

Study Guide prepared by
Catherine Bush
Barter Playwright-in-Residence

Great Expectations

Adapted by Catherine Bush from Charles Dickens's novel

*Especially for Grades 7-12

Gilliam Stage at Barter Theatre – Fall, 2018

(NOTE: standards included for reading *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, seeing a performance of the play, and completing the study guide.)

Virginia SOLs

English – 7.1, 7.4, 7.5, 7.7, 7.9, 8.2, 8.4, 8.5, 8.7, 8.9, 9.1, 9.3, 9.4, 9.6, 9.8, 10.3, 10.4, 10.6, 10.8, 11.3, 11.6, 11.8, 12.1, 12.3, 12.4, 12.6

Theatre Arts – 7.6, 7.18, 7.20, 8.5, 8.12, 8.18, 8.22, TI.10, TI.11, TI.13, TI.17, TII.6, TII.9, TII.12, TII.15, TII.17, TIII.11, TIII.12, TIV.12, TIV.13

Tennessee/North Carolina Common Core State Standards

English Language Arts – Reading Literacy: 7.1, 7.4, 7.7, 7.10, 8.1, 8.4, 8.6, 8.7, 8.10, 9-10.1, 9-10.4, 9-10.6, 9-10.9, 9-10.10, 11-12.1, 11-12.4, 11-12.7, 11-12.10

English Language Arts – Writing: 7.1, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 8.1, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 9-10.1, 9-10.7, 9-10.8, 9-10.9, 11-12.1, 11-12.7, 11-12.8, 11-12.9

Tennessee State Standards

Theatre 6-8 – 7.1, 7.2 **Theatre 9-12** – 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2

North Carolina Essential Standards

Theatre Arts – 7.A.1, 7.AE.1, 7.CU.1, 8.A.1, 8.AE.1, 8.CU.1, 8.CU.2, B.C.1, B.C.2, B.A.1, B.AE.1, B.CU.1, B.CU.2, I.A.1, I.AE.1, I.CU.2, P.C.1, P.A.1, P.AE.1, A.C.2, A.A.1, A.AE.1

Setting

A village on the marshes of Kent as well as various locations in London, England. The 1830's.



Characters

Phillip Pirrip “Pip” – a poor boy who lives near the marshes of Kent

Magwitch – an escaped convict

Joe – a blacksmith and Pip’s brother-in-law

Mrs. Joe – Pip’s much older sister

Uncle Pumblechook – Pip’s great-uncle

Miss Havisham – a rich old woman

Estella - Miss Havisham’s protégé, spoiled and cruel

Biddy – a friend of Pip’s

Mr. Jaggers – a lawyer from London

Herbert Pocket – Pip’s best friend in London

Matthew Pocket – Herbert’s father, Pip’s tutor

Clara – Herbert’s love

Bentley Drummle – Pip’s rival for Estella and a boor

Compeyson – Miss Havisham’s former lover

Father – Miss Havisham’s father, flashback

Various soldiers



Note: Doubling of Actors

In this production of *Great Expectations* some actors will be playing more than one role. Doubling of actors requires distinction between characters. In this production, characters will be distinguished by costume, voice and other physical character traits.

Synopsis

Pip is an orphan living on the Kent marshes with his abusive sister and her husband, Joe Gargery, the village blacksmith. While exploring the churchyard near the tombstones of his parents, Pip is accosted by an escaped convict. The convict scares Pip into stealing food for him, as well as a metal file to saw off the convict's leg iron. Returning with these the next morning, Pip discovers a second escaped convict, an enemy of the first one. Shortly afterward, both convicts are recaptured while fighting each other.



