

Charles Dickens A TALE OF TWO CITIES

Set in Paris and London at the time of the French Revolution, this is the story of two men, Frenchman, Charles Darnay, and Englishman, Sydney Carton. As the Revolution and the Terror begins, the two men's fates bring them together in a powerful story of love, hate and revenge. We meet revolutionaries and aristocrats, and see the poverty of many in both London and Paris contrasted with the wealth of a few. *A Tale of Two Cities* is Charles Dickens's most famous historical novel.

In this reader you will find:

- Information about Charles Dickens's life
- Focus On Sections: History - The French Revolution, The Rich and the Poor, Crime and Punishment
- Glossary of difficult words
- Appreciation and Extension Activities
- B2 First Activities

Tags

Classic literature Justice Love

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Classic

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Charles Dickens

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

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Young Adult



Readers

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Charles Dickens

A TALE OF TWO CITIES



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Book brief

- 1 *A Tale of Two Cities* is a historical novel written by English author Charles Dickens in 1859 and is claimed to be one of the best-selling novels of all time.
- 2 The novel is set in London and Paris before and during the French Revolution.
- 3 It tells the story of the French Doctor Manette, released after 18 years of being a prisoner in the Bastille, and his new life in London with his daughter and her husband, Charles Darnay.
- 4 Charles Darnay wishes to break free from the horrors his family committed in France in the past, and is helped ultimately by an Englishman.
- 5 Main themes include the violence and oppression of the revolutionaries, the possibility of a new life, and the need of sacrifice.

Charles Dickens

A Tale of Two Cities

Adaptation and Activities by
Janet Borsbey and Ruth Swan

Illustrated by
Giacomo Garelli

Contents

6	Main Characters	
8	Before you Read	
10	Chapter One	Recalled to Life
18	Activities	
22	Chapter Two	The Café, the Three Men Called Jacques and the Lonely Shoemaker
30	Activities	
34	Chapter Three	The Blue Flies Buzz, Buzz, Buzz
42	Activities	
46	Chapter Four	The Marquis St. Evrémonde
54	Activities	
58	Chapter Five	The Register
66	Activities	
70	Chapter Six	East, West, South and North
78	Activities	
82	Chapter Seven	A Message from Gabelle
90	Activities	
94	Chapter Eight	'Save the Prisoner, Evrémonde!'
102	Activities	
106	Chapter Nine	A Life you Love
116	Activities	
118	Focus on...	Charles Dickens
120	Focus on...	The French Revolution – Important Events
122	Focus on...	Rich and Poor in France and England
124	Focus on...	Crime and Punishment
126	Test yourself	
127	Syllabus	

Main Characters

Mr Jarvis Lorry

An elderly businessman who works for Tellson's Bank. Mr. Lorry isn't married and is loyal and honest.



Doctor Alexandre Manette

Lucie's father and a brilliant doctor. He spent eighteen years as a prisoner in the Bastille. He's a kind, loving father whose daughter's happiness is the most important thing to him.



A French aristocrat by birth, Darnay chooses to live in England because he can't bear to be part of the cruel, unjust French social system.



Charles Darnay



Lucie Manette

A young French woman who grew up in England, because her parents were thought to be dead. Her love and kindness influence the actions of other characters in the book.



Sydney Carton

Madame Thérèse Defarge

A cruel revolutionary who hates the aristocracy. Unlike her husband Ernest, she wants revenge at all costs.



A wine shop owner and revolutionary in the poor Saint Antoine part of Paris. Before he worked as a servant for Doctor Manette. He's intelligent and a natural leader but also shows kindness.



