

David Copperfield (chapters 1-9) Discussion Questions

These discussion questions, written by Tara Thomas, are based on the Santa Cruz Pickwick Club's September 2019 meeting, led by John Jordan. You can listen to the recording of the meeting on our [website](#).

1. Dickens included three chapters in each monthly number. What are some ways that the three chapters fit together or are in conversation with one another?
2. How are Phiz's illustrations functioning in the novel? Are there illustrations that provide a commentary on or critique of the text? Do the two illustrations accompanying each monthly number relate to one another in interesting ways?
3. What does the lengthy title of the novel reveal about the novel? What kind of novel is this?
4. Close Reading 1: Read the first paragraph of Chapter 1 closely, page 13 in the Penguin Classics edition. Who does the pronoun "I" refer to? With what kind of narrative discourse(s) does the novel engage? Are there multiple layers of interpretation at work here?
5. Close Reading 2: "Our Pew at Church" and surrounding text, pages 27-28 in the Penguin Classics edition. Analyze the illustration "Our Pew at Church" using the church scene as a guide. Identify each character. What is happening in the illustrated scene? Does the illustration provide insight into the novel beyond the information provided in the text?
6. Close Reading 3: "I am hospitably received by Mr. Peggoty" and surrounding text, pages 44-5 of the Penguin Classics edition. Again, Analyze the illustration using the surrounding scene as a guide. Identify the characters. What is happening in the scene? Are there ways that Dickens and Phiz are marking class distinctions? What are some ways that Phiz emphasizes class in the illustration? Are there indicators that the narrator and the characters are self-conscious of class in the text and illustrations?