

ENGLISH LEARNING
FOR CURIOUS
MINDS



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Episode #270

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

10th Jun, 2022

[00:00:00] Hello, hello hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:00:12] The show where you can listen to fascinating stories, and learn weird and wonderful things about the world at the same time as improving your English.

[00:00:21] I'm Alastair Budge, and today we are going to be talking about Charles Dickens.

[00:00:27] This is actually part two of a three-part mini-series on Great Victorian writers.

[00:00:33] In part one we looked at Jane Austen, the author responsible for novels such as Pride and Prejudice and Emma, and [next up](#)¹ we'll be looking at the Brontë sisters.

[00:00:45] OK then, The [Inimitable](#)² Charles Dickens.

¹ right afterwards, next

² impossible to be copied or imitated, unique

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:00:51] If you're wondering what this strange word "[inimitable](#)" means, it means [unable](#)³ to be [imitated](#)⁴, [unable](#) to be copied.

[00:00:59] Later on in his life, Dickens referred to himself, [jokingly](#)⁵ I should add, as [inimitable](#), but his style certainly was unique.

[00:01:09] Indeed, alongside George Orwell, he is one of the few English authors whose surname has become an [adjective](#)⁶, Dickensian.

[00:01:19] To get an understanding of how he reached this point, similar to the episodes on Jane Austen and the Brontë sisters, in this episode we'll go on a journey through four different areas: the novelist's life, their novels, the impact of those novels and finally their legacy.

[00:01:38] So, our first stop is a brief look at Dickens's life.

[00:01:43] Although he was born in 1812 into what should have been a relatively secure middle-class life in the southern English port city of Portsmouth, his father had no control over the family's spending and managed to put himself, and therefore his family, into considerable [debt](#)⁷.

³ not able to

⁴ copied

⁵ in a humorous or funny way

⁶ a word describing an attribute or characteristic of a noun

⁷ state of owing money

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:02:05] The shock of such a **sudden**⁸ change from relative **plenty**⁹ to the kind of **grinding**¹⁰, real poverty, as experienced by the industrial working class, **marked**¹¹ Dickens for life.

[00:02:19] He was only 12 when this **traumatic**¹² event occurred, he found himself suddenly **taken out**¹³ of the good school that he was in and sent to work in a factory which made black **boot polish**¹⁴.

[00:02:32] Here, for three **gruelling**¹⁵ years, the sensitive and bright young Charles worked long hours in a **dismal**¹⁶ factory near London's Charing Cross station, **fixing**¹⁷ labels onto jars of **boot polish**.

⁸ happening quickly and without warning

⁹ the state of having enough

¹⁰ a difficult situation in which they were very poor for a long period of time

¹¹ had a big effect on

¹² causing emotional shock and pain

¹³ removed from

¹⁴ a substance used to give boots an even and shiny surface

¹⁵ extremely tiring and demanding

¹⁶ causing sadness and hopelessness

¹⁷ attaching, sticking

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:02:48] His father and the majority of his many brothers and sisters had all been imprisoned in what was known as a **debtor's**¹⁸ prison until his father's **debts**¹⁹ were all paid.

[00:02:59] If you're familiar with Charles Dickens, you'll know that there is a **recurrent**²⁰ theme of adults **mistreating**²¹ children, of adults treating children poorly. This theme clearly had its **roots**²² in this **bruising**²³ early childhood experience.

[00:03:16] Young Charles's formal education was therefore **short-lived**²⁴, it didn't last for long. After the **blacking factory**²⁵ and a short further **spell**²⁶, a short period, at school, he went to work as a legal **clerk**²⁷.

¹⁸ for people who owed money

¹⁹ amounts of money owed

²⁰ appearing again and again

²¹ behaving badly and unfairly towards them

²² cause, source

²³ hurtful and painful

²⁴ lasted for a short time

²⁵ a factory producing a substance used to give boots an even and shiny surface

²⁶ short period

²⁷ a person who works in an office

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:03:32] Rather than continuing to do his apprenticeship and become a lawyer, he quickly learnt a new form of [shorthand writing](#)²⁸, which, together with his very quick mind meant that he was soon expert at writing down accounts of criminal [trials](#)²⁹ in court.