Pip's pompous Uncle Pumblechook arranges for Pip to go to the house of a wealthy reclusive woman, Miss Havisham, to play with her adopted daughter, Estella. The house is a strange nightmare-world. Miss Havisham's fiancé jilted her on her wedding day and she still wears her old wedding gown. The house has been left as it was on her wedding day and even the old wedding cake is still on the table. Estella is beautiful but haughty and tells Pip that he is coarse and common. Pip is immediately attracted to Estella in spite of how she and Miss Havisham treat



him. Although the visits are emotionally painful and demeaning, Pip continues to go there for several months to play with Estella. Pip does earn a kiss from Estella when he beats a visitor, the Pale Young Gentleman, in a fistfight. Pip tries to better himself to win Estella's admiration by asking his friend, Biddy, to teach him how to read.

After a number of months, Miss Havisham insists that Pip begin his blacksmithing apprenticeship with Joe. Now that Pip has seen "genteel" life, he views working at the forge as a death sentence. However, he hides his feelings from Joe and performs his duties. After a year, he visits Miss Havisham only to discover that Estella has gone abroad to study. On his way home from, Biddy finds Pip and gives him the news that his sister has had a stroke, leaving her paralyzed and unable to speak. Biddy comes to live with Joe and Pip to help out.

Synopsis (cont.)

One evening, a powerful London lawyer, Mr. Jaggers, visits Pip and Joe and informs them that Pip has “great expectations.” Pip is overjoyed and assumes the windfall is from Miss Havisham, who wants to prepare him for Estella. He gets a new suit of clothes and is amazed at how differently money changes things. He has a conversation with Biddy and asks her to work on “improving” Joe. Pip accuses her of being jealous of him when she suggests Joe does not need improving. By the end of the week, Pip is on his way to London to become a gentleman.



In London, Pip meets with Jaggers, who gives Pip directions to the apartment he'll be sharing with Herbert Pocket. When Pip arrives, he discovers Herbert is the Pale Young Gentleman he fought at Miss Havisham's. Pip is to study with Herbert's father, Mr. Matthew Pocket, to learn how to be a gentleman. Pip and Herbert become good friends. Matthew Pocket is also tutoring another fellow named Bentley Drummle. Drummle and Pip do not get along.

Through Biddy, Joe write Pip a letter asking if he can visit him in London, but Pip, embarrassed at the idea of Joe meeting his new friends, puts him off. A few weeks later, Pip receives another letter from Biddy – Pip's sister had died. Pip goes home for the funeral, where Biddy scolds him for abandoning Joe. Upset, Pip pays a visit to Miss Havisham. He discovers that Estella has returned, now a beautiful woman. Miss Havisham informs Pip he is to accompany Estella to London where she will live with a wealthy society woman. Pip is convinced Miss Havisham intends Estella for him. In London, Pip discovers that Herbert, too, is in love, with a young woman named Clara, but has no means of supporting her. Wishing to help his friend, and with Jagger's help, Pip secretly arranges to set Herbert up in business with a merchant named Clarriker. Pip puts a down payment on the Herbert's partnership, with the remainder to be paid off when he comes into the rest of his inheritance.

Synopsis (cont.)

One stormy evening, Pip's life is changed forever with the arrival of a stranger whom Pip recognizes as the convict from the marshes years ago. The convict, whose name is Magwitch, had been sent to Australia and was to never return to England under penalty of death. Magwitch made a fortune in Australia and has risked death to return and tell Pip that he is the source of Pip's expectations. Pip is disgusted and devastated. He now realizes that Miss Havisham has not been preparing him for Estella, and that with his money coming from a convict he can never have Estella.



Magwitch explains to Pip that he has come to give him his full inheritance as thanks for his help on the marshes years before. He tells Pip about the other convict, a man named Compeyson. Pip recognizes the name; Herbert told him that a man named Compeyson was the one who broke Miss Havisham's heart. Pip decides he will take no more of Magwitch's money. However, he feels responsible for the danger the man is in and will find a way to get him safely out of the country, even though it means accompanying him.



Before he leaves England, Pip pays one last visit to Miss Havisham. He asks Miss Havisham to pay off the rest of the money owed on Herbert's partnership. Then he professes his love to Estella who, he discovers, is about to elope with Drummle. Pip is horrified and pleads with her not to do this. During this conversation, Estella and Miss Havisham have an argument that shows she cannot love Miss Havisham, either. Miss Havisham realizes the depth of the damage she has done and is heartbroken.