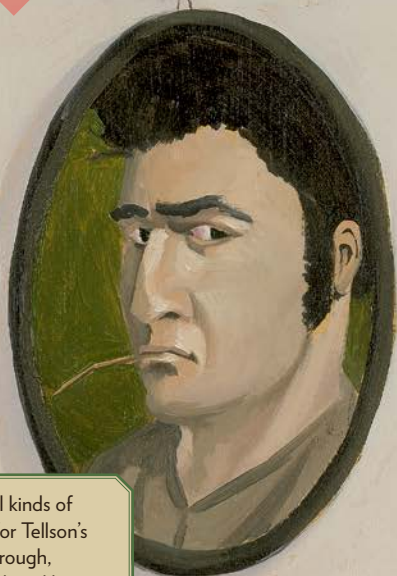
Ernest Defarge

Miss Pross

The servant who raised Lucie, Miss Pross is sharp, tough, and totally loyal to Lucie.



He does all kinds of little jobs for Tellson's Bank. He's rough, uneducated, and loses his temper easily.



Jerry Cruncher

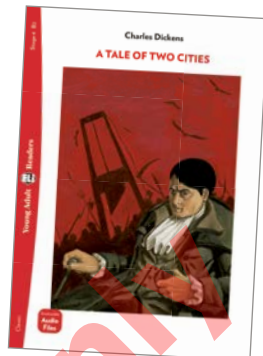
Before you Read

Grammar B2 First

- 1 Read the introduction to *A Tale of Two Cities*. Decide which answer – A, B, C or D best fits each gap.

Introduction

A Tale of Two Cities (1) first published in 1859. It was not originally published as a novel; it was (2) divided into weekly parts in a magazine, *All the Year Round*. The two cities in the (3) are Paris and London, and the story is set at the time of the French Revolution. The threat of revolution and social change was in the air all (4) Europe at the time, and the after-effects of both the French and the American Revolutions were being felt. Dickens thought that there was a chance that revolution would come to Britain, too. Critics today consider that Dickens was (5) great changes in his own life by writing about change in society. Dickens had separated from his wife the year before, after a long, unhappy (6) Furthermore, he'd left his publishers after a disagreement, and *All the Year Round* was a new magazine that he'd started. *A Tale of Two Cities* (7) one of his most popular novels and has been adapted for television, theatre, cinema and radio many times.



- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 A <input type="checkbox"/> had | B <input type="checkbox"/> was | C <input type="checkbox"/> is | D <input type="checkbox"/> were |
| 2 A <input type="checkbox"/> readily | B <input type="checkbox"/> hardly | C <input type="checkbox"/> actually | D <input type="checkbox"/> lovely |
| 3 A <input type="checkbox"/> title | B <input type="checkbox"/> page | C <input type="checkbox"/> headline | D <input type="checkbox"/> top |
| 4 A <input type="checkbox"/> that | B <input type="checkbox"/> by | C <input type="checkbox"/> in | D <input type="checkbox"/> over |
| 5 A <input type="checkbox"/> having | B <input type="checkbox"/> looking | C <input type="checkbox"/> seeing | D <input type="checkbox"/> reflecting |
| 6 A <input type="checkbox"/> wedding | B <input type="checkbox"/> marriage | C <input type="checkbox"/> relation | D <input type="checkbox"/> engagement |
| 7 A <input type="checkbox"/> remains | B <input type="checkbox"/> stays | C <input type="checkbox"/> lasts | D <input type="checkbox"/> takes |

Vocabulary

- 2** **Reporting Verbs.** Solve these anagrams to find verbs we can use to report speech. Then fill the gaps to complete the sentences with the **Past Simple** of the verbs.

	sak	'How far exactly is it?' <i>asked</i> the child.
1	masrce	'Help!' the old man
2	lyper	'Why?' she
3	erwnas	'Because it's time,' the girl
4	ryc	'Ouch! That hurt!' he
5	ousth	'Look out!' they 'There's a car!'
6	eirwphs	'Shh! They'll hear us,' the small boy

Prediction 21st Century Skills

- 3** In *A Tale of Two Cities*, a number of different places are mentioned, including the following:

- Tellson's Bank
- The Port of Dover
- The prison at La Force
- The Bastille
- The Old Bailey Court
- The George Hotel in Dover
- The prison at the Abbaye
- A café in Saint Antoine, Paris

What predictions can you make about the story from the names of these places?

