Great Expectations

GCSE English Literature for AQA

Great Expectations Student Book

Written for the AQA GCSE English Literature specification for first teaching from 2015, this Student Book provides in-depth support for studying Great Expectations. Exploring the Dickens' text in detail and as a whole text, this resource builds students' skills and confidence in understanding and writing about this much-loved 19th-century novel.

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- The Cambridge Elevate-enhanced Edition features additional rich digital content, including brand new videos of performances of key scenes, character and language explorations, and much more.

This book has been approved by AQA.

About the authors:
Jon Seal is an experienced teacher who has worked as a Head of English and teacher of Media Studies. He has written teacher guides published by NATE and an award-winning filmmaker, having won a Jerwood Film Shorts Prize for Back to Earth.

Series editor Peter Thomas has been involved in English curriculum development for more than 30 years. He has written for the national press, educational journals and NATE magazines on various aspects of the English curriculum and assessment.

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Either:
see Ali so unhappy. She thinks that Sam is bad for Ali. Jo is worried to will one day grow to love her. Jo is Ali’s best friend. believes that by remaining faithful and loyal, Sam to her, but Ali still thinks Sam is wonderful. Ali to show no interest in Ali and is often quite rude Ali is desperately in love with Sam. Sam seems Havisham and to see Estella.

Havisham allowed him to believe that she was his paid for by a criminal. He is also upset that Miss Havisham is ashamed that his rise in society has been Work with an editor to improve your writing. Either:

1. Improvise a conversation between Ali and Jo in which Jo gives Ali advice.
2. Working alone or in pairs, write out the dialogue between Jo and Sam as a short script of 10-15 lines. Afterwards, give the script a simple reality check: do the characters say anything you cannot imagine yourself saying?

GETTING STARTED – THE STORY AND YOU

Pip is ashamed that his rise in society has been paid for by a criminal. He is also upset that Miss Havisham allowed him to believe that she was his benefactor. What hope does he now have with Estella? He goes to Satis House to confront Miss Havisham and to see Estella.

Love and loyalty: role-play or script

Ali is desperately in love with Sam. Sam seems to show no interest in Ali and is often quite rude to her, but Ali still thinks Sam is wonderful. Ali believes that by remaining faithful and loyal, Sam will one day grow to love her. Jo is Ali’s best friend. She thinks that Sam is bad for Ali. Jo is worried to see Ali so unhappy.

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

Read the brief summaries of Chapters 44-48 to get an overview of the section you are about to explore.

1. Skim Chapters 46, 47 and 48 and find a suitable quotation to accompany the summary of these chapters.

Tip Icon

Tip: to make something up as you go along, with no planning.

Read the text for Chapters 44-48 on Cambridge Elevate.

Chapter 44
Miss Havisham admits to Pip that she led him on and Estella tells him she will marry Bentley Drummle.
‘I am as unhappy as you can ever have meant me to be.’

Chapter 45
Pip meets Wemmick, who has learned that Compeyson is pursuing Magwitch.
‘I came to what I did after hearing what I heard.’

Chapter 46
Pip discusses a plan for Magwitch’s escape.

Chapter 47
Pip’s debts pile up as he refuses to spend Magwitch’s money.

Chapter 48
Pip notices that Jaggers’s housekeeper, Molly, bears a strong resemblance to Estella.

Tip Icon

Test or Assessment

Tip Icon

Further reading

Tip Icon

Further reading

Tip Icon

Further reading

Tip Icon

Further reading

Tip Icon

Further reading

Tip Icon

Further reading
The room of Satis House. There is a fire in the grate. Estella knits. Pip stands.
Miss Havisham sits and watches.
Miss Havisham gradually withdraws her eyes and turns them on the fire. Estella continues to knit.

Miss H: What else?
Pip: Estella, you know I love you. You know that I have loved you long and dearly.

Estella raises her eyes but continues with her needlework. Miss Havisham looks between the two of them.

Pip: I should have said this sooner, but for my long mistake. It induced me to hope that Miss Havisham meant us for one another. While I thought you could not help yourself, as it were, I refrained from saying it. But I must say it now.

Estella shakes her head.

Pip: I know. I have no hope that I shall ever call you mine, Estella. I am ignorant what may become of me, how poor I may be, or where I may go. Still, I love you. I have loved you ever since I first saw you in this house.

Unmoved she shakes her head again.

Pip: It would have been cruel in Miss Havisham, horribly cruel, to practise on the susceptibility of a poor boy, and to torture me through all these years with a vain hope and an idle pursuit, if she had reflected on the gravity of what she did. But I think she did not. I think that in the endurance of her own trial, she forgot mine, Estella.

Miss Havisham puts her hand to her heart, looking by turns at Estella and at Pip.

