STM Knowledge Organiser

Core Knowledge (Charles Dickens)

Charles Dickens is a British novelist who lived between 1812-1870.

Dickens used his writing to present the unjust side of London life. Some of which he had experienced first hand.

He was the author of 15 major novels, but also wrote short stories and individual essays and articles.

He began his career writing short sketches of everyday people and signing them 'Boz'. He published 'Sketches by Boz' in 1833

Dickens first novel 'The Pickwick Papers' was published in 1836 when Dickens was 24.He released it in instalments in a magazine (serialised)

Other serialised novels include Bleak House (1852-53) Hard Times (1854) The Tale of Two Cities (1859) Great Expectations (1861) David Copperfield (1849-50) Oliver Twist (1837-1838) Martin Chuzzlewit (1842-44) Barnaby Rudge (1841)

His other popular novels are Nicholas Nickleby (1838), The Old Curiosity Shop (1840), Our Mutual Friend (1864) and his most popular novel A Christmas Carol (1843)

His fifteenth novel 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood' (1870) was only half written when he died.

Core Knowledge (Social and Historical context)

In the 1800s (the Victorian era) there was a large divide between the rich and the poor.

The Industrial Revolution (1760-1840). The manufacturing of goods moved to large factories in cities. It was a time of technological advancement. More people moved to the cities to find work, causing overcrowding.

The Poor Law Amendment Act (1835). This ensured that the poor were housed in workhouses. The workhouses became known as 'prisons for the poor' as conditions were unbearable.

Ragged schools (1844). set up by a charitable organisation to provide free education to the poor.

Religion and Christmas were very important to the Victorians. Christmas was transformed in the 1800s with card sending, the eating of the turkey feast, decorations and gift giving. It all centred around the family.

Core Knowledge (Dickens' Texts)

- Coketown extract from '**Hard Times**'. (1854) **Alliteration, personification, similes and repetition** to depict Coketown as a dirty, polluted industrial city.

- '**Martin Chuzzlewit**' (1842-44) extracts on Mr Pecksniff, Mr Pinch and Mrs Gamp. To analyse Dicken's **caricature** style of writing. The use of **exaggerated description** highlights not only their appearance but also their personality, good or bad and achieves **Comic effect.**

- '**Oliver Twist**' **(1837-38)** Use of **emotive language** to create sympathy for the orphan, Oliver. **Imagery and powerful adjectives** present Oliver's life as insufferable.

- Nancy's murder in '**Oliver Twist**' and the **Penny Dreadful** use the style of **Victorian Melodrama** (shock and horror)

- '**Nicholas Nickleby**' (1839) and '**Hard Times**' -**adjectives** and **imagery** describe the poor conditions of ragged schooling, with corrupt teachers and exploitation of students.

- Dickens' **speech about schools** (1857). **persuasive techniques, imperatives, listing, emotive language** to highlight how schools need to improve.

- '**A Christmas Carol**' (1843) critiques the idea of social awareness, Christian values and equal spread of wealth.

Core Knowledge (descriptive writing)

Dickens uses a range of techniques to engage and inflnce the reader. These examples are from a description of Coketown in 'Hard Times':

Aliiteration: **melancholy madness**

Personification: **out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves.**

Similes: **like the head of an elephant**

Repetition: **went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work,**

Metaphor: **vast piles of building.**

Key Vocabulary

Poverty	*Being poor*
Squalor	*Dirty, unpleasant conditions*
unemployed	*Having no paid employment*
prejudice	*Dislike (for no fair reason)*
Victorians	*People who lived between 1837-1901*
disease	*An illness or unhealthy condition*
society	*A community of people*
caricature	*An amusing or exaggerated picture.*
workhouse	*A public institution in which the poor were housed, clothed and fed in return for hard work.*