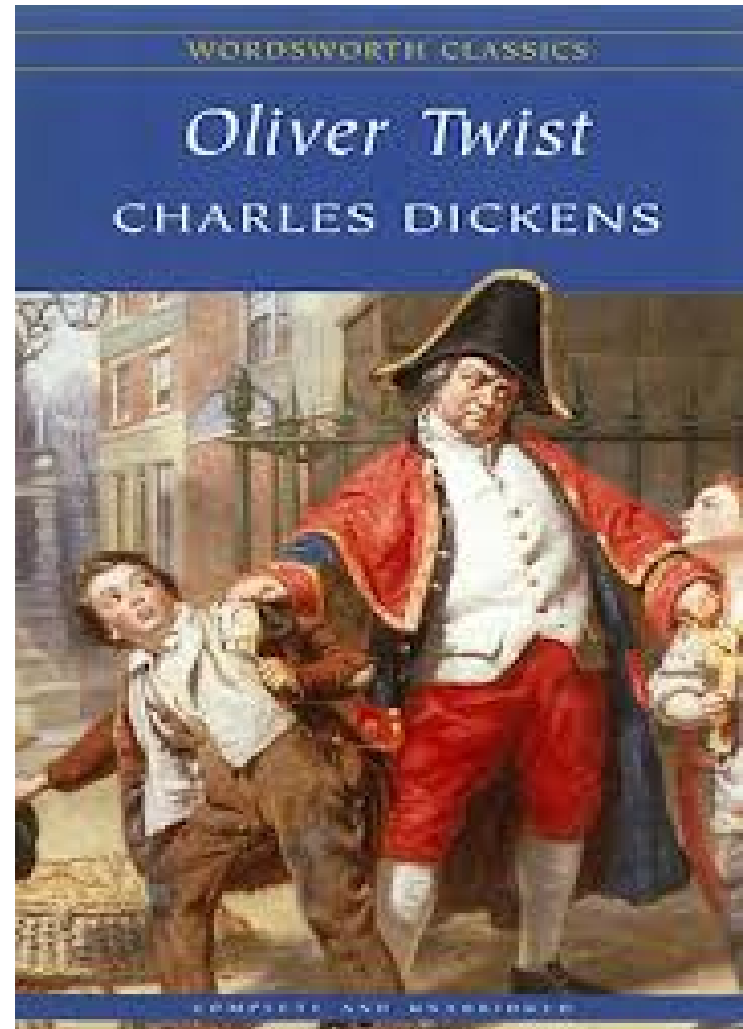
Within a year of being hired, **Dickens** began freelance reporting at the **law courts of London**. In 1833, he began submitting sketches to various magazines and newspapers under the pseudonym "**Boz.**" In 1836, his clippings were published in his first book, *Sketches by Boz*. Dickens' first success caught the eye of **Catherine Hogarth**, whom he soon married.

Catherine would grace Charles with 10 children before the couple separated in 1858.



