

# How do I revise for my Dickens exam?

1. Re-read the book! If you already have, that's great; you can always read it again. There's no substitute for knowing the text well – it will allow you to reference the book more effectively and to answer the question more precisely and these are both essential for this exam. Try to actively read the book: this means annotating, highlighting, making notes as you go.

*NB: as Great Expectations is long and time consuming, re-reading key chapters is sufficient. Ask your teacher for pointers if you need them.*

2. Get organised! You have lots of stuff on the book already. Find it. Sort it. And use it.
3. Know what is going on. Produce mind maps/summaries of each stave or chapter. Know what happens and when it happens and also why it's important. Being able to write confidently about the order of events and the structure of the narrative will help you access the higher grades.
4. Know your Victorian British history! Make sure you have a clear view of what was going on then and what it has to do with the novel.
5. Know who is who... and know why they are important to the novel. What do they all represent? Many of Dickens' characters (particularly minor ones) are there to symbolise or represent one of the writer's ideas. Practice writing 5 bullet points for each character (start with personality/appearance/what the others think of them) and find 5 (minimum) key quotes for them. Put the quotes on a big sheet of paper and stick it on your bedroom wall-AND LOOK AT IT!
6. Be clear on the themes. There are lots of themes, symbols and motifs used in Dickens' work know what they are, why they're important and which characters have something to do with them. Again, practice writing bullet points and find relevant quotes.
7. Learn some quotes. Don't forget you can't take your book into the exam. Get some cue cards-write 5 key quotes for each theme and each character on them and learn them! On the bus, in the car, just before bed...you get the idea. Stick them in your bag and take them with you, everywhere you go. Encourage friends to do the same and test each other.
8. Plan some essays. Time yourself: spend ten/fifteen minutes writing down and then organising your ideas for different practice questions. Use the examples provided in this email to get you started.