

Great Expectations
Discussion Questions for Paideia/Socratic Seminar

1. Reminders
 - a. Listen to others, give everyone a chance to speak, and provide specific feedback to your peers (Speak 4 times= A, 3 times = B, 2 times = C, 1 time= D).
 - b. Use People's Names
 - c. Respect the Conversation
 - d. You Don't Need To Raise Your Hands
 - e. Refer to the Text
 - f. I'll Keep Track of Comments / Rubric
 - g. Be prepared. This means reading the "text" closely, taking notes, and forming questions.
 - h. Be courteous. There will be no put-downs and no sarcasm.
 - i. Allow the speaker enough time to begin and finish his/her thoughts. (Do not be afraid of silence---this usually means thinking is occurring.)
 - j. Bring others into the discussion and ask others to elaborate on their responses.
2. Bring your copy of the paideia questions to class. **These questions must be completed before class begins.**
3. **Give specific examples from the text to support your answer!**
4. **Opening Questions**
 - a. Who is your favorite character? Who was your least favorite character?
5. **Core Questions (Analyze the text)**
 - a. In this novel, things are often not what they seem. Discuss how the theme of "expectations" is illustrated by and through major characters in this book. How are Pip's expectations different from and similar to those of Joe, Miss Havisham, Estella, and Magwitch?
 - b. Why do you think it is one of Magwitch's principal conditions that Pip "always bear the name Pip" in order to receive financial support?
 - c. Why does Miss Havisham manipulate and mislead Pip into thinking she is his secret benefactor?
 - d. Given Dickens' portrayal of Estella, what do you think attracts Pip to her in the first place? Even when Pip realizes that Estella has been raised to break hearts, why do you think he still remains devoted to her? Why is he not attracted to Biddy?
 - e. Miss Havisham confesses to Pip that in adopting Estella she "meant to save her [Estella] from misery like my own." Do you believe this given Dickens' harsh characterization of Miss Havisham throughout the novel? Do you agree with Pip's decision to forgive her?
 - f. When Miss Havisham catches on fire, do you think this was an accident or was she trying to commit suicide because of the guilt she felt about her actions/decisions regarding Estella and Pip? If it was not an accident, did she deserve it?

- g. Several of the characters in the book seemed transformed from bad to good; we see this with Mrs. Joe. Who else changes/transforms from bad to good in the book?
- h. Where do we see irony in the novel (the opposite of what we expect)?
- i. How are the following sets of characters similar? How are they different?
<Biddy and Estella> <Magwitch and Joe> <Jaggers and Wemmick> <Orlick and Compeyson>
- j. Discuss the role of Miss Havisham in the novel. Some critics have said that she represents "an imprisoned state of mind." What does this mean? Do you agree with this?
- k. Many people are bothered by the character of Uncle Pumblechook. However, Uncle Pumblechook and Pip have similarities. How are they similar?
- l. Pip's character changes at the end of the book. Which Pip did you like the most (Pip as a boy, Pip as a young "gentleman", Pip at the end of the book as a middle-aged man)?
- m. What are the main themes (life lessons) of this book?
- n. What would you change about the book (besides the length)? What did you like about the book? Would you recommend it to others?

6. Closing Questions

- a. Has your understanding of the novel matured or significantly changed through this discussion?
- b. What else did you learn during the course of the discussion?

7. Debriefing

- a. Did you meet your personal goal during the seminar? / What will you work on next time?
- b. Was there anything about the seminar that bothered you?
- c. What could we do to improve the seminar?
- d. What will you remember about the seminar?