



Charles John Huffam Dickens

7 February 1812

Portsmouth, England

Biography

- The second of eight children to John Dickens a clerk in the [Navy Pay Office](#) at Portsmouth, and his wife, Elizabeth .
- When he was five, the family moved to [Chatham, Kent](#). In 1822, when he was ten, the family relocated to 16 Bayham Street, [Camden Town](#), in London.
- the 12-year-old Dickens had begun [working](#) ten-hour days at Warren's [Blacking Warehouse](#)



First work

- Although Dickens eventually attended the Wellington House Academy in North London
- In May 1827, Dickens began work, in the law office of Ellis and Blackmore, as a clerk In May 1827, Dickens began work, in the law office of Ellis and Blackmore, as a clerk. It was a junior position, but, as an articled clerk In May 1827, Dickens began work, in the law office of Ellis and Blackmore, as a clerk. It was a junior position, but, as an articled clerk, Dickens would eventually qualify for admission In May 1827, Dickens began work, in the law office of Ellis and Blackmore, as a clerk. It was a junior position, but, as an articled clerk, Dickens would eventually qualify for admission to the Bar, and it was there that he gleaned his detailed knowledge of legal processes of the period.
- At the age of seventeen, he became a court stenographer and, in 1830, met his first love, Maria Beadnell. It is believed that she was the model for the

Journalism and early novels

- In 1834, Dickens became a political journalist, reporting on parliamentary debate and travelling across [Britain](#) by [stagecoach](#) to cover election campaigns for the [Morning Chronicle](#).
- His journalism, in the form of sketches which appeared in periodicals from 1833, formed his first collection of pieces [Sketches by Boz](#) which were published in 1836 and led to the serialization of his first novel, [The Pickwick Papers](#), in March 1836.
- Also in 1836, Dickens accepted the job of editor of [Bentley's Miscellany](#).
- At the same time, his success as a novelist continued, producing [Oliver Twist](#) (1837-39), [Nicholas Nickleby](#) (1838-39), [The Old Curiosity Shop](#) and, finally, [Barnaby Rudge: A Tale of the Riots of 'Eighty](#) as part of the [Master Humphrey's Clock](#) series (1840-41)—all published in monthly instalments before being made into

