



Familial Relationships in “great Expectations”: The Search for Identity

Guide for Curriculum Unit 86.01.03

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Charles Dickens’ “Great Expectations” is a remarkable novel rich in familial relationships which addresses a young man’s quest for identity in the world in which he lives. This unit attempts to explore the novel as a prime example of the role of family in literature with the hope that students will come to understand better familial relationships that influence their own lives. Notions such as nuclear family and forces which detract from the family unit will be considered. A second focus of the unit concerns students’ own quests for identity in relation to career exploration. Various classifications of jobs highlighted in “Great Expectations” will be expanded upon to better familiarize students of the possible career choices they have at their disposal in future years. The unit also highlights several of Dickens’ other works including “A Christmas Carol,” which will be read as a story of family in contrast to “Great Expectations.” In addition to reading “Great Expectations” students will listen to the book on audiocassette and will view the 1946 movie version on videocassette.

(Recommended for English classes, grades 7-12)

Key Words

Dickens Charles Literature Great Expectations British Christmas Carol Novel Family

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