Estella leaves with Drummle. Miss Havisham writes a bank draft that will pay the remainder of Herbert's partnership and gives it to Pip. Then she collapses. She begs Pip's forgiveness then dies in his arms.

Synopsis (cont.)

Upon his return to London, Pip learns from Magwitch that he once had a young daughter named Estella who was given up for adoption and who he fears dead. Before Pip can react, Herbert arrives with the news that Magwitch is being watched. Herbert and Pip devise an escape plan for that very night. But as they are rowing downriver with Magwitch, a boat filled with soldiers pulls abreast. Magwitch recognizes one of the men in the boat as Compeyson. They struggle and fall into the river. Compeyson drowns and Magwitch is fatally injured. They manage to get him to shore, where, before he dies, Pip is able to assure him that his daughter is alive and well.



Pip and Herbert return home, where Herbert informs Pip that he has been made full partner at Clarriker's. He and Clara are going to get married then move to India to run the office there. He asks Pip – who, with Magwitch's death is completely broke



– to join them there, but Pip goes home instead, intending to make amends with Joe and marry Bidley. He arrives just in time to celebrate Joe and Bidley's wedding. Pip apologizes for his behavior, then leaves to join Herbert in India. When he returns several years later to meet Joe and Bidley's son, he first stops at Satis House, Miss Havisham's former home. It is in disrepair and about to be sold. He meets Estella there. She is a widow now, after suffering in an abusive marriage for all these years. She begs Pip's forgiveness, and he assures her that nothing will ever part them again.

Biography of author Charles Dickens



Charles Dickens was born on February 7, 1812, in Portsmouth, England, the son of John and Elizabeth Dickens. John Dickens, a clerk, had a poor head for finances, and in 1824 was imprisoned for debt. His wife and children, with the exception of Charles, joined him in prison. Charles was put to work in the Warren Blacking Factory, an experience that scarred him emotionally for life. When the family finances were righted and his father was released, Dickens was released from his work at the factory and attended school in London. At fifteen, he found employment as an attorney's office boy and in 1829 he became a freelance reporter. In 1833 his first published story appeared and was followed, very shortly thereafter, by a number of other stories and sketches. In 1834, still a newspaper reporter, he adopted the soon to be famous pseudonym "Boz." The first series of *Sketches by Boz* was published in 1836, and that same year Dickens began writing *The Pickwick Papers*, which became an enormous success. Dickens married Catherine Hogarth

on April 2, 1836, and embarked on a fulltime career as a novelist, writing such famous classics as *Oliver Twist* (1838), *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839), *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841), *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), *House* (1853), *Hard Times* (1854), *Little Dorrit*, (1857), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), *Great Expectations* (1861) and *Our Mutual Friend* (1865).

In 1856, Dickens purchased Gad's Hill, an estate he had admired since childhood. In 1857, he and Catherine and their 10 children spent a great deal of time there. At this time Dickens met a young actress, Ellen Ternan, with whom he fell in love and in 1858 he and his wife of 22 years separated so the he could be with Ellen.

During the latter part of his career, Dickens supplemented his income with paid speaking engagements all over England, Scotland, Ireland and the United States. He continued these engagements even after his health began to deteriorate and the doctors advised him to slow down. In 1869, during a public speaking tour, he collapsed, showing symptoms of mild stroke. Further readings were cancelled, but he began work upon what would be his last (and unfinished) novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. On June 8, 1870, Dickens collapsed once again – this time at Gad's Hill. He died the next day. He was buried at Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey on June 14, 1870.