- 4** The first chapter of *A Tale of Two Cities* is called *Recalled to Life*. Tick the words you expect to read. Then read and check.

death	<input type="checkbox"/>	robbery	<input type="checkbox"/>
funeral	<input type="checkbox"/>	passenger	<input type="checkbox"/>
young	<input type="checkbox"/>	king	<input type="checkbox"/>
elderly	<input type="checkbox"/>	punishment	<input type="checkbox"/>
prisoner	<input type="checkbox"/>	crime	<input type="checkbox"/>
nervous	<input type="checkbox"/>	gun	<input type="checkbox"/>

Recalled to Life

- 2 It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of stupidity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything to look forward to, we had nothing to look forward to, we were all going directly to Heaven, we were all going directly the other way – in short, it was a time much like today.

A king with a large chin and a queen with a plain face ruled England. A king with a large chin and a queen with a pretty face ruled France. Nothing had changed and nothing would change. Things would be this way forever. King George III of England and his Queen Charlotte Sophia were sure of that. King Louis XIV and his Queen Marie Antoinette were sure of that, too. It was the year 1775.

Times were hard and the people were quietly angry. Poor people *had nothing* and *were* nothing. Rich people had *everything* and were *everything*. There was justice, but justice was cruel. In France, the people were afraid: even less serious crimes were punished with terrible punishments.

In England, the people were afraid, too. Robbery and murder were common, so no-one felt there was justice. The punishments didn't

A Tale of Two Cities

seem to match the crimes: the courts didn't seem to be able to tell the difference between a thief and a murderer.

Our story starts in England, on a dark, rainy Friday night in late November, as the mail coach* was making its way to the port of Dover. It was cold and wet; the road was muddy and the horses were tired. The coach was getting heavier and heavier with the mud and now the hill was too much for them. The driver was nervous and so were the passengers: robberies were common and the Dover road was a favourite place for robbers to wait. The three passengers had no choice. They got out and began to walk up the hill in the mist and the rain, beside the coach. The mail guard looked down at his gun to check it was there.

'Listen, Joe. Can you hear that?' called the driver.

'I can't hear anything, Tom.'

'It's a horse, I'm sure it is. Get your gun and look out.'

The driver stopped the coach and the guard picked up his gun and listened. Yes, there it was! He could hear the sound of a horse in the distance and it was getting closer. 'Stop! Who's there? Stop or I'll shoot!'

'I'm looking for a passenger,' said a voice from the mist.

'What passenger?'

'Mr Jarvis Lorry.'

'That's me,' said one of the passengers. 'Is that you Jerry? What's the matter?'

'I've got a message from Tellson's Bank for you.'

'Come forward, then,' said the guard, with his finger on his gun,

coach a type of transport pulled by horses, people paid to travel by coach and coaches also took things from one place to another

‘but keep your hands where I can see them.’

The passengers hid their watches and valuable things deep inside their coats. The horse and rider came out of the mist, both were covered from head to foot in mud. The rider got off and handed Mr Lorry a piece of paper. Mr Lorry thanked him and read:

Wait at Dover for the young lady.

‘Well Jerry, tell them that my answer is *Recalled to life*.’

‘That’s a very strange answer, sir.’

‘Maybe it is, but when they hear that, they’ll know that the answer is from *me* and from no-one else. Good night.’

The coach slowly moved on again and Jerry watched until it disappeared in the mist. ‘*Recalled to life*. What kind of answer is that? Very strange. Very strange. No, Jerry, he can’t know, but that wouldn’t suit *my* sort of work!’ he said to himself.

Meanwhile, the coach moved on and Mr Lorry became lost in his dreams. He was on his way to dig someone out of a grave*. But which of the ghostly faces that he saw in his dreams was the face of the buried person? Proud, sad, angry faces, but always the face of a man of about forty-five. Tired, pale and thin, and with every hair on his head completely white. ‘Buried? How long?’ Mr Lorry repeatedly asked this ghost.

The answer was always the same ‘Eighteen years. Eighteen years.’

‘Shall I bring her to you?’ asked Mr Lorry.

