



The Grand and Most Illuminating Guide to Writing in the Style of Mr Charles Dickens: A Comprehensive Study

Description

On the Essential Nature of Proper Beginning

My dear aspiring writers – nay, let us call you literary adventurers, for that is what you truly are – the art of beginning like Dickens requires a particular sort of courage. One must grab one's reader by the metaphorical lapels and announce something of tremendous significance with absolute authority.

The Matter of Opening Lines

Consider “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” Notice how Dickens doesn't merely suggest this contrast – he thunders it from the rooftops with the confidence of a street-corner prophet who's just had a particularly convincing vision.

The Application of This Principle

Instead of writing “London was foggy that morning”, one might declare: “The metropolis lay shrouded in a pestilential fog, the sort of fog that seemed to have made a careful study of human misery and decided to specialise in it.”

The Delicate Art of Character Introduction

Physical Descriptions That Reveal the Soul

Dickens understood that a person's outer appearance should telegraph their inner nature with all the subtlety of a carnival barker. When introducing a character, one must:

1. Begin with their most striking physical feature
2. Connect said feature to a moral quality

3. Add at least three peculiar habits
4. Throw in an odd item of clothing
5. Conclude with a bizarre comparison to an inanimate object

A Practical Example

“Mr Thumblewick was a man whose enormously protruding ears seemed to strain, like twin satellite dishes, to catch the whispers of potential business opportunities. His fingers, long and spidery, were perpetually occupied in counting invisible coins, and he had developed the peculiar habit of clicking his back teeth precisely seventeen times before making any financial decision. The green waistcoat he invariably wore had achieved such a high polish through nervous rubbing that it resembled nothing so much as a well-waxed drawing room floor.”

On the Construction of Dialogue

The Implementation of Verbal Tics

Each character must possess a linguistic peculiarity that serves as their verbal fingerprint. Consider:

- The Repetitive Phrase: “Not to put too fine a point upon it...”
- The Mangled Quotation: “As the Greeks would say, or would have said had they thought of it...”
- The Physical Punctuation: “Every statement *sniff* must be accompanied *sniff* by some form of gesture.”

Class Distinctions in Speech

Working-class characters should speak in a dialect so thick it requires translation notes, while upper-class characters must pepper their speech with Latin phrases they’ve mostly misunderstood.

The Architecture of Plot

On the Matter of Coincidence

In the Dickensian universe, coincidence is not merely acceptable – it is mandatory. Your plot should be constructed like a spider’s web designed by an obsessive-compulsive spider who’s had rather too much coffee.

The Proper Application of Sub-plots

Each main plot must be accompanied by no fewer than three sub-plots, which should:

- Initially appear entirely unrelated
- Weave together with increasing frequency
- Resolve simultaneously in a manner that suggests divine intervention

The Mastery of Environmental Description

Weather as a Literary Device

Weather in Dickens is never merely meteorological. Your rain must not simply fall – it must assault the earth with the vigour of a creditor pursuing a particularly elusive debtor.

The Personification of Buildings

Buildings must possess personality traits, moral qualities, and occasionally, digestive problems. A proper Dickensian building should be described as if it were a character who simply happens to be made of bricks.

On the Subject of Social Institutions

The Proper Portrayal of Bureaucracy

Any institution must be presented as a labyrinth of meaningless procedures, staffed by individuals whose job titles are longer than their actual accomplishments.

Example: “The Deputy Assistant Under-Secretary to the Assistant Deputy Under-Secretary of the Department of Circumlocutory Affairs”

The Fine Art of Chapter Endings

The Cliffhanger Technique

Each chapter must end with either:

- A shocking revelation
- A mysterious stranger
- An ominous prediction
- A character in peril
- All of the above simultaneously

Advanced Techniques in Narrative Voice

The Omniscient Observer

Your narrator should possess:

- The all-seeing eye of Providence
- The wit of a seasoned satirist

- The moral certainty of a Victorian preacher
- The tendency to address readers directly with uncomfortable frequency

In Conclusion: The Matter of Length

Remember that Dickens was paid by the word, and while you likely aren't, you should write as if you were. Consider each sentence an opportunity to demonstrate your vocabulary's breadth and depth, each paragraph a chance to explore the furthest reaches of human patience.

A Final Note of Encouragement

Should you find yourself thinking "Perhaps this is too much," remind yourself that in the world of Dickens, "too much" was merely a starting point. After all, if one can't be excessive when channeling the spirit of literature's most gloriously verbose author, when can one be?

Written whilst consuming an quantity of tea that would alarm medical professionals, accompanied by a plate of sadly neglected biscuits

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