



Film Worksheet 2.7

David Copperfield

Knowledge base

1. Review your knowledge of the novel.
 - a. Read the brief summary of the storyline.
 - b. Say who dies, who takes care of David, where young David is sent to work, who he runs off to, who he falls in love with and marries, who eventually becomes his wife and soul-mate.

Summary

David's mother, whom he loves very much, dies, leaving the young boy in the care of his stepfather, Mr Murdstone, and his sister Jane. Murdstone and his sister are rigid and cruel disciplinarians who care nothing for David. Murdstone soon turns the boy out of his house, sending him to work in a bottling warehouse in London. Here his landlord is a Mr Micawber who will be a true friend to the last. David suffers terribly in the factory and runs away in search of his long-lost Aunt Trotwood who lives in Dover. She accepts David into her care and his life begins to improve. He attends a good school and then finds work in a respectable firm. He falls in love with the beautiful, naïve and unpractical Dora Spenlow who he marries and he begins to experiment with writing as a career. Dora dies of an illness but David eventually remarries, finding true happiness with Agnes Wickfield, who has long been his friend and confidante but who now becomes his soul-mate.

2. The clip you will watch concerns the moment when David is sent to work in London.

- a. Who sends him to London?
- b. Who will David stay with while in London?

First impressions

3. Read the script which corresponds roughly to the text on pages 229-230 of your book.
 - a. What reasons do the Murdstones give for sending David away from home and school?
 - b. Who calls for David at the end of his day in the warehouse?

MURDSTONE: David, this is a world for action, not for moping and droning in.
 JANE MURDSTONE: As you do.
 MURDSTONE: Jane Murdstone, leave it to me, if you please.
 I say David, this is a world for action, especially so for a young boy of your disposition which requires a good deal of correcting.
 JANE MURDSTONE: Stubbornness won't do. Stubbornness must be crushed and crushed it shall be.
 MURDSTONE: Education is costly and, even if it were not and I could afford it, I am of the opinion that it would not be at all advantageous to you to be kept in school. What is before you is a fight with the world and, the sooner you begin it, the better. You are going to London, David, to begin life on your own account.

[...]

[The action shifts to London and the bottling warehouse.]

- FOREMAN: That's six shillings a week rising to seven if you prove yourself useful. Mickey here will show you the ropes.
- MICKEY: Quite the young gentleman, ain't yer? Well we'll have none of you airs round here or I'll throw you in the cellar with the rats. You'll have to be quicker than that, little gent.
- MICAWBER: Copperfield?



David Copperfield
(see film clip
on the Class Video DVD)

In more detail

Shots and montage

Conclusions

4. Watch the clip for the first time.

- a. What is David's job in the warehouse?
- b. What kind of a place is it? How can you tell?
- c. Are most of the workers children or adults?

5. Watch the clip again. There are two main sequences.

- a. In the first sequence, what kind of shots are mainly used? How is attention focused on speech of Mr Murdstone, particularly as it reaches its terrible conclusion?
- b. In the second sequence at the warehouse, which technique is used to pass from one shot to another? What does it infer about the day in the factory?

- #### 6. Compare and contrast the text in your book with the film clip. Focus on
- the work environment.
 - David's behaviour and feelings.

Which paints a darker picture — the film or the novel?