Here, the answers were often different, sometimes his ghost was crying, ‘No! It’s too soon.’ sometimes impatient, ‘Take me to her,’ or sometimes confused, ‘I don’t know her, I don’t understand.’

And when the imaginary conversation finished, Mr Lorry would start to dig, dig and dig.

grave a place in the ground where you bury a dead person

A Tale of Two Cities

The words 'eighteen years' were still in his ears when he woke up. However, the shadows of the ghostly face faded away with the rising sun.

The mail coach finally arrived in Dover and stopped at The George Hotel. By this time, there was only one remaining passenger and he was wrapped up from head to toe to keep warm. He was shown to his room and the staff eagerly waited for him to re-appear, to see what their new guest looked like. He washed and changed and went down to breakfast. Mr Lorry was about sixty years old. He was dressed in a formal brown suit that was a little worn, but very well-kept. He had bright eyes and a healthy colour in his cheeks and, though his face was lined, it wasn't from worry. He sat still by the fire and waited patiently for his meal but, with the effects of the warmth from the fire and the long journey, Mr Lorry dropped off to sleep.

The noise of his breakfast arriving woke him up and he said to the waiter, 'Please get a room ready for a young lady. She could arrive at any time today. She might ask for Mr Jarvis Lorry, she might ask for a gentleman from Tellson's Bank. Please let me know when she gets here.'

Late in the evening, while Mr Lorry was finishing his dinner, he heard the sound of wheels, on the road outside. The sound stopped at the hotel, 'This is the young lady!' he said to himself.

Sure enough, the waiter came to tell him that Miss Manette had arrived from London and wanted to see the gentleman from Tellson's Bank as soon as possible.

Charles Dickens

Mr Lorry in the George Hotel in Dover
waiting for Lucie Manette to arrive.



The English Channel, between southern England and northern France, is the busiest shipping area in the world. Now, many travellers cross under the Channel by train through the Channel Tunnel that was first opened in 1994.

Beauvais is in northern France about 75 km north of Paris.

Miss Manette was still wearing her travelling coat and holding her hat, when Mr Lorry went into her sitting room. She was a pretty young lady, about seventeen years old and with blonde hair and blue eyes. For a tiny moment, he thought she looked like the child that he'd once held in his arms, protecting her from the wind and rain, while crossing the Channel from France. Then the thought disappeared from his mind and he kissed her hand.

'Please sit down,' she said.

Her voice was clear and pleasant and you could only just tell that she was French, not English. 'I received a letter saying something about a discovery about my poor father. My long dead father, who I never saw. The letter mentioned going to Paris but, as I'm alone in the world, I asked if I could go with a gentleman from Tellson's to protect me and help me.'

'Myself, Miss.'

'Yes, so they sent a message to you, to ask if you'd be kind enough to wait for me. They said you'd tell me some news and that some of it might be surprising to me. What news have you got for me? I'm very interested to know.'

'It's difficult to know where to begin. I'm a man of business and my story concerns one of our customers in France. It was twenty years ago and he was a French gentleman and a Doctor, like your father. Also like your father, he was from Beauvais and was well-respected in Paris. At that time, I was working in our French bank and I'd been working there for many years. The doctor married an English lady and ...'

'But this is my father's story, sir. Do I know you? I'm beginning to



think I do. My mother only lived a few years after my father died. Was it you who brought me to England? I'm almost sure it was. Please tell me.'

'Yes, it was me, and Tellson's Bank have been looking after you ever since. But this isn't the whole of my story. What if your father, Doctor Manette, didn't die when you think he did? What if he'd just disappeared? What if he'd been taken away? Perhaps no-one knew where to, although it'd have been easy to guess. What if his wife had asked and asked and asked for help to find him? If she'd asked everyone possible, even the king and queen, but no-one told her? In that case, my story wouldn't be your father's story, but the story of my doctor from Beauvais.'

'Please tell me more. I'm a little afraid, but I have to know the truth.'