[00:03:50] Before long, he was doing a similar thing in London's Houses of Parliament, where he became a famous reporter on parliamentary debates.

[00:04:00] In the early days of railways, Dickens's ability to accurately record politicians' speeches and have those speeches written up in newspapers which were [distributed](#)³⁰ all over Britain was an important part in the communications revolution which [accompanied](#)³¹ the growth of newspapers and rail travel.

[00:04:20] His talent for reporting speeches extended to writing [sketches](#)³² about famous politicians. This then led to short stories and then novels.

²⁸ a method of writing very fast

²⁹ formal examinations of hearings of a criminal case in a court of law

³⁰ given out or spread to a lot of people

³¹ was present at the same time as

³² simple drawings

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:04:31] Writing [initially](#)³³ under what was a family nickname, Boz, his brilliance at creating [memorable](#)³⁴ characters and [satirising](#)³⁵ [institutions](#)³⁶, making fun of [institutions](#), meant that he soon became a famous writer, and this [fame](#)³⁷ would only increase.

[00:04:50] When he was aged only 24, the publication of his first novel, The Pickwick Papers, turned him into an international, literary [celebrity](#)³⁸.

[00:05:01] It helped that he also became editor of two popular magazines [in succession](#)³⁹.

[00:05:07] I mention this because the way in which the majority of his novels were published was in what's called [serial](#)⁴⁰ form.

³³ at the beginning

³⁴ worth remembering

³⁵ criticising in a funny way, making fun of

³⁶ organisations

³⁷ the state of being known by many people

³⁸ a very well-known person

³⁹ following one after the other

⁴⁰ published in several separate parts, one after another

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:05:16] This meant that each week or month, you would have a few new chapters of the latest Dickens novel, each ending in moments of [suspense](#)⁴¹.

[00:05:26] So, the chapter would end on what's called a "[cliffhanger](#)⁴²", a point when the [narrative](#)⁴³ or storyline is [in the balance](#)⁴⁴ and we are desperate to know how a particular set of events is going to [progress](#)⁴⁵.

[00:05:40] Cleverly, of course, it is organised so that the reader will surely buy the next [instalment](#)⁴⁶.

[00:05:47] This style of [serial](#) publication was to become the [dominant](#)⁴⁷ form of publication for the Victorian novel, and it's obviously still a [device](#)⁴⁸ that's used even today in the latest TV series.

[00:06:01] But how about Dickens's personal life, perhaps you are asking?

⁴¹ the feeling of excited or anxious uncertainty about what may happen

⁴² a dramatic and exciting ending to an episode

⁴³ storyline

⁴⁴ in an uncertain or critical state

⁴⁵ move forward

⁴⁶ part or episode of the story

⁴⁷ having the strongest presence or influence

⁴⁸ plan or method

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:06:05] Well, although for his **adoring**⁴⁹ public and indeed for succeeding generations, the famous Boz was **regarded**⁵⁰ as being very much a family man, with his long-term wife, Catherine and his 10 children, this was actually not the case.

[00:06:23] Like many **high-profile**⁵¹ people, he had a **complex**⁵² personal life.

[00:06:28] He had a passionate early love with a lady called Maria Beadnell, whom he did not marry.

[00:06:34] He did not treat his wife, Catherine, particularly well, as he **regarded** her as very much **below him**⁵³ intellectually.

[00:06:43] Somewhat **bizarrely**⁵⁴, he had a very close relationship with Catherine's sister, Mary Hogarth, whose early death was a great source of sadness for Dickens.

[00:06:54] After Dickens separated from his wife in 1858, he **struck up**⁵⁵ a relationship with an actress 27 years younger than him, Ellen Ternan, and there is little doubt that she and he were lovers from the early 1860s until his death in 1870 aged 58.