Biography of the Playwright – Catherine Bush

Catherine Bush has been Barter Theatre's playwright-in-residence since 2007. Her produced plays include: *The Other Side of the Mountain*, *The Quiltmaker*, *Comin' Up A Storm*, *Wooden Snowflakes*, *Tradin' Paint*, *Where Trouble Sleeps*, *Walking Across Egypt*, *I'll Never Be Hungry Again* (book & lyrics), *The Three Musketeers*, *The Frankenstein Summer*, *unHINGED*, *The Executioner's Sons*, *The Controversial Rescue of Fatty the Pig*, *Winter Wheat* (book & lyrics) and *Just a Kiss*, which was a finalist for the 2007 Steinberg Award presented by the American Theatre Critics Association. Plays for Young Audiences: *Cry Wolf!*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Rapunzel*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, *All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth*, *My Imaginary Pirate*, *The Call of the Wild*, *The Princess and the Pea*, *Aesop's Fables*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, *Frosty*, *Santa Claus is Coming to Town*, *Mother Goose: The Musical*, *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*, *Jingle All the Way*, *Old Turtle and the Broken Truth*, *Antigone*, *Robin Hood*, *Clementine the Musical*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, and *Great Expectations*.
www.catherinebushplays.com



Vocabulary Words

vittles

battery

vengeance

accommodate

benefactor

dismal

loiter

diversion

knave

tormentor

contemptuous

ponder

illiterate

abyss

discernable

condescend

apprentice

drudgery

sanctify

oblige

apoplexy

stipulation

heiress

lout

tutelage

sentiment

capital

circumstances

guinea

lavish

extravagance

insufferable

swindle



A Brief History

Barter Theatre was founded during the Great Depression by Robert Porterfield, an enterprising young actor. He and his fellow actors found themselves out of work and hungry in New York City. Porterfield contrasted that to the abundance of food, but lack of live theatre, around his home region in Southwest Virginia. He returned to Washington County with an extraordinary proposition: bartering produce from the farms and gardens of the area to gain admission to see a play.

Barter Theatre opened its doors on June 10, 1933 proclaiming, "With vegetables you cannot sell, you can buy a good laugh." The price of admission was 40 cents or the equivalent in produce, the concept of trading "ham for Hamlet" caught on quickly. At the end of the first season, the Barter Company cleared \$4.35 in cash, two barrels of jelly and enjoyed a collective weight gain of over 300 pounds.

Playwrights including Noel Coward, Tennessee Williams and Thornton Wilder accepted Virginia ham as payment for royalties. An exception was George Bernard Shaw, a vegetarian, who bartered the rights to his plays for spinach.

Today, Barter Theatre has a reputation as a theatre where many actors performed before going on to achieve fame and fortune. The most recognized of these alumni include Gregory Peck, Patricia Neal, Ernest Borgnine, Hume Cronyn, Ned Beatty, Gary Collins, Larry Linville and Frances Fisher. The list also included James Burrows, creator of *Cheers*, Barry Corbin, and the late Jim Varney

Robert Porterfield passed away in 1971. His successor, Rex Partington, had been at Barter in the 1950s as an actor and in the 1970s as stage manager. Rex returned as chief administrator from 1972 until his retirement in 1992. In March 2006, he passed away.

Richard Rose was named the producing artistic director in October 1992. In that time, attendance has grown from 42,000 annual patrons to more than 163,000 annual patrons. Significant capital improvements have also been made. Including maintenance to both theatres, and in 2006, the addition of The Barter Café at Stage II and dramatic improvements to Porterfield Square.

Barter represents three distinct venues of live theatre: Barter Theatre Main Stage, Barter Theatre Stage II and The Barter Players. Barter Theatre, with over 500 seats, features traditional theatre in a luxurious setting. Barter Stage II, across the street from Barter Main Stage and beyond Porterfield Square, offers seating for 167 around a thrust stage in an intimate setting and is perfect for more adventurous productions. The Barter Players is a talented ensemble of actors, producing plays for young audiences throughout the year.

History is always in the making at Barter Theatre, building on legends of the past; Barter looks forward to the challenge of growth in the future.

Questions/Activities

1. Read *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens then attend a performance of Barter's production. How are they similar? How are they different?

Write a paper that compares and contrasts the book with Barter's production!

