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# Charles Dickens

Today we're going to talk about Charles Dickens...in just a minute.

Charles John Huffam Dickens was born on February 7, 1812, in Portsmouth, England. He is generally considered the greatest novelist of the Victorian era as well as the first to achieve fame during his lifetime. His stories weren't originally published as books; they were serialized, or released a little bit at a time in inexpensive literary journals. Serialization made his work available to a wider audience, who awaited each new release with excitement.

Dickens's stories often focus on societal changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution, and many take place in grim settings like prisons and orphanages, where characters face constant challenges. Some of these tales were inspired by his own experience: when he was a child, his father was sent to a debtors' prison, and he had to work long hours in a factory to help support his family.

Despite their often bleak settings, Dickens's novels are also filled with humor, possibility, and vivid language. He created unforgettable characters who have become part of our vocabulary—like Scrooge, the cold-hearted miser in *A Christmas Carol* whose name is now used to describe any greedy or grouchy person. Even Dickens's own name has entered our language; the term "Dickensian" implies dirty, impoverished conditions like those in his novels. But when a piece of writing is described as Dickensian, that usually means it is rich with description, humor, and keen observations about society.

How do you think Charles Dickens's work has influenced other writers?