⁴⁹ showing great love and admiration

⁵⁰ considered, seen

⁵¹ attracting much attention or publicity

⁵² not easy to understand, complicated

⁵³ in a lower position than him

⁵⁴ in a strange or unusual way

⁵⁵ started

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:07:14] Dickens was also a famously [charismatic](#)⁵⁶ individual.

[00:07:18] He was a powerful personality with great energy and spirit; he loved colourful clothes, such as [waistcoats](#)⁵⁷, along with dancing, [theatricals](#)⁵⁸ and, above all charitable work on behalf of causes as [wide-ranging](#)⁵⁹ as child poverty, prostitution, homelessness, educational reform and pollution.

[00:07:40] We will return to some of these themes shortly when discussing his impact on Victorian society.

[00:07:47] What about his work, his books?

[00:07:49] Well, as you would expect of a man with such energy, idealism and genius, his productivity was [prolific](#)⁶⁰, he wrote a [vast](#)⁶¹ amount.

[00:07:59] He wrote 15 novels, mainly very long ones.

[00:08:03] In addition, his output included five short novels, hundreds of short stories and many non-fiction articles which were published in his magazines.

⁵⁶ attractive, charming

⁵⁷ pieces of clothing that cover the upper body but not the arms

⁵⁸ dramatic performances on stage

⁵⁹ covering or including a lot of things

⁶⁰ producing a great number of works

⁶¹ extremely large

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:08:14] As if that wasn't enough to keep him busy, and let's not forget that he also had 10 children, he was a [conscientious](#)⁶² editor of his two weekly magazines which he published over a period of 20 years and a similarly [dutiful](#)⁶³ and careful contributor to charities, such as Urania Cottage, the home that he and a wealthy banking [heiress](#)⁶⁴, Angella Coutts, [set up](#)⁶⁵ for prostitutes who were trying to free themselves from their lives as sex workers and start [afresh](#)⁶⁶.

[00:08:47] As for his novels, which is what he is best known for, they cover a very broad range of topics.

[00:08:54] The early ones are perhaps best known for their comedy, with The Pickwick Papers and the Old Curiosity Shop examples of this genre.

⁶² putting a lot of effort, dedicated

⁶³ doing everything that he could

⁶⁴ woman who had received a lot of money from another person, especially an older member of the same family, when that person died

⁶⁵ established, started

⁶⁶ again in a new way

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:09:04] As he moved into his [mature⁶⁷](#) and late [phase⁶⁸](#), he wrote powerfully [critical⁶⁹](#) novels about important social problems and failures, such as the educational system, which he covered in Hard Times and Nicholas Nickleby.

[00:09:19] He also experimented with historical novels, where the action is set someway in the past.

[00:09:27] Most famously, this was the case with A Tale of Two Cities, which set the action in London and Paris during the time of the French Revolution.

[00:09:37] His later work became yet more complex and [uncompromising⁷⁰](#) in its attacks on what he saw as the evils of the society that surrounded him.

[00:09:48] For instance, In Bleak House, he attacks the way in which the legal system only [serves⁷¹](#) lawyers and destroys young lives.

⁶⁷ advanced, older

⁶⁸ period, stage

⁶⁹ expressing his disagreement or disapproval

⁷⁰ not easily changed, not flexible

⁷¹ is of use to, helps

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:09:58] In Little Dorritt the target is the effect of the [debtors](#)⁷² prison, whilst one of his darkest novels, Dombey and Son, involves a brilliant [dramatisation](#)⁷³ of how great wealth can [eat out](#)⁷⁴ the heart of a family.

[00:10:14] The sad but [sincere](#)⁷⁵ question of the young Paul Dombey to his rich father [sets the tone](#)⁷⁶ of the novel. He says: "What's money?"

[00:10:25] In Dickens's last decade he extended his lifetime's enjoyment of drama and became an [adored](#)⁷⁷ reader of [passages](#)⁷⁸ from his books.

