

# *Great Expectations*

*Charles Dickens*



## Dickens' Childhood

- born in a humble background in 1812
- witnessed his parents constantly struggle against poverty
- father imprisoned for debt (debtor's prison)



## Dickens' Childhood

- at age 11 worked in a sweatshop (shoe polish warehouse) to help pay the family bills
- family was constantly on the move, lived in both Kent and London (two major settings in the novel)

*Dumbledore*

## Education and Career

- he had a patchy education, partly homeschooled by his social-climbing mother, partly at a brutal school for boys
- at 15, he became a junior legal clerk



*Disraeli*

## Education and Career

- at 17, he became a legal reporter
- this started him on a career towards journalism ...



## First Success

Because of his connections with the newspapers and magazines, he was able to publish his first novel The Pickwick Papers, in 1836.



## First Success

- It was a great success and made him a household name in Victorian England.

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- Because of The Pickwick Papers, he was able to become a full-time writer.

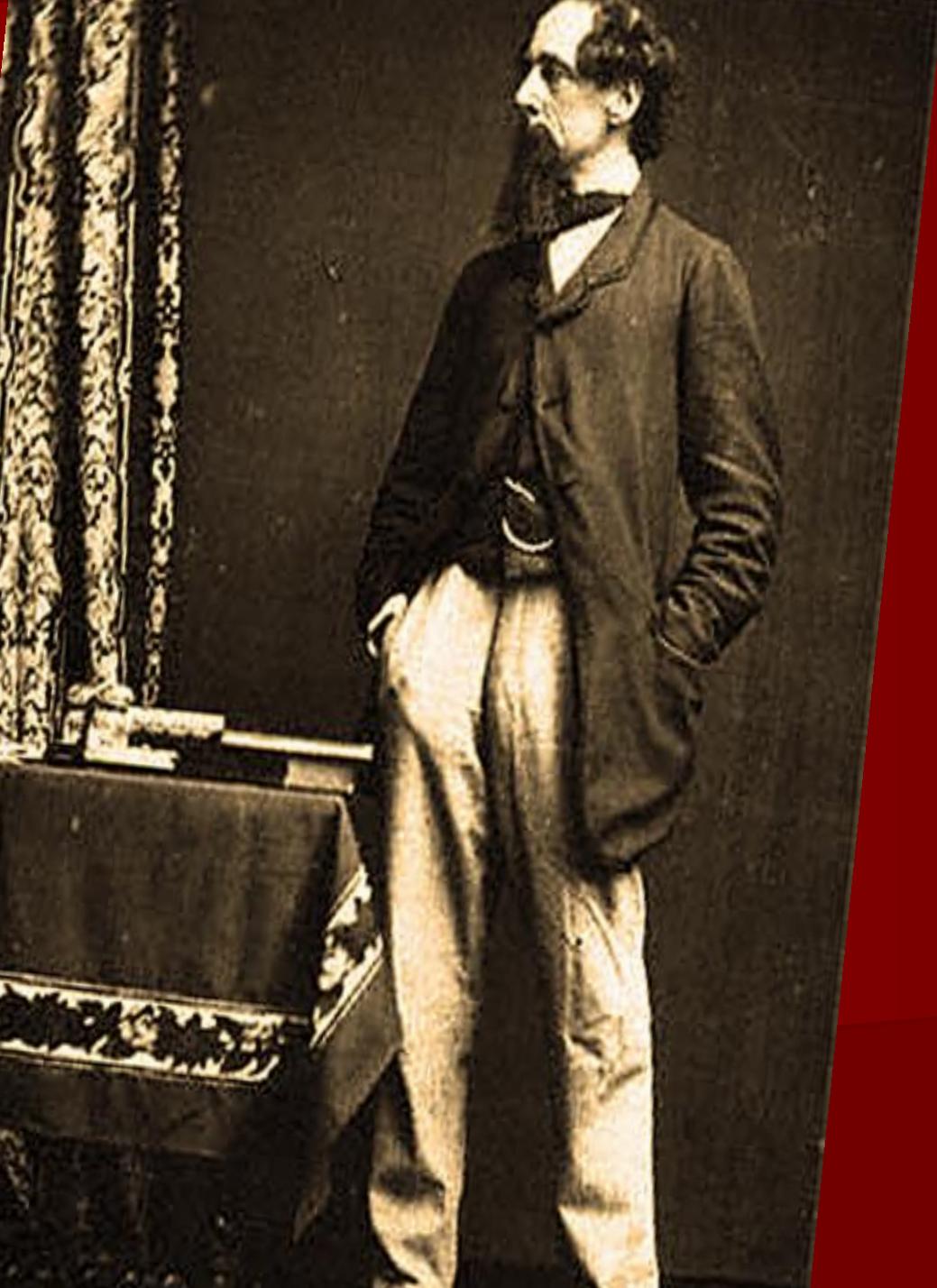


# Dickens' Life and Audience

- Dicken's two most autobiographical novels are David Copperfield and Great Expectations.
- In his life, he enjoyed wealth, fame, and popularity, but he was always a restless genius, always searching, never satisfied, always hoping for something better around the corner.

# Dickens' Life and Audience

- he wrote for serial publications in popular magazines
- all of his novels appeared in parts (like weekly or monthly episodes) people looked forward to buying their copy to find out "what happens next"



## Victorian Society

- As Dickens wrote, England was changing as well.
- **rigid class system**
- Each "class" had its own manners and customs, even ways of dressing, which could not be easily learned by an outsider.

