

Revising 'Great Expectations' for Summer 2020

Dear Year 11 students,

Given there are 59 chapters to choose from, it is especially difficult to play 'guess the questions that will come up' with *Great Expectations*, though we will do so anyway. All we can do is advise. Here is our advice on what to re-read if you feel you don't have time to reread the novel in its entirety.

We would advise ticking them off as you re-read, with notes on each of them. You can use your old red exercise books to help you with this.

At the end of this list are some ideas for possible 'extra ideas', especially the vivid scenes relating to Mr Jaggers' housekeeper and the chapters where Mr Wemmick 'stars'. Please do remember the 'GE' examination guide that you have already.

"What larks, dear boy(s)!"

The Year 11 team

- 1) Chapter 1: a meeting on the marshes – Pip and Magwitch
- 2) Chapter 2: at the blacksmith's forge and home
- 3) Chapters 3, 5 & 7: feeding the convict and Pip's guilt on the marshes**
- 4) Chapter 9, especially pages 48–50, 52 & 55: meeting Miss Havisham
- 5) Chapter 11: a second visit to Satis House
- 6) Chapter 12, especially p.80 to the end and chapters 13 & 14: Pip is apprenticed to Joe as a blacksmith
- 7) Chapter 17, especially p.107–end: Pip's ambitions and dissatisfaction
- 8) Chapter 18, esp. p.116–end and the end of chapter 19: the astonishing news of Pip's expectations; the end of Pip's country life
- 9) Chapter 22, especially up to and incl. p.156: Herbert Pocket tells Miss Havisham's story to Pip
- 10) Chapter 27: Joe's visit to Pip, the gentleman, in London
- 11) Chapters 28 & 29, especially 200–205: Pip takes a trip 'home'
- 12) Chapter 35: Pip and Biddy (after Mrs Joe's funeral)*
- 13) Chapter 38: Estella and Miss Havisham***
- 14) Chapters 39, 40 & 42: a surprise nighttime visitor
- 15) Chapter 44: Pip's 'great expectations' come crashing down
- 16) Chapter 49: the very painful visit to Miss Havisham and Pip's torment
- 17) Chapter 54: helping Magwitch
- 18) Chapter 57: Joe tends Pip on his sick-bed*(set as the specimen paper extract)
- 19) Chapters 58-59: the ending of the novel and the final ambiguous scene between Pip and Estella

* = extracts from these chapters have appeared in OCR sample papers, as has a short extract with a scene from Magwitch's trial and conviction

** = June 2017 actual exam extract *** = June 2018 actual exam extract (June 2019 is also on this list)

Additional ideas:

The first half of chapter 30 (Trabb's boy's torment of Pip); Pip visits Newgate prison, pages 223–226; the scene with Jaggers's mysterious housekeeper in chapter 26; Mr

Wemmick and his Aged P and his ‘Walworth self’ in chapters 25, 26, 37, 45, 48, 51, 55. Though a minor character, Wemmick seems, to me, to be a character to whom several themes could be attached, but perhaps this might suit those aiming for the very top grades, and it might anyway appeal to only a very few students.

Please do remember these four essentials:

- You have the choice of an extract question or the big thematic question. The extract may suit those who are especially skilled at close reading BUT a minimum 30% of your answer must be devoted to linked other sections of the novel. It is not the easy option.
- The ‘big’ question option requires you to come up with two relevant extracts of your own choice that fit the examiner’s question. They will be more forgiving of quotation analysis weaknesses than they are in the extract question as you have nothing in front of you and all your quotations have to be summoned from your brains. You must, again, prove with a few well-chosen links that you have read the whole novel. Failure to do so on either question would result in a grade 2/3 pass.
- Quotations should be short and pithy, ideally two or three words. If longer, a detail of the quotation should then be examined. Close references to imagery, for example, as long as treated analytically, are of equal merit.
- You must have some contextual content. The four main areas for this novel are: ideas of the gentleman; crime and the justice system; women’s roles; the city and the country; childhood and schooling/education; Christian faith or values. A good way to cover this is perhaps when you are making links to the wider novel, so that you don’t necessarily have to find something in the extract (or in your two main chosen moments if doing the ‘big question’): it can come from your linking moments.

So far, OCR has set the following ‘big questions’ in their practice and specimen papers:

- 1) Money is the source of all Pip’s problems.’ How far do you agree with this view?
Explore at least two moments from the novel to support your ideas. (SPECIMEN)
- 2) It is difficult to have sympathy for Miss Havisham.’ How far do you agree with this view?
Explore at least two moments from the novel to support your ideas. (PRACTICE)
- 3) ‘The ending of *Great Expectations* is not really a happy one.’ To what extent do you find the ending a satisfactory conclusion to the problems of the novel? Explore at least two moments from the novel to support your ideas. (PRACTICE)
- 4) ‘Pip is more of a snob than a gentleman.’ How far do you agree?
Explore at least two moments from the novel to support your ideas. (JUNE 2017)
- 5) ‘*Great Expectations* is as much Magwitch’s story as it is Pip’s.’ How far do you agree?
Explore at least two moments from the novel to support your ideas. (JUNE 2018)