[00:10:35] In much the same way that today's best-known musicians make more money through [going on tour](#)⁷⁹ than from selling music, Dickens would read to mass audiences, earning huge fees.

⁷² people who owed money

⁷³ novel story, fictional drama

⁷⁴ completely consume or destroy

⁷⁵ honest

⁷⁶ describes the particular mood or message

⁷⁷ very much loved and admired

⁷⁸ parts

⁷⁹ giving performances in various places

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:10:48] It would be an almost concert-like experience, with Dickens enjoying the [rapturous⁸⁰ applause⁸¹](#) and response of his audiences as he read favourite [passages](#) from his books, such as the arguments between Nancy and her lover, Bill Sikes from Oliver Twist.

[00:11:05] It is said that the [emotion⁸²](#) he put into one of these public readings was actually a major factor in [bringing on⁸³](#) the [stroke⁸⁴](#) that killed him when he was only 58.

[00:11:17] As for the central ideas or themes in Dickens's work, it is difficult to summarise them [adequately⁸⁵](#) as the work covers such a [broad⁸⁶ canvas⁸⁷](#).

⁸⁰ expressing great pleasure or enthusiasm

⁸¹ the sound of people hitting their hands together to show enjoyment

⁸² strong feeling, passion

⁸³ causing

⁸⁴ a medical condition in which poor blood flow or movement to the brain causes cell death

⁸⁵ in a way that is enough

⁸⁶ very wide, including lots of thing

⁸⁷ range, expanse

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:11:29] Few elements of Victorian society escape his [penetrating](#)⁸⁸ and [accurate](#)⁸⁹ [gaze](#)⁹⁰ – not just the educational, banking and legal systems as I mentioned, but also [bureaucracy](#)⁹¹, mess on public streets, horrible air quality and the [inhumane](#)⁹² treatment of children.

[00:11:49] However, above all, running through all his work like a golden [thread](#)⁹³ is his celebration of human kindness and generosity.

[00:11:59] This, so his stories suggest, is much more likely to be found amongst the very poor than amongst the rich, although he is not so [simplistic](#)⁹⁴ as to suggest that there cannot be [mean-spirited](#)⁹⁵ poor people and [generous-hearted](#)⁹⁶ wealthy ones.

[00:12:17] Let's now move on to explore the impact that he had in his lifetime.

⁸⁸ having the ability to see into another's mind or into the nature of events

⁸⁹ correct, exact

⁹⁰ a steady, fixed look

⁹¹ complicated management processes organised by the government

⁹² without humanity, kindness, compassion or cruel

⁹³ a long thin line of fabric

⁹⁴ dealing with complex issues and problems as if they were much simpler than they really are

⁹⁵ bad, cruel

⁹⁶ generous, friendly, helpful

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:12:22] You will have **gathered**⁹⁷ so far that he was a true national celebrity, recognised by people even in an age before photography.

[00:12:30] Although he loved the response of an **adoring** crowd, he also valued his privacy and there are **firsthand**⁹⁸ accounts of how, when he was, let's say, in the theatre watching a play, he would hope not to be noticed, but as **word got round**⁹⁹ that the famous Boz was in the audience, it was highly likely that the whole theatre would **erupt**¹⁰⁰ in **applause** as his fellow **theatre-goers**¹⁰¹ would stand up, **clap**¹⁰² and **cheer**¹⁰³ him.

[00:12:59] It's worth mentioning here that his **fame** was not **confined**¹⁰⁴ to the **literate**¹⁰⁵ and the wealthy, to those who could read and those who had lots of money.

⁹⁷ understood

⁹⁸ coming from personal experience

⁹⁹ it became known

¹⁰⁰ explode or break out suddenly

¹⁰¹ people who frequently went to the theatre

¹⁰² make a short loud noise by hitting their hands together

¹⁰³ give loud shouts of approval and excitement

¹⁰⁴ limited

¹⁰⁵ those who could read

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:13:08] Because [instalments](#)¹⁰⁶ of his work could be bought cheaply in magazine form and his stories were so [gripping](#)¹⁰⁷, they would be read out loud by the [literate](#) members of a family or the street, so that others could enjoy them.