# Victorian Society

- Making money through business would not automatically make someone a member of the "upper class". It also had to do with your family and your history.



# Victorian Society

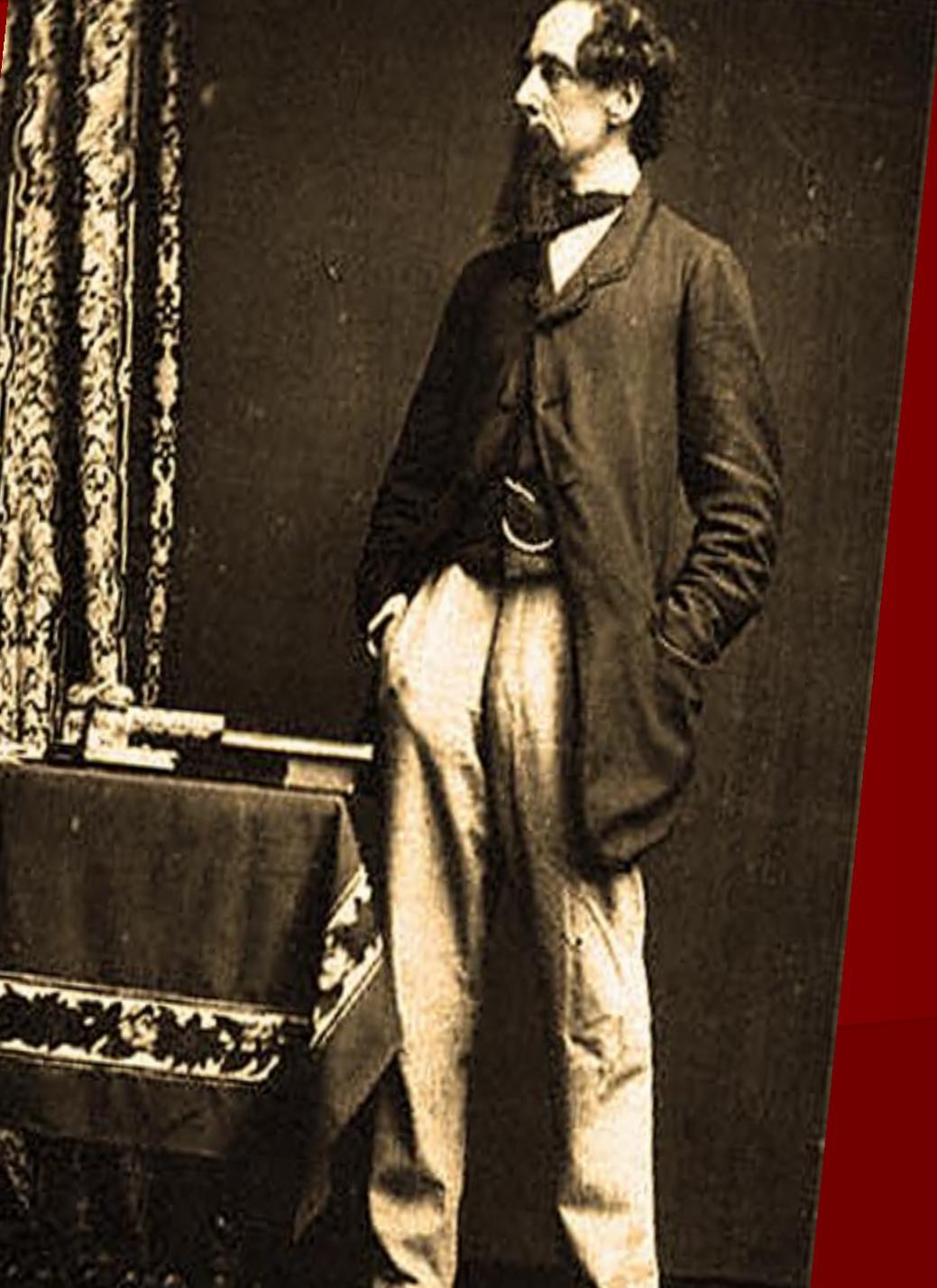
- The emerging "middle class" and the aspiring "working class" viewed each other with suspicion, and both were looked down on by the "upper class."
- Dickens understood what it was like to be a part of one class financially and another class by birth.





Though Victorian England was a time of many advances in technology and science, many social problems emerged during these years. Some of the problems that Dickens saw at the worst were:

- public education
- public health and sanitation
- the prison system and the courts



- At times when Dickens visited America, he gave speeches to try to set up **copyright laws**, and he also spoke out opposing **slavery**.



# Great Expectations

- ▶ Great Expectations is written in **first person** point of view.
- ▶ The name of the main character **Pip** is one of the many **symbols** in the book. The word "pip" was another word for a **seed**, *something that would flourish and grow.*

# Great Expectations

## Themes

- ▶ money and its effect on people
  - ▶ class and snobbery
- ▶ guilt and broken dreams (disillusionment)
  - ▶ justice and the law
  - ▶ love and forgiveness

# Great Expectations

## Themes (continued)

- ▶ revenge (payback)
- ▶ pursuit and mystery
- ▶ death and loneliness
- ▶ childhood (past influences the present)