'Good. You're a brave young lady and you need to be. I'll go on. His wife had a baby. Yes, a girl. Then, two years later, his wife died, I believe broken-hearted, after never stopping to search for him. However, she hadn't wanted her child to suffer as she'd suffered, so she let the girl believe both parents were dead. Now, this story *does* become your father's story and I have to tell you, that he's been found. He has another name, but he's alive. He's been in prison all these years, not dead as you were told. He's changed a lot and he's no longer the man he once was but, Miss Manette, the truth is he really is alive. He's been taken to the house of an old servant in Paris and we're going to go there to see him. This is a secret mission, Miss. We mustn't let anyone know his true identity or he'll be in terrible danger. My job is to identify him, if I can, and yours is to look after him and bring him back to health.'

A Tale of Two Cities

Miss Manette's face went white. She gripped* Mr Lorry's hand and began to faint. 'I'm going to see his ghost, not him. His ghost!'

Mr Lorry called for help and immediately a large, wild-looking woman ran into the room and pushed him back against the wall. She was very red in the face and had a strange hat on her head. Mr Lorry wasn't even sure if she was a woman or a man, she was so strong.

'What have you done, you in brown? Couldn't you tell her what you had to without frightening her to death? Do you call that being a banker?'

Mr Lorry was confused and didn't really know how to answer, but then, shouting at the servants, the wild woman went on, 'Don't just stand there you lazy lot. Go and fetch some water for my young lady!'

Despite his confusion, Mr Lorry was impressed by the woman's care and attention for Miss Manette. 'I very much hope you'll be coming to France with Miss Manette, Madam,' he said.

'If nature had intended me to go across salt water, do you think I'd have been born on an island?'

Mr Lorry thought about this for a moment and, not really knowing how to answer this question either, he decided it'd be better to leave. He left the room, still thinking about it.

grip take and keep a firm hold of

Reading Comprehension

1 Put these nine events into the order they appear in Chapter One.

- A** ☐ He handed over a message to one of the travellers, a Mr Lorry.
- B** ☐ Miss Manette felt faint and a lady with a red face looked after her.
- C** ☐ Mr Lorry asked a servant there to tell him as soon as a lady called Miss Manette arrived.
- D** ☐ Mr Lorry then gave a message for the man to take to Tellson's Bank.
- E** ☐ Mr Lorry told her that her father was still alive.
- F** ☐ The coach finally arrived at The George Hotel in Dover.
- G** ☐ The mail coach was travelling to Dover.
- H** ☐ A man on a horse stopped the coach.
- I** ☐ When the lady arrived, she asked to speak to Mr Lorry immediately.

Vocabulary

2 Look again at the first page of Chapter One. Find words that mean the same as the words/phrases below. The words are in the same order in the text.

- 1** wait for excitedly
- 2** governed
- 3** certain
- 4** difficult
- 5** silently
- 6** frightened
- 7** horrible
- 8** killing
- 9** often happened

Vocabulary and Writing

- 3 A** Complete the sentences by forming a noun from the adjectives given.

- It was the season of*darkness*....., but also the season of*light*.....
dark, light
- 1 It was the age of, but also the age of
wise, stupid
- 2 It was the spring of, it was the winter of
hopeful, despairing
- 3 There was a system, but it was known for its
just, cruel
- 4 People in Paris and in London suffered in
poor
- 5 The courts didn't seem to be able to tell the
between a thief and a murderer.
different
- 6 is important to this mission.
secret
- 7 You must bring your father back to
healthy

- 3 B** Choose one of the following things to do. Write a paragraph about it.

a wise thing to do • a stupid thing to do
a just thing to do • a healthy thing to do

Speaking

21st Century Skills

- 4** Discuss the following questions in pairs.

- 1 Have you ever travelled on horseback or in a horse-drawn vehicle? What was it like?
- 2 Imagine travelling by coach in November 1775. What might the dangers be?
- 3 Have you ever travelled by boat? What was it like?
- 4 Imagine travelling by sea in November 1775. What might the dangers be?
- 5 Is there a capital city in the world that you'd like to visit?
- 6 Is there a means of transport that you've never tried, but would like to try?