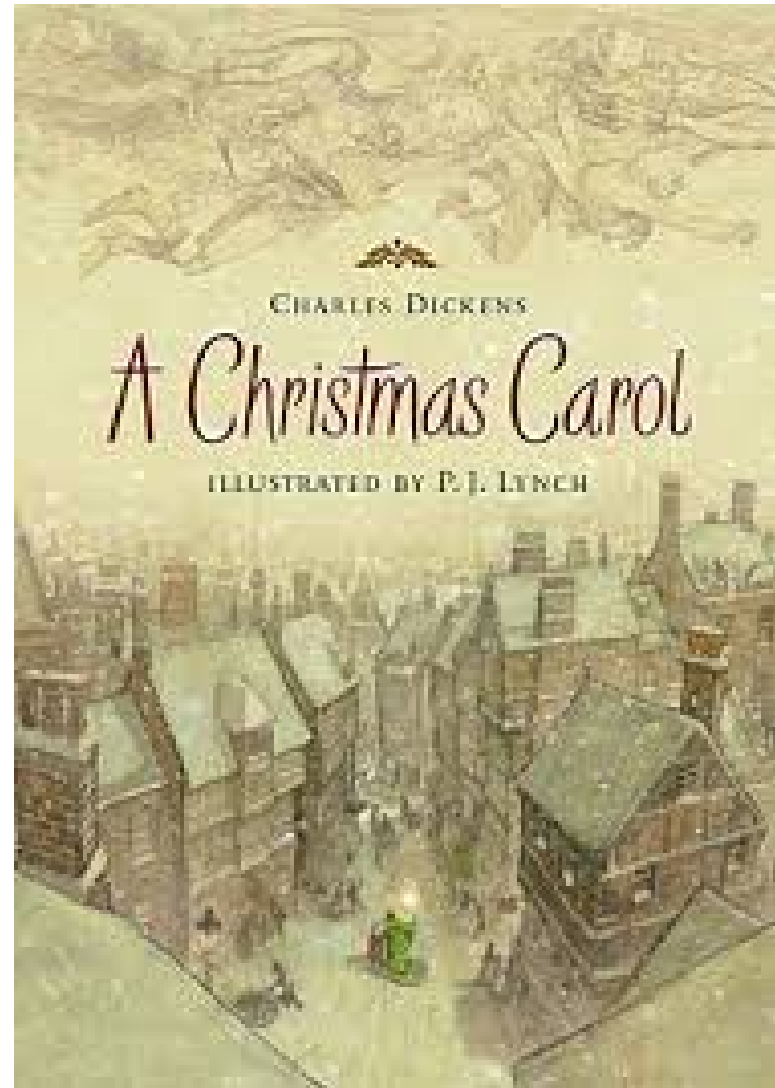
Success as a writer

Dickens became publisher of a magazine called *Bentley's Miscellany*. In it he started publishing his first novel, *Oliver Twist*, which follows the life of an orphan living in the streets. The story was inspired by how Dickens felt as an impoverished child forced to get by on his wits and earn his own keep. The novel was extremely well received in both England and America.