[00:13:24] Indeed, it's estimated that every book sold was read aloud to 14 people.

[00:13:31] It is no [exaggeration](#)¹⁰⁸ to say that his fans ranged from Queen Victoria to the poorest of [street sweepers](#)¹⁰⁹.

[00:13:38] This, in itself, is a unique achievement for English novelists.

[00:13:44] Perhaps the easiest and most universal of impacts that Dickens had was to do with Christmas.

[00:13:51] Dickens, [initially](#) through his most famous Christmas story, A Christmas Carol, more or less invented the idea of the White, or snowy, Christmas.

[00:14:01] He produced Christmas stories every year, although none would become as popular as the extraordinary A Christmas Carol.

¹⁰⁶ parts, episodes

¹⁰⁷ very interesting and exciting

¹⁰⁸ a statement that represents it as better than it really is

¹⁰⁹ people whose job was to clean the streets

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:14:09] But perhaps the most positive and [long-lasting](#)¹¹⁰ impact he had on his own age was that of his social activism.

[00:14:18] His idealism, his anger at social injustice and his [relish](#)¹¹¹ or enjoyment at putting his own [expertise](#)¹¹² and money behind practical social reforms, such as that home [set up](#) for women trying to escape prostitution, meant that he set an example to others of social activism.

[00:14:38] He was someone who not only felt very passionately about social injustice but actually did a great deal in practical terms to improve things, he did more than just [highlight](#)¹¹³ these injustices through his books.

[00:14:54] [Moving on](#)¹¹⁴ to his legacy – in other words things that have [survived](#)¹¹⁵ him and which we perhaps have some reason to be grateful for - there is once again much to say on this topic.

[00:15:05] As I said at the start, he is one of the few writers whose name has become an [adjective](#). There will not be many days when one of the British newspapers does not

¹¹⁰ continuing for a long time

¹¹¹ enjoyment

¹¹² high level of knowledge or skill

¹¹³ show, emphasise

¹¹⁴ continuing

¹¹⁵ lived after his death

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

use the word Dickensian to describe unacceptable, [out of date](#)¹¹⁶ and poor working conditions or living conditions.

[00:15:24] In terms of his artistic legacy, the attraction of Dickens's stories can be seen by the [vast](#) quantity of film and stage adaptations that have been made of them.

[00:15:36] This has been the case right from the early days of cinema.

[00:15:39] Even in the era of silent films, some 100 movies were made of his novels.

[00:15:45] It is no [exaggeration](#) to say that his unique writing style, with his brilliant eye for human [curiosities](#)¹¹⁷ has been an inspiration to a [vast](#) number of [subsequent](#)¹¹⁸ writers, not just novelists but also playwrights and screenwriters.

[00:16:00] Dickens's extraordinary genius at combining photographic realism with great [sweeps](#)¹¹⁹ of imagination means that he has an unusual power to [sum up](#)¹²⁰ the nature of a place or an [institution](#)¹²¹.

¹¹⁶ no longer good enough or sufficient

¹¹⁷ unusual and interesting facts

¹¹⁸ following

¹¹⁹ extents or stretches

¹²⁰ give a summary or review

¹²¹ organisation

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:16:14] His near [contemporary](#)¹²², the journalist Water Bagehot, described this back in 1858, saying that Dickens "describes London like a special correspondent for [posterity](#)¹²³."

[00:16:27] In other words, he [summed it up](#)¹²⁴ definitively and forever.

[00:16:32] Let's just finish with some of the specific linguistic Dickensian legacies, so you can get an idea of his talent for creating powerful images with words.

[00:16:43] Like Shakespeare, he invented words which have gone into the language.