2. In the first scene of our story, Pip encounters Magwitch, an escaped convict, in the churchyard and agrees to help him. Why does Pip do this? How would the novel change if Pip refused to help him? **Discuss.**

3. Who does Magwitch capture in the marshes? Why does he sacrifice his own freedom to capture him? **Discuss.**

4. How are Miss Havisham and Estella related? Why does Miss Havisham want Pip to play with Estella? **Discuss.**

5. When Pip meets Estella, she convinces him that he is common. How does this make Pip feel? Are there people in your school who make you feel less worthy because of your socio-economic status? Do you make others feel "common?" **Discuss.**

6. Using pictures from magazines or newspapers, construct a collage representing one of the characters from *Great Expectations*. Display the collages around the room and see if the other students are able to match the collage to the character.



7. Describe Pip's relationship with Joe at the beginning of the story. How does this relationship change once Pip learns of his great expectations? Why does it change? What is their relationship at the end of the book? What did Pip learn throughout the course of this story? **Discuss.**

8. How has Estella changed by the end of the story? Do you think she and Pip should get together? Why or why not? **Discuss.**

(Note: Charles Dickens wrote two endings to this novel. In the original ending, Pip and Estella part as friends.)

Write it!

Select your favorite character from the play, pick an important day in their life that influences this play then write a journal entry about that day as that character. For example, you might pick the character of Estella and write about the day you first met Pip, or you might pick the character of Miss Havisham and write about the day you were jilted by your fiancé. Be as specific as possible and write as that character would.



Write a critique of Barter's production of *Great Expectations*. Be sure to include what you liked, didn't like and what you would have done differently.

Comedy vs. Tragedy



comedy: a dramatic work that is light and often humorous or satirical in tone and that usually contains a happy resolution of the thematic conflict.

tragedy: A drama or literary work in which the main character is brought to ruin or suffers extreme sorrow, especially as a consequence of a tragic flaw, moral weakness, or inability to cope with unfavorable circumstances.

Given these definitions, would you categorize *Great Expectations* as a comedy or a tragedy? **Cite three samples from the play to support your position.** Does a character's point-of-view influence your findings? **Discuss.**

irony: *a literary technique, originally used in Greek tragedy, by which the full significance of a character's words or actions are clear to the audience or reader although unknown to the character.*

9. **Examine the following sentence:** "...I thought of the beautiful young Estella . . . with absolute abhorrence of the contrast between the jail and her." Why is this ironic? Can you find other examples of irony in this story? **Discuss.**

The second part of *Great Expectations* is set in London, England.

Individually or in groups, research one of the London landmarks below then make an oral presentation to the class!

Newgate Prison Thames River Hyde Park

Buckingham Palace Westminster Abbey

Tower of London Trafalgar Square

St. Paul's Cathedral Piccadilly Circus



Extra Credit - PERSUADE ME!

As Mr. Jaggers, write a paper persuading Pip to accept Magwitch's money.

Be Descriptive!

Read the descriptions below of these two characters
from *Great Expectations*:

Miss Havisham and Mr. Jaggers

“She was dressed in rich materials – satins, and lace, and silks – all of white. Her shoes were white. And she had a long white veil dependent from her hair, and she had bridal flowers in her hair, but her hair was white... I saw that everything within my view which ought to be white, has been white long ago, and had lost its lustre, and was faded and yellow. I saw that the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress, and like the flowers, and had no brightness left but the brightness of her sunken eyes. I saw that the dress had been put upon the rounded figure of a young woman, and that the figure upon which it now hung loose, had shrunk to skin and bone...”



“He was a burly man of an exceedingly dark complexion, with an exceedingly large head and a correspondingly large hand... He was prematurely bald on the top of his head, and had bushy black eyebrows that wouldn't lie down but stood up bristling. His eyes were set very deep in his head, and were disagreeably sharp and suspicious. He had a large watch chain, and strong black dots where his beard and whiskers would have been if he had let them...”



Students

Find a picture of a person, place or thing from a magazine and write a description of him/her/it in your own words. Be as descriptive as possible.

Teacher

Number the pictures and place them on one wall of the classroom. Give the students copies of the descriptions and see if they are able to match them to the appropriate picture!