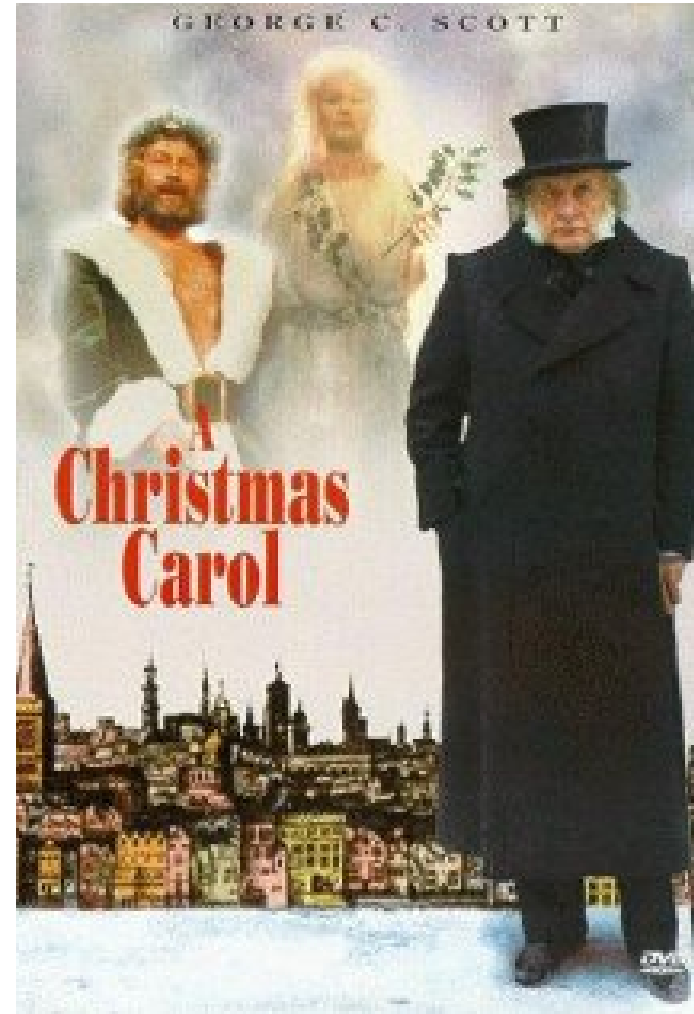


Success as a writer

- In 1843, Dickens wrote his novel *The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit*, a story about a man's struggle to survive on the ruthless American frontier.
- Over the next couple of years, Dickens published two Christmas stories. One was the classic *A Christmas Carol*, which features the timeless protagonist *Ebenezer Scrooge*, an old miser, who, with the help of a ghost, finds the Christmas spirit.