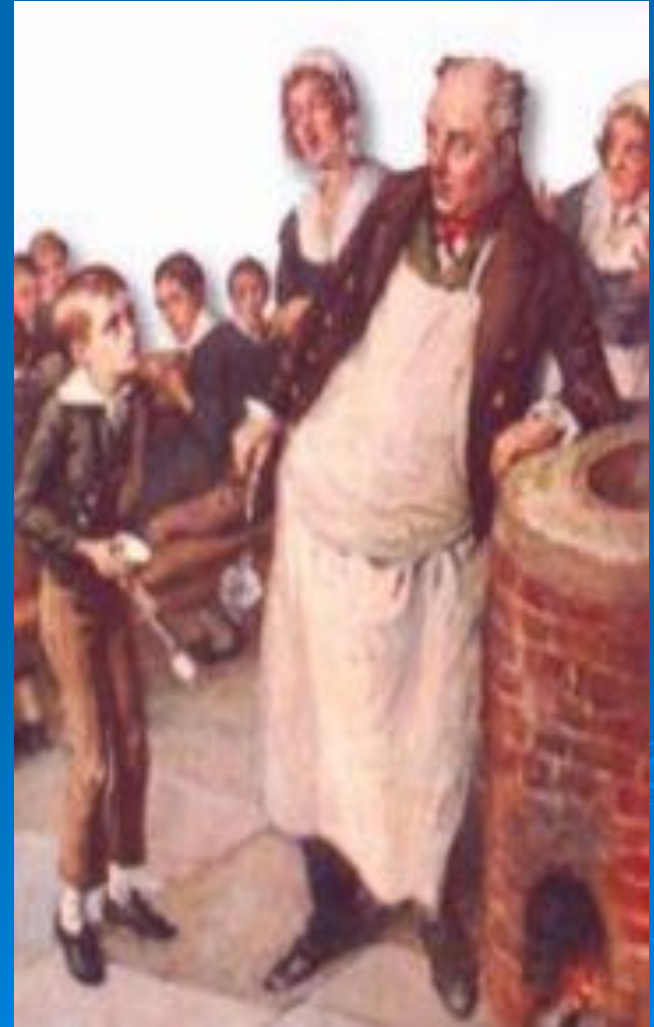


- After living briefly abroad in Italy (1844) and Switzerland (1846), Dickens continued his success with
- *Dombey and Son* (1848);
- *David Copperfield* (1849-50);
- *Bleak House* (1852-53);
- *Hard Times* (1854);
- *Little Dorrit* (1857);
- *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859);
- *Great Expectations* (1861).
- Dickens was also the publisher and editor of, and a major contributor to, the journals *Household Words* (1850 – 1859) and *All the Year Round* (1858-1870).



Literary style

- Dickens's writing style is florid and poetic, with a strong comic touch. His satires Dickens's writing style is florid and poetic, with a strong comic touch. His satires of British aristocratic snobbery—he calls one character the "Noble Refrigerator"—are often popular. Many of his character's names provide the reader with a hint as to the roles played in advancing the storyline, such as Mr. Murdstone in the novel *David Copperfield*, which is clearly a combination of "murder" and stony coldness. His literary style is also a mixture of fantasy Dickens's writing style is florid and poetic, with a strong comic touch. His satires of British aristocratic snobbery—he calls one character the "Noble Refrigerator"—are often popular. Many of his character's names



Last years

- In 1868 his second American reading tour.
- in New York, he gave 22 readings at [Steinway Hall](#) between 9 December 1867 and 20 April 1868
- at [Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims](#) between 16 January and 21 January 1868.
- Dickens boarded his ship to return to Britain on 23 April 1868, barely escaping a [Federal Tax Lien](#) against the proceeds of his lecture tour.
- During 1869 readings continued, in England, Scotland, and Ireland, until at last he collapsed, showing symptoms of mild [stroke](#). Dickens's final public readings took place in London in 1870.
- He suffered another stroke on 8 June at Gad's Hill, after a full day's work on *Edwin Drood*, and five years to the day after the Staplehurst crash, on 9 June 1870, he died at his home in Gad's Hill Place.



Museums and festivals

- There are museums and festivals celebrating Dickens's life and works in many of the towns with which he was associated.
- The [Charles Dickens Museum](#), in Doughty Street, [Holborn](#) is the only one of Dickens's London homes to survive. He lived there only two years but in that time wrote *The Pickwick Papers*, *Oliver Twist*, and *Nicholas Nickleby*. It contains a major collection of manuscripts, original furniture and memorabilia.
- **Charles Dickens' Birthplace Museum** in [Portsmouth](#) is the house in which Dickens was born. It has been re-furnished in the likely style of 1812 and contains Dickens memorabilia.
- The **Dickens House Museum** in [Broadstairs](#) in Broadstairs is the house of Miss [Mary Pearson Strong](#) in Broadstairs is the house of Miss Mary Pearson Strong, the basis for Miss [Betsey Trotwood](#) in *David Copperfield*. It is visible across the bay from the original Bleak House (also a museum until 2005) where *David Copperfield* was written. The museum contains memorabilia, general Victoriana and some of Dickens's letters. Broadstairs has held a **Dickens Festival** annually since 1937.
- The **Charles Dickens Centre** in Eastgate House, [Rochester](#) in Eastgate House, Rochester, closed in 2004, but the garden containing the author's Swiss [chalet](#) is still open.



Dickens Festival

Dickens Festival in [Rochester, Kent](#). **Summer Dickens** is held at the end of May or in the first few days of June, it commences with an invitation only ball on the Thursday and then continues with street entertainment, and many costumed characters, on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Christmas Dickens is the first weekend in December- Saturday and Sunday only. The **Riverside Dickens Festival** in [Riverside, California](#), includes literary studies as well as entertainments