Be Artistic!

Read the following descriptions from Charles Dickens'
Great Expectations

“The marshes were just a long black horizontal line then, as I stopped to look after him; and the river was just another horizontal line, not nearly so broad nor yet so black; and the sky was just a row of long angry red lines and dense black lines intermixed. On the edge of the river, I could faintly make out the only two black things in all the prospect that seemed to be standing upright; one of these was the beacon by which the sailors steered... the other, a gibbet with some chains hanging to it which had once held a pirate.”

Now working in whichever medium you choose – paint, pencil, pen and ink, charcoal, etc. – illustrate one of the descriptions above.



“Mr. Jagger’s room was lighted by a skylight only, and was a most dismal place; the skylight, eccentrically patched like a broken head, and the distorted adjoining houses looking as if they had twisted themselves to peep down at me through it. There were not so many papers about, as I should have expected to see; and there were some odd objects about, that I should not have expected to see – such as an old rusty pistol, a sword in a scabbard, several strange-looking boxes and packages, and two dreadful casts on a shelf, of faces peculiarly swollen, and twitchy about the nose. Mr. Jagger’s own high-backed chair was of deadly black horsehair, with rows of brass nails round it, like a coffin...”

Word Search

Find the following words in the puzzle below:

Abel Magwitch, Miss Havisham, Pip, churchyard, Estella, expectations, London, Joe Gargery, Charles Dickens, forge, blacksmith, Biddy, Herbert Pocket, benefactor, Compeyson, convict, Pumblechook, Jaggers, River Thames, Satis House, marshes, file, forgiveness

M B S M S A L L E T S E T S S
I L A S N O I T A T C E P X E
S A T R E J E T E Y K O S J M
S C I E K W O L C C D S P C A
H K S G C O I E O I E D O V H
A S H G I F O P G N V M I S T
V M O A D L T H E A P N E B R
I I U J S R O V C E R H O F E
S T S H E B I N Y E S G O C V
H H E B L G J S D R L R E W I
A H R U R D O V A O G B X R R
M E A O A N J M L E N L M K Y
H O F C H U R C H Y A R D U E
O R O T C A F E N E B P I P P
A B E L M A G W I T C H N C A

True and False

Write **T** if the statement is **True** and **F** if the statement is **False**.

1. ____ “Pip” was Charles Dickens’ first pen name.
2. ____ *Great Expectations* is set in Paris, France.
3. ____ Joe Gargery is Pip’s brother-in-law.
4. ____ Pip meets Mr. Jaggers in the churchyard (cemetery).
5. ____ Mrs. Joe raises Pip with a fair and gentle hand.
6. ____ Uncle Pumblechook hires Pip to play with Estella.
7. ____ Miss Havisham lives in Satis House.
8. ____ When Pip meets Estella, she is very rude.
9. ____ Even though she is very old, Miss Havisham wears a wedding dress.
10. ____ Mr. Jagger’s is Miss Havisham’s lawyer.
11. ____ Pip’s best friend in London is Herbert Pocket.
12. ____ Bentley Drummle is Pip’s benefactor.
13. ____ Estella marries Bentley Drummle.
14. ____ Magwitch was once engaged to Miss Havisham.
15. ____ Miss Havisham is Pip’s benefactor.

Matching

Draw a line connecting the noun in the 1st column with its corresponding description in the 2nd.

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Biddy | a. a blacksmith |
| 2. Joe Gargery | b. a lawyer |
| 3. Philip Pirrip | c. owns Satis House |
| 4. Miss Havisham | d. a convict |
| 5. Estella | e. nicknamed “Pip” |
| 6. Mr. Jaggers | f. jilted Miss Havisham |
| 7. Mrs. Joe | g. Dicken’s wife |
| 8. Catherine Hogarth | h. Joe’s second wife |
| 9. Compeyson | i. Pip’s sister |
| 10. Magwitch | j. Havisham’s adopted daughter |

Dickensian London vs. Modern Appalachia



Great Expectations is just one of many novels by Charles Dickens set in the tough economic times of early 19th century London. Research the economic conditions of this period and compare them to London's economy today. Then take the same statistics and compare them to the economic conditions that prevail in Appalachia today. Use the following link to research the Appalachian economy:

http://www.arc.gov/appalachian_region/CountyEconomicStat usandDistressedAreasinAppalachia.asp

Present your findings to the class and prepare to discuss the results.