Estella: It seems that there are sentiments, fancies - I don't know how to call them - which I am not able to comprehend. When you say you love me, I know what you mean, as a form of words; but nothing more. You address nothing in my breast, you touch nothing there. I don't care for what you say at all. I have tried to warn you of this; now, have I not?
Interpreting: surface and depths

Re-read Chapter 44, which tells of Pip’s visit to Satis House. Then carry out these activities to find out more about the thoughts and feelings of the three main characters.

Pip

1. Estella retains an ‘unmoved countenance’. She gives Pip no indication that she cares about him. Why do you think he is still in love with her?
2. Pip confesses his love to Estella in a very formal way. Write down a quotation as evidence of this.
3. Look at how Dickens presents Pip in this scene. Do you think we are being encouraged to admire him or laugh at him or feel sorry for him? Find evidence in the text to support your views.

Estella

4. Estella says: ‘When you say you love me, I know what you mean, as a form of words; but nothing more.’ Explain what you think she means by this.
5. We are now about three-quarters of the way through the novel. What information do we have about Estella so far?
6. Write a paragraph explaining what you think about Estella. You might want to use some of the following words:

  - sympathy
  - frightened
  - young
  - cold
  - proud
  - lonely
  - selfish
  - cruel
  - poor

Narrative structure

Dickens is often called a ‘master story teller’. This means he is good at making readers want to find out:

- what is going to happen next in the text (e.g. will Magwitch be caught? Will Estella agree to marry Pip?)
- the significance of some mystery in the subtext (e.g. what do Estella’s words and silences mean? Are Pip’s ‘expectations’ a good thing?)
- why do you think Dickens included this passing remark? What do you think it is intended to add to our understanding of both Molly and Estella?

In Chapter 44, Pip realises that Molly resembles Estella:

‘… I believe had some gypsy blood in her.’

Why do you think Dickens included this reference to her suspected ethnicity:

In Chapter 48, Pip realises that Molly was actually Miss Havisham’s sister.

1. In Chapter 47, Wopsle tells Pip that he saw a man sitting behind him at the theatre:

   ‘I had a ridiculous fancy that he must be with you, Mr Pip, till I saw that you were quite unconscious of him, sitting behind you there, like a ghost.’

   a. What three words does Wopsle use that make this incident seem chilling?
   b. How does this incident begin to build narrative tension as we approach the final sections of the novel?

2. In Chapter 48, Pip realises that Molly resembles Estella:

‘I looked at those hands, I looked at those eyes, I looked at that flowing hair; and I compared them with other hands, other eyes, other hair, that I knew of… And I felt absolutely certain that this woman was Estella’s mother.’

   a. How does this discovery add to the narrative tension?
   b. What does this discovery add to our understanding of Estella?

Find out more about plot and structure in Unit 11.
They both raised their eyes as I went in, and both saw an alteration in me.

Chapter 44

Earlier in this unit, you investigated what Miss Havisham and Estella might be thinking. You are now going to develop those ideas into creative writing.

1. Use your text lasso tool to choose an extract of around 300 words. This should focus on the relationships between Pip, Estella and Miss Havisham. Use the ideas and notes you have made throughout this unit to help you write your own version of the extract with either Miss Havisham or Estella as the first-person narrator.

You will need to use your knowledge and understanding of the rest of the novel to develop the character’s thoughts.

2. Write a short account of the evidence on which you based your interpretation. What was it in the novel that made you decide Miss Havisham and Estella had those particular thoughts, feelings and motives?

For an extra challenge, try and write in Dickens’s style. To help you with this, make a list of six or seven words and four or five phrases from your extract that you think are most typical of Dickens’s style. Include them in your own version.

Working with an editor

1. Swap your version of the extract with that of another student.

a. As an editor, read through your partner’s version of the extract. Write your thoughts in the margins of their work, using a different colour pen.

b. Have a meeting with your author in which you feed back some of your thoughts about their work. Authors are notoriously temperamental and moody, so you will need to be thoughtful and helpful.

c. Swap roles and allow them to comment on your piece of writing.

GETTING FURTHER

1. Dickens wrote Great Expectations to be published in his own monthly magazine so he had to write a particular number of words for each instalment. How might this have affected the style of Great Expectations? Discuss this in small groups.

2. Dickens also performed extracts of Great Expectations. In your groups, discuss which chapters from this unit would work as a dramatic reading. What qualities make it suitable for reading aloud? Would you need to cut some passages to make it work better?

3. Pip and Estella meet and he falls in love, but it takes him the rest of the novel to work out the relationship. Think about any romantic comedies you have read (or films you have seen) and discuss the parallels with Great Expectations. If you are studying Romeo and Juliet, you could use this as your text for comparison. Think about using words such as ‘narrative tension’, ‘irony’ and ‘characterisation’ in your answer.
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