A Christmas Carol

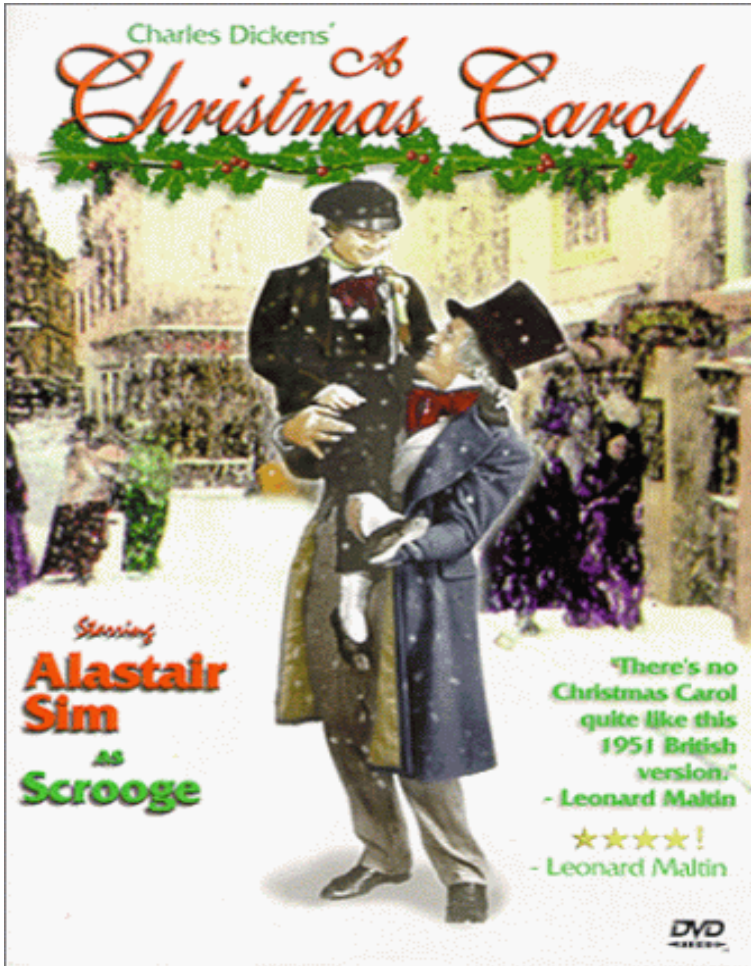


Fame



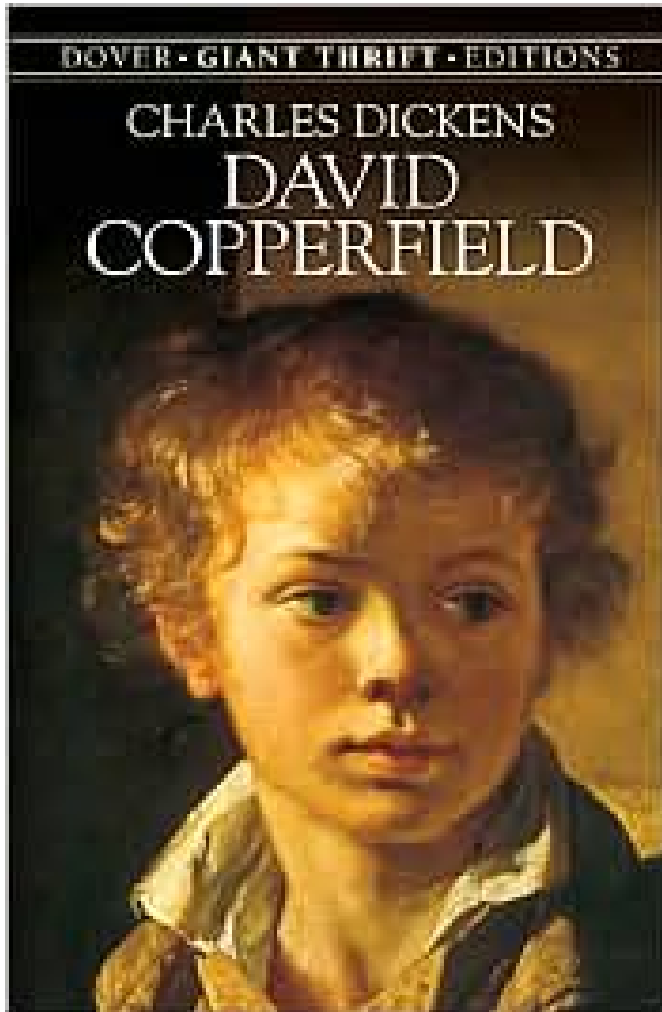
During his first U.S. tour, in 1842, Dickens designated himself as what many have deemed the first modern celebrity. He spoke of his opposition to slavery and expressed his support for additional reform. His lectures, which began in Virginia and ended in Missouri, were widely attended.

Fame



- His 76 readings earned him no less than \$95,000, which, in the Victoria era, amounted to approximately **\$1.5 million** in U.S. dollars.
- Back at home, **Dickens** had become so famous that people recognized him all over **London** as he strolled around the city collecting the observations that would serve as inspiration for his future work.

Later years



From 1849 to 1850, Dickens worked on *David Copperfield*, the first work of its kind; no one had ever written a novel that simply followed a character through his everyday life. In writing it, Dickens tapped into his own personal experiences, from his difficult childhood to his work as a journalist.

Although *David Copperfield* is not considered Dickens' best work, it was his personal favorite. It also helped define the public's expectations of a Dickensian novel.

Later years

During the 1850s, [Dickens](#) suffered two devastating losses: the deaths of his daughter and father. He also separated from his wife during that decade.



Death

In 1865, [Dickens](#) was in a train accident and never fully recovered. Despite his fragile condition, he continued to tour until 1870.

On June 9, 1870, [Dickens](#) had a stroke and, at age 58, died at Gad's Hill Place, his country home in [Kent, England](#).



A Christmas Carol

A miserly old man named **Ebenezer Scrooge** sits in his counting-house on Christmas Eve. His clerk, **Bob Cratchit**, shivers because Scrooge refuses to spend money on heating coals for a fire. **Scrooge's nephew, Fred**, pays his uncle a visit and invites him to his annual Christmas party. Two gentlemen also drop by and ask Scrooge for a contribution to their charity. Scrooge reacts to the holiday visitors, spitting out an angry "**Bah! Humbug!**" in response to his nephew's "**Merry Christmas!**"





Later that evening, after returning to his dark, cold apartment, **Scrooge** receives a visitation from **the ghost of his dead partner, Jacob Marley**. **Marley** relates his unfortunate story. As punishment for his greedy and self-serving life his spirit has been condemned to wander the Earth weighted down with heavy chains. **Marley** hopes to save **Scrooge** from sharing the same fate. **Marley** informs **Scrooge** that three spirits will visit him during each of the next three nights. After that, **Scrooge** collapses into a deep sleep.