From the Page to the Stage!

How does a book become a stage play? Here are some of the elements that went into Barter's production of *Great Expectations* ...

1. Script

It all starts here. A playwright (in this case, playwright Catherine Bush) turns the prose of literature into dialogue and dramatic action. This is called "adapting". Sound easy?

Try it yourself!

Pick a scene from your favorite story and adapt it into a scene for the stage. Try not to use the narrative voice – focus instead on creating "dialogue" between the characters.

2. Director/Actors

The director and actors begin the rehearsal process. The director "blocks" the play, which means he tells the actors where to move and stand and sit. The actors work on learning their lines, finding their character's motivation and creating the world of the play. The length of a rehearsal process for a Barter Player production ranges from 30 – 40 hours spread out over 4-6 weeks, depending on the play.

Try it yourself!

Rehearse the scene you adapted with your classmates.

3. Set Design

The set designer designs a set that will not only serve the aesthetic needs of the production by creating beautiful visuals that represent the various locations in the story (i.e. the cemetery, the streets of London, the River Thames) but also function as a safe environment upon which the actors will move (or be moved). A good set design will also allow the action to flow from one scene to another smoothly, with seamless transitions.

Try it yourself!

Using the scene you adapted, design a set that will both visually serve the story and function effectively for the actors.

4. Costumes/Wigs

The costume designer is responsible for creating a different look for each character while maintaining the overall aesthetic of the production.

Each actor's costume must be tailored to fit and be built to take the wear-and-tear of 8 shows a week! Also, in a show where the actor is required to play more than one character, the design must incorporate a method to facilitate "quick changes". The wig designer is responsible for designing, building and styling the wigs that will appear in the show. Like the costumes, wigs are necessary to help distinguish characters.

Try it yourself!

Design a costume/wig for the character in your scene. Make sure your costume includes a mechanism to make "quick changes possible.

5. Props

Miss Havisham's cane! Joe's hammer! Estella's necklace! These are a few examples of the props designed and built by Barter's props department for this production. A **prop** is defined as an object used on stage by actors for use in the plot or story line of a theatrical production.

Try it yourself!

Design and build the props you will need for your scene.

6. Lights/Sound

Lights not only illuminate the actors and pull focus to various spots on the stage but, together with sound, help create a mood. Lights and sound can also, along with the set, help establish location. The sound of oars in the water, moonlight streaming, and we are travelling with Pip, Magwitch, and Herbert down the River Thames!

Try it yourself!

Put together a soundtrack for your scene that establishes place and mood. Feel free to use recorded music/sound effects or perform it live!

7. Stage Manager/Crew

The Stage Manager attends all the rehearsals and once the show goes into production, is "in charge", calling all the sound and light cues and maintaining the integrity of the piece during its run. The SM is aided in these endeavors by the Crew, the unsung heroes who work backstage moving sets, changing wardrobe, placing props – whatever is necessary for the show to go on!

Suggested Further Reading/Links:

Other novels by Charles Dickens

Oliver Twist

Nicholas Nickleby

The Old Curiosity Shop

Barnaby Rudge

Martin Chuzzlewit

David Copperfield

Bleak House

Hard Times

Little Dorrit

A Tale of Two Cities

A Christmas Carol

Our Mutual Friend

Biographies about Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens: A Life by Claire Tomalin

Charles Dickens by Michael Slater

Becoming Dickens: The Invention of a Novelist by Robert Douglas-Fairhurst

Dickens: Public Life and Private Passion by Peter Ackroyd

For more information about the life and works of Charles Dickens, check out the link below:

<http://www.dickens-literature.com/>