

# *What is Dickens Doing?*

## An Analysis Exercise

I'd like to provide a moment for you to consider more closely how Dickens uses language to serve his overall purpose. Using a New Criticism/Formalist lens, I'd like you to isolate a moment in the text to study. You might have a particular passage in mind, or maybe just pick a page randomly. Ask yourself: What is Dickens doing here? What about attitude? Tone? Stylistic techniques? How do all of those work together to support a message? I'll give you a few minutes to select your passage (1-3 sentences is plenty when it comes to Charlie D.), and craft your statement. Here's a list of idea starters for the initial question. This list can be used for any literary author or work!

### **IS THE AUTHOR...?**

- Drawing comparisons
- Establishing or developing character
- Revealing the nature of a relationship
- Creating atmosphere
- Providing social commentary
- Being metaphorical
- Using irony
- Working with a symbol
- Complicating the plot situation
- Building emotional tension or conflict
- Genre-blurring
- Exploring the workings of the mind
- Writing in dream time/sense
- Playing on nostalgia
- Philosophizing
- Making an allusion
- Moralizing
- Presenting a paradox
- Romanticizing
- Breaking the fourth wall
- Shifting perspective
- Presenting a cosmic view of man/universe
- Reflecting religious or spiritual beliefs
- Echoing a previously established motif or theme
- Employing humor for effect
- Satirizing
- Highlighting injustice
- Using an unreliable narrator
- Paying homage to someone or something
- Downplaying/Understating
- Making a political statement
- Building on archetypes and mythology
- Shifting perspectives
- Incorporating dialect or other cultural elements
- Using evocative/visceral description
- Questioning cultural norms
- Withholding detail/using opaque narration
- Creating contrast
- Justifying
- Using and/or breaking conventions intentionally
- Utilizing structure to reinforce meaning
- Overemphasizing/Hyperbolizing

**Something else?**