He wakes moments before the arrival of the **Ghost of Christmas Past**, a strange childlike phantom with a brightly glowing head. The spirit escorts Scrooge on a journey into the past to previous Christmases. Invisible to those he watches, Scrooge revisits his childhood school days, his apprenticeship with a jolly merchant named **Fezziwig**, and his engagement to **Belle**, a woman who leaves Scrooge because his lust for money eclipses his ability to love another. **Scrooge**, deeply moved, sheds tears of regret before the phantom returns him to his bed.



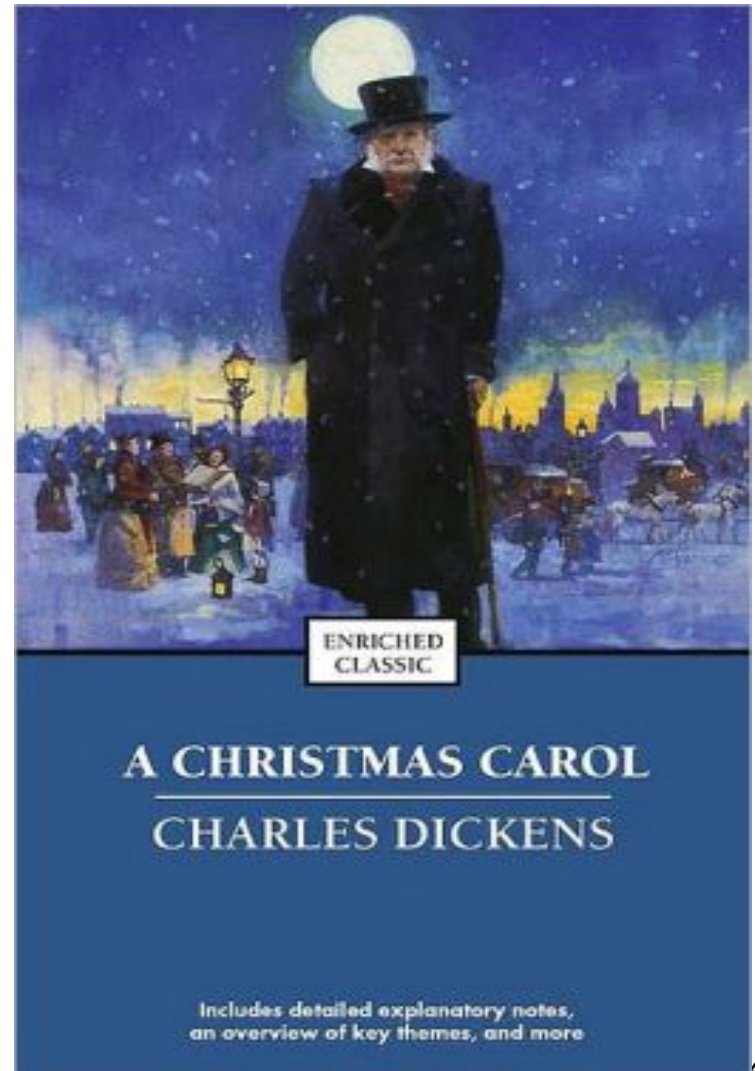
The **Ghost of Christmas Present**, takes Scrooge through London to unveil Christmas as it will happen that year. Scrooge watches the Cratchit family prepare a miniature feast in its meager home. He discovers **Bob Cratchit's** crippled son, **Tiny Tim**, a courageous boy whose kindness and humility warms Scrooge's heart. Then Scrooge visits his nephew's to witness the Christmas party. Scrooge finds the gathering delightful and pleads with the spirit to stay until the very end of the festivities. Toward the end of the day, he shows Scrooge two starved children, **Ignorance and Want**, living under his coat. He vanishes instantly as Scrooge notices a dark, hooded figure coming toward him.



The **Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come** leads Scrooge through a sequence of mysterious scene. Scrooge sees businessmen discussing the dead man's riches and some people trading his personal effects for cash. **Scrooge**, anxious to learn the lesson of his latest visitor, begs to know the name of the dead man. After pleading with the ghost, Scrooge finds himself in a churchyard, the spirit pointing to a grave. **Scrooge** looks at the headstone and is shocked to read his own name. He desperately implores the spirit to alter his fate, promising to renounce his insensitive, ways and to honour Christmas with all his heart. He suddenly finds himself safely tucked in his bed.

