

Student Essay on A Biography of Charles Dickens

A Biography of Charles Dickens

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Contents

[Student Essay on A Biography of Charles Dickens.....1](#)

[Contents.....2](#)

[Essay.....3](#)

Essay

Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

The best-loved novelist of the Victorian age, Charles Dickens was born on February 7, 1812, at Landport. From 1816 to 1821 the family lived in Chatham, where Charles received elementary schooling and read ferociously in the works of other novelists. As a child, Dickens had a rough childhood. He acquired not only a determination to rise above all danger of poverty, but also a sympathy for the poor and unprivileged, especially children. At the age of fifteen he began to write in several magazines and newspapers. Having almost discovered his ability as a novelist, Dickens devoted himself to his literary career. His first novel was *Oliver Twist*, a book openly committed to the purpose of reform, by displaying the iniquitous administration of the poor-laws. His next novel, *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-39) showed the development of his characteristics. Not yet thirty and Dickens was unquestionably the most popular author in England. He was making loads of money, and had become a familiar figure in literary and social circles. Somewhat over-dressed and over-dramatic in appearance, he possessed enough energy and enthusiasm to overcome all obstacles. Charles Dickens went on to write fifteen major novels. In his old age he ignored that his health was over-strained, but he still persisted with all his activities. On June 8, 1870, he suffered a stroke of apoplexy, and died the next evening.

Dickens had the mysterious creative genius that linked him with Chaucer and Shakespeare- the power of making people who came to life in the reader's head. Literally hundreds of his characters assume the illusion of reality, many of them only being minor characters. He laughed and cried with and characters and as a result, he can still effect readers of every type, from childhood to old age.