

## Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> Jan – Background Information

Almost 200 years ago, Charles Dickens wrote a story about a little boy who had nothing. The boy was called Oliver Twist. He had no parents and he lived in a place called a workhouse. Only poor people lived in workhouses. It was a hard life.

Dickens' stories tell us what life was like all those years ago and he is one of the most famous writers in the English language.

Charles Dickens lived in the 1800s, the Victorian age. \ Life could be hard for children then. Many had to go out to work.

At 12, Dickens himself left school to work in a factory putting labels on pots. His dad had been sent to prison for not paying his bills, so the young Dickens worked to look after his family.

He eventually returned to school but never forgot how hard life was for poor people.

When he grew up, Dickens became a journalist and wrote for newspapers.

He also wrote stories from his own imagination, called novels.

His novels, like Oliver Twist, were often about the lives of poor people, their crowded houses and tough jobs.

Another story he wrote was 'A Christmas Carol', in which a miserable character called Ebenezer Scrooge hates Christmas. In the story, Scrooge meets three ghosts who teach him how to be kind to people.

Dickens became very famous. He travelled the country reading to crowds.

His books made readers think about the lives of the poor and the terrible conditions in the workhouses.

Today his books allow us to imagine life 200 years ago.

By making people think about characters like Oliver Twist and Scrooge, Dickens inspired changes that actually helped improve people's lives.

That's the power of a good storyteller, and Charles Dickens was one of the best.