

Pip's early experiences

The following gives you information about Pip's early experiences in the novel, what Dickens wants us to see in the characters and story and how he does this:

Think about where Pip is at the beginning and who he is. Dickens has portrayed him like this to show that he is someone who is alienated and isolated from others: he is an orphan alone in the churchyard.

Although Pip's life is by no means perfect he is quite contented with the expectation that he will become Joe's apprentice.

The chapter about the Christmas dinner and Pip's theft of the pie and other food acts as a contrast to the day-to-day lives of Pip and family.

When Pip goes to Miss Havisham's he is made to feel extremely uncomfortable. As readers we can see that although Miss Havisham is rich she is corrupt and immoral: we see this through the rottenness of her house and the brewery lying empty. She could have almost anything and yet she chooses to live like this.

The education Pip receives from Mr Wopsle's great aunt is nearly useless.

It is only when Pip comes into money that people begin to treat him with respect: many are obsequious towards him: consider in particular Mr Pumblechook and Mr Trabb. Pip goes from being referred to as a boy to being called 'sir'.

1. Use the above as a starting point to looking at Pip's character and events that happen to him.
2. Explain in more detail some of the points above; for example, why does Dickens show that the education Pip receives from Mr Wopsle's great aunt is nearly useless?
3. Find other examples through the novel and explain what they show us and how Dickens makes us see events and characters in a particular way.
4. Find quotations to prove you are right, if you can.