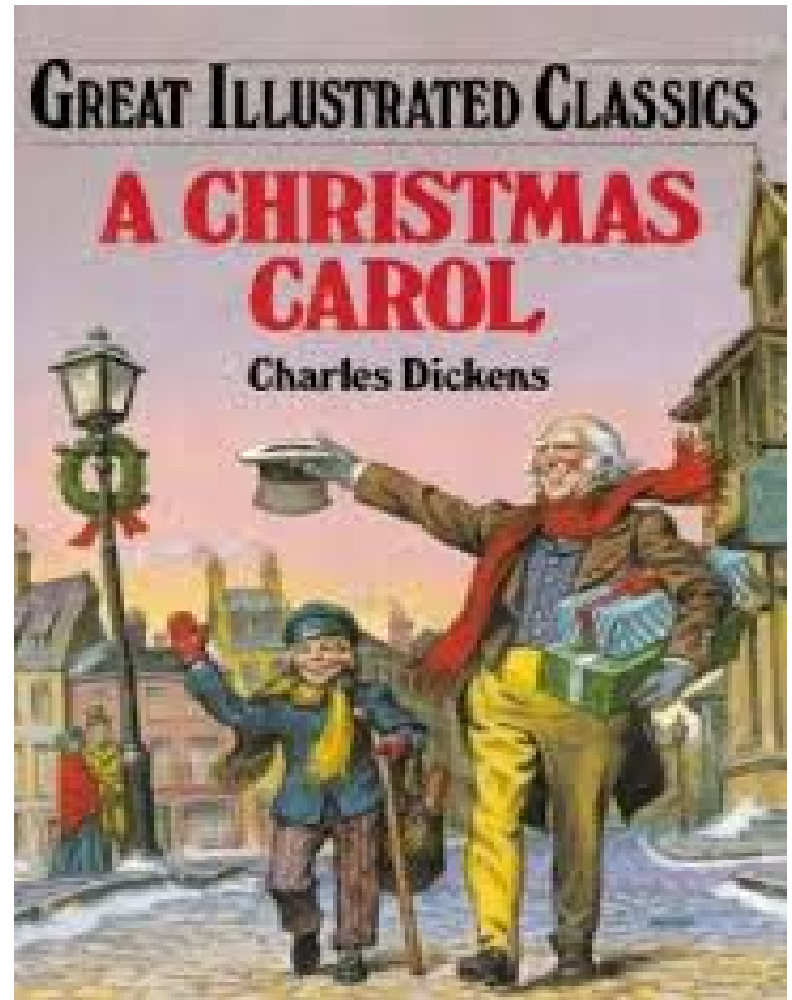
The ending

Full of joy Scrooge rushes out onto the street hoping to share his newfound Christmas spirit. He sends a giant Christmas turkey to the **Cratchit house** and attends **Fred's** party, to the stifled surprise of the other guests. As the years go by, he holds true to his promise and honors Christmas with all his heart: he treats **Tiny Tim** as if he were his own child, provides gifts for the poor, and treats his fellow human beings with kindness, generosity, and warmth.



