



English KO: Know it...

- Victorians believed poverty was a result of sinfulness or not working hard enough (idleness). They sought to punish the poor for this reason.
- The workhouse offered cruel and harsh treatment (such as little food and long, monotonous work), to discourage people from seeking help from the state and encourage independence.
- Oliver is a victim of the Victorian attitudes to poverty and the cruelty of the workhouse in the beginning of the novel. He is seen to challenge the social divide and punished for this.
- Dickens paints a picture of children who have had to grow up quickly through their clothing, speech and behaviour – poverty has forced them into crime which has taken away their childhood innocence, in contrast to Oliver at the beginning.
- Oliver sees everyone as ultimately good and doesn't have a sense of self preservation, whereas all of the boys in Fagin's gang look out for themselves first and foremost. This could be their natural character or their experiences – nature vs nurture.
- Nancy symbolises the Victorian attitudes towards women as virtuous or fallen. She evokes sympathy despite being a prostitute and is shown as someone who has morality even in her limited circumstances. She is self-destructive and rejects the offer of help, due to her shame.
- Bill Sikes represents the ultimate consequences of poverty as the antagonist of the novel. He is so far involved in crime that he has lost all sense of ethical or moral behaviour. He shows that being treated cruelly in a world dominated by social class leads to brutality and a disregard for human life.
- Rose represents selfless charity and the possibility of bridging the social divide as she herself benefits from the actions of someone from a higher social class. She is symbolic of virtue and goodness; an idealised Victorian woman in contrast to Nancy. She shows the potential for a kinder society without social class as a defining factor.

Grammar – parts of a simple sentence (Verbs; nouns; adjectives; articles; prepositions)



Say it... benefit,

authority, legislate, significant, reside, consequent, principle, compensate, outcome, welfare, domestic, sufficient, motive, adequate, antagonist, innocence, Bildungsroman, social critique, pathetic fallacy, archetype, denouement, Dickensian, brutality, dichotomy,



Prove it...

- 1) 10 Multiple choice questions.
- 2) How far do you blame Nancy for what happens to Oliver?
- 3) How does Dickens show the damaging effects of poverty on the characters in the novel?
- 4) A description contrasting the world of poverty and the world of wealth in Victorian London.



Link it...

Child hero in Year 7 novel,
Women's roles in year 7
Shakespeare,
Romantic poetry in Year 9,
A Christmas Carol in year 10

