

Charles Dickens

- Born 1812/Died 1870
- Age 12 went to work in shoe polish factory because his father was in debtor's prison
- Wrote about what he saw and heard in English society
- REFORMIST WRITER – wrote about the bad things in English society so change would occur and improve life for the poor
- Pen name = Boz
- Married with 10 kids
- Well known and liked as author during his lifetime
- Many character in his books were real people from his life with different names
- Other Works:
 - David Copperfield
 - Oliver Twist
 - A Tale of Two Cities
 - The Pickwick Papers

The Victorian Age

- London was the largest city in the world
- Most people worked in factories, 12 hours a day for pennies
- A time when the rich became richer, the poor became poorer
 - 90% poor (factory workers)
 - 5% middle class (craftsmen and merchants)
 - 5% rich (factory owners and land owners)
- Poor sanitation/much disease
- No public education --only those who could pay went to school
- Named for Queen Victoria of England

The Industrial Revolution

- Steam power replaces man, animal and wind power
- machines now do the work of men and animals
- England changed from an agricultural society to an industrial one
- Caused major air and water pollution
- People moved from the countryside to the cities to work in the factories
- Created slum areas in the cities where industry was located
- Children as young as 4 worked in factories
- Many were injured or killed working in factories
- Factories were dangerous and the work was hard

Workhouses and Poorhouses

- People sent here for minor crimes and/or not paying debts
- Terrible places
 - People were mistreated: overworked and underfed
 - Cold and damp in winter
 - hot in summer
 - same as prisons
 - officials who ran the workhouses were often corrupt
- people would work off their debts by working each day to reduce the amount they owed by a set amount (usually a few cents a day)
- orphans were sent to workhouses to pay for their food and shelter
- 49,000 children under 16 were in workhouses during the 1800's
- people who could not support themselves could go to workhouses voluntarily, but most would rather live on the streets or die