[00:16:48] If someone keeps on dropping a ball or anything else, they are a [butterfingers](#)¹²⁵.

[00:16:54] If you are put into a panic or a confusion by something you might be [flummoxed](#)¹²⁶.

[00:17:01] If you come across someone on a dark night who talks to you in a nasty voice, you might say that they [give you the creeps](#)¹²⁷.

¹²² living at the same time

¹²³ future generations

¹²⁴ gave a summary or review of it

¹²⁵ someone who keeps on dropping a ball or anything else

¹²⁶ put into a panic or a confusion by something

¹²⁷ cause a feeling of fear

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:17:09] Like any great writer, Dickens has also become [synonymous¹²⁸](#) with particular sayings or images, so here are some to conclude:

[00:17:19] You may know that the start of A Tale of Two Cities begins with the sentence, "it was the best of times, it was the worst of times".

[00:17:28] In David Copperfield, he writes that "A loving heart is better and stronger than wisdom."

[00:17:35] And to conclude this episode, here is how he finished his last public reading, which he made three months before his death.

[00:17:43] Just on a language note, “ [garish¹²⁹](#)”, which is a word you’ll hear, means “very bright and [dazzling¹³⁰](#)”.

[00:17:52] He ended his speech, perhaps knowingly, with the sentence: “From these [garish](#) lights I [vanish¹³¹](#) now for [evermore¹³²](#).”

[00:18:03] OK then, that is it for today's episode on The [Inimitable](#) Charles Dickens.

¹²⁸ having the same meaning

¹²⁹ unpleasantly bright

¹³⁰ so bright that it blinds you

¹³¹ disappear

¹³² for ever

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:18:09] I hope it's been an interesting one, that you've learnt something new, and that perhaps it might have inspired you to pick up a copy of one of his books and read one for yourself.

[00:18:19] If you have a Kindle or an e-reader, because they are all [out of copyright](#)¹³³, you can [pick up](#)¹³⁴ these books for tiny amounts of money.

[00:18:26] Indeed, I just checked and I've bought the entire works of Charles Dickens for €2, which I think must be the best value for money entertainment in the world right now.

[00:18:38] And if you have read any Charles Dickens, either in English or in your own language, I would love to know what you thought.

[00:18:45] Did you enjoy them? What do you think makes Dickens such an [inimitable](#) writer?

[00:18:51] Is there a writer in your language who you would compare Dickens to?

[00:18:55] I would love to know.

[00:18:56] You can head right into our community forum, which is at community.leonardoenglish.com and get chatting away to other curious minds.

¹³³ not longer protected by copyright laws

¹³⁴ buy

English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #270
The Inimitable Charles Dickens

[00:19:05] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:19:06] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

[END OF EPISODE]

Key vocabulary

Word	Definition
Next up	right afterwards, next
Inimitable	impossible to be copied or imitated, unique
Unable	not able to
Imitated	copied
Jokingly	in a humorous or funny way
Adjective	a word describing an attribute or characteristic of a noun
Debt	state of owing money
Sudden	happening quickly and without warning
Plenty	the state of having enough
Grinding	a difficult situation in which they were very poor for a long period of time
Marked	had a big effect on
Traumatic	causing emotional shock and pain

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

Taken out	removed from
Boot polish	a substance used to give boots an even and shiny surface
Gruelling	extremely tiring and demanding
Dismal	causing sadness and hopelessness
Fixing	attaching, sticking
Debtor's	for people who owed money
Debts	amounts of money owed
Recurrent	appearing again and again
Mistreating	behaving badly and unfairly towards them
Roots	cause, source
Bruising	hurtful and painful
Short-lived	lasted for a short time
Blacking factory	a factory producing a substance used to give boots an even and shiny surface
Spell	short period
Clerk	a person who works in an office