A brief analysis

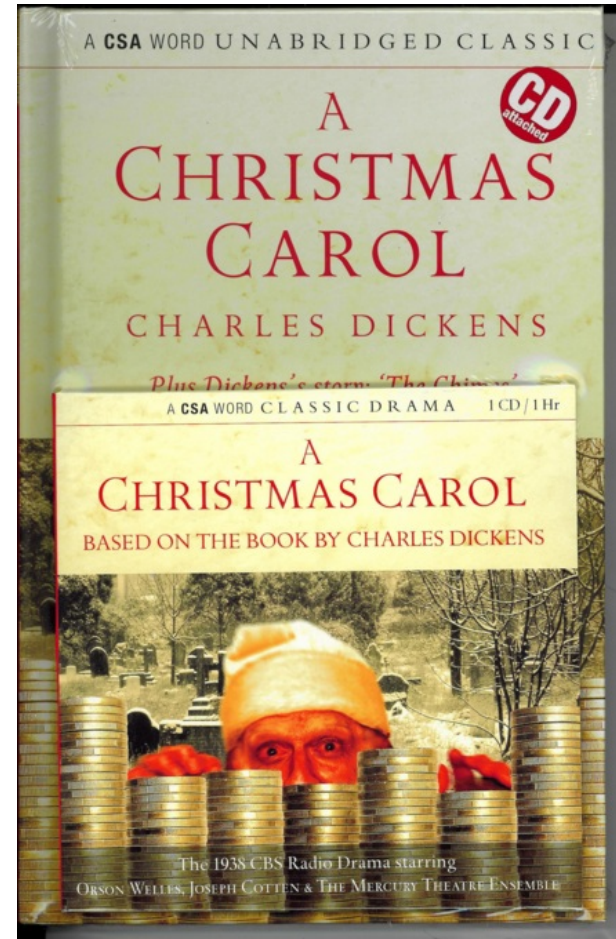
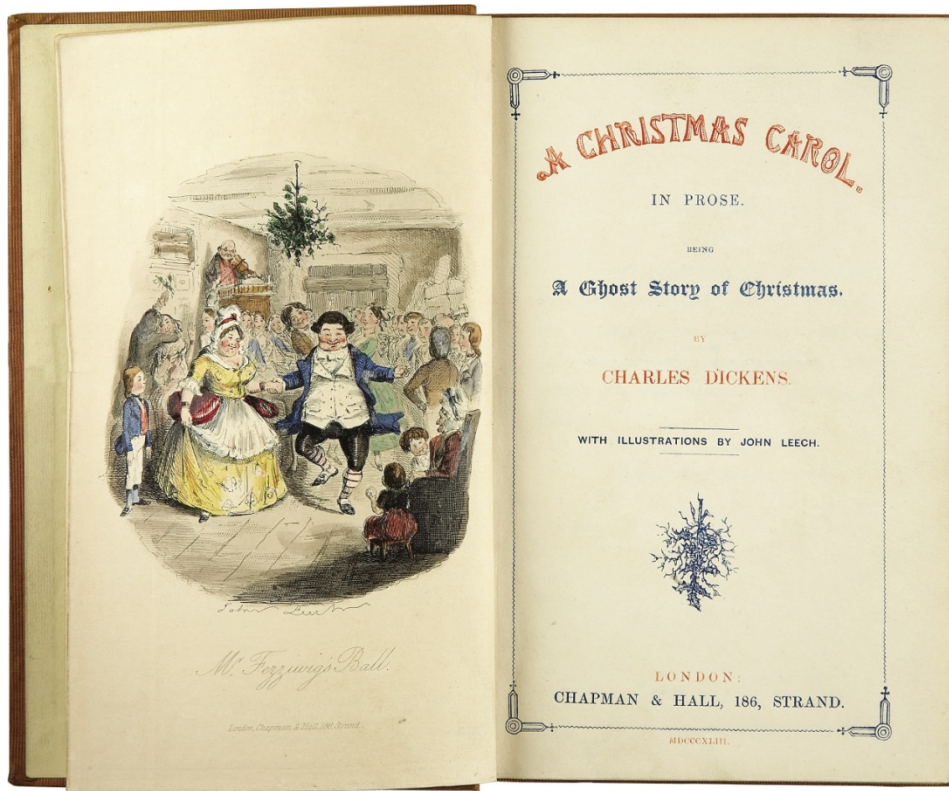
With *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens hopes to illustrate how insensitive people can be converted into charitable, caring, and socially conscious members of society. Warmth, generosity, and overall goodwill, overcome Scrooge's bitter apathy as he encounters and learns from his memory, the ability to empathize, and his fear of death.



A famous book



A famous book



A famous writer

Statue of Dickens in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