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

Shorthand writing	a method of writing very fast
Trials	formal examinations of hearings of a criminal case in a court of law
Distributed	given out or spread to a lot of people
Accompanied	was present at the same time as
Sketches	simple drawings
Initially	at the beginning
Memorable	worth remembering
Satirising	criticising in a funny way, making fun of
Institutions	organisations
Fame	the state of being known by many people
Celebrity	a very well-known person
In succession	following one after the other
Serial	published in several separate parts, one after another
Suspense	the feeling of excited or anxious uncertainty about what may happen
Cliffhanger	a dramatic and exciting ending to an episode

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

Narrative	storyline
In the balance	in an uncertain or critical state
Progress	move forward
Instalment	part or episode of the story
Dominant	having the strongest presence or influence
Device	plan or method
Adoring	showing great love and admiration
Regarded	considered, seen
High-profile	attracting much attention or publicity
Complex	not easy to understand, complicated
Below him	in a lower position than him
Bizarrely	in a strange or unusual way
Struck up	started
Charismatic	attractive, charming
Waistcoats	pieces of clothing that cover the upper body but not the arms

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

Theatricals	dramatic performances on stage
Wide-ranging	covering or including a lot of things
Prolific	producing a great number of works
Vast	extremely large
Conscientious	putting a lot of effort, dedicated
Dutiful	doing everything that he could
Heiress	woman who had received a lot of money from another person, especially an older member of the same family, when that person died
Set up	established, started
Afresh	again in a new way
Mature	advanced, older
Phase	period, stage
Critical	expressing his disagreement or disapproval
Uncompromising	not easily changed, not flexible
Serves	is of use to, helps
Debtors	people who owed money

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

Dramatisation	novel story, fictional drama
Eat out	completely consume or destroy
Sincere	honest
Sets the tone	describes the particular mood or message
Adored	very much loved and admired
Passages	parts
Going on tour	giving performances in various places
Rapturous	expressing great pleasure or enthusiasm
Applause	the sound of people hitting their hands together to show enjoyment
Emotion	strong feeling, passion
Bringing on	causing
Stroke	a medical condition in which poor blood flow or movement to the brain causes cell death
Adequately	in a way that is enough
Broad	very wide, including lots of thing
Canvas	range, expanse

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

Penetrating	having the ability to see into another's mind or into the nature of events
Accurate	correct, exact
Gaze	a steady, fixed look
Bureaucracy	complicated management processes organised by the government
Inhumane	without humanity, kindness, compassion or cruel
Thread	a long thin line of fabric
Simplistic	dealing with complex issues and problems as if they were much simpler than they really are
Mean-spirited	bad, cruel
Generous-hearted	generous, friendly, helpful
Gathered	understood
Firsthand	coming from personal experience
Word got round	it became known
Erupt	explode or break out suddenly
Theatre-goers	people who frequently went to the theatre

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Clap	make a short loud noise by hitting their hands together
Cheer	give loud shouts of approval and excitement
Confined	limited
Literate	those who could read
Instalments	parts, episodes
Gripping	very interesting and exciting
Exaggeration	a statement that represents it as better than it really is
Street sweepers	people whose job was to clean the streets
Long-lasting	continuing for a long time
Relish	enjoyment
Expertise	high level of knowledge or skill
Highlight	show, emphasise
Moving on	continuing
Survived	lived after his death
Out of date	no longer good enough or sufficient

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Curiosities	unusual and interesting facts
Subsequent	following
Sweeps	extents or stretches
Sum up	give a summary or review
Institution	organisation
Contemporary	living at the same time
Posterity	future generations
Summed it up	gave a summary or review of it
Butterfingers	someone who keeps on dropping a ball or anything else
Flummoxed	put into a panic or a confusion by something
Give you the creeps	cause a feeling of fear
Synonymous	having the same meaning
Garish	unpleasantly bright
Dazzling	so bright that it blinds you
Vanish	disappear

The Inimitable Charles Dickens

Evermore for ever

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Pick up buy

We'd love to get your feedback on this episode.

What did you like? What could we do better?

What did you struggle to understand?

Let us know in the forum community.leonardoenglish.com