CAPITOLO

1

Progress and Poverty: Victorian Britain and Dickens

"England is full of wealth, of multifarious produce, supply for human want in every kind; yet England is dying of inanition." — Thomas Carlyle, Past and Present (1843), Book I, ch. 1

OBIETTIVI

1. I can describe early Victorian Britain — railways, industrial cities, the New Poor Law, Chartism, free trade and the Great Exhibition — and explain the label "Victorian compromise".
2. I can explain how serial publication shaped the Victorian novel, define the social novel and outline the career of Charles Dickens.
3. I can analyse caricature, repetition and imagery in passages from *Hard Times* and *Great Expectations*.
4. I can choose the right tense when I write about a text, an author's life and a writer's influence.
5. I can compare two pictures of then and now, write a feature article and plan my revision for the year.
6. I can compare Dickens's working children with Verga's Rosso Malpelo, and his foundlings with the recognitions of Menander's New Comedy.

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On 1 May 1851 Queen Victoria opened the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park, in a glass building so large that it enclosed some of the park's elm trees; about six million visits followed. Three summers later, less than two miles away in Soho, more than five hundred people fell fatally ill with cholera in ten days, most of them near a single street pump. Same city, same decade, same confident age.

This chapter opens the year with that double picture: the early Victorian decades (1832–1870), and the writer who made their poor visible to millions, Charles Dickens. Along the way you will practise a skill you need in every essay and in the colloquio: choosing the right tense when you write about a text and its age.

1.1 History and Society: Progress and Its Price, 1832–1870

English 4 ended in 1832, with the Great Reform Act and the death of Walter Scott. Five years later, on 20 June 1837, an eighteen-year-old princess became queen on the death of her uncle, William IV. Victoria reigned until 1901 and gave her name to the age. In 1840 she married her cousin Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha; with their nine children they were presented as a model family. When Albert died in December 1861 (officially of typhoid fever), the Queen withdrew from public life and wore black for the rest of hers. Figura 1.1 shows the events of this chapter on a single axis.

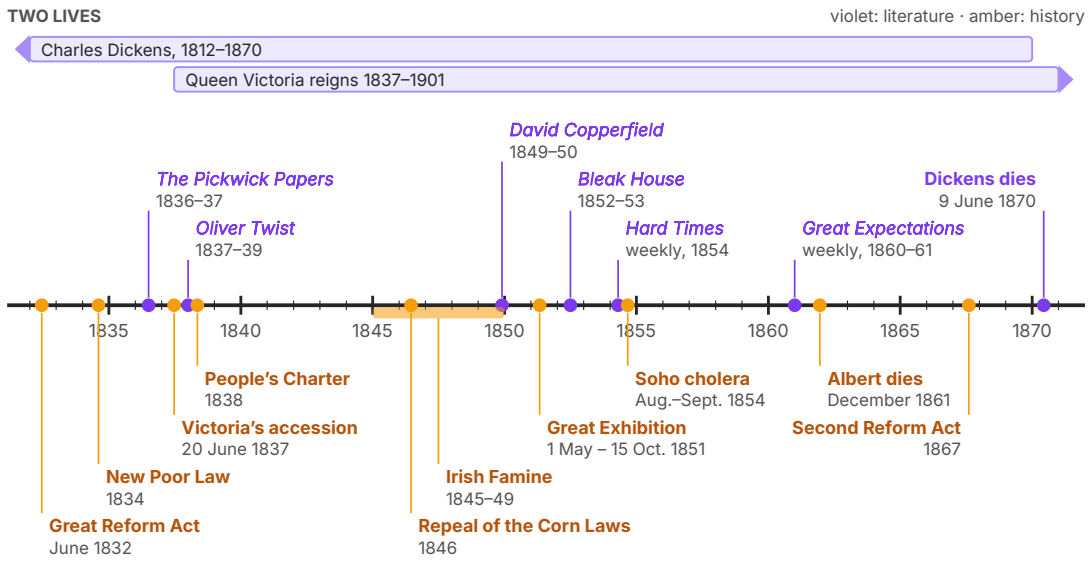


Figura 1.1 Britain and the novel, 1832–1871, on a proportional axis (ticks every year, labels every 5 years): Dickens's books above the axis (violet), historical events below (amber). Dates of serial novels are those of the first instalment to the last.

1.1.1 Steam and the industrial city

The first passenger railway between two great cities, Liverpool and Manchester, had opened in 1830 (English 4, chapter 14). In the 1840s investors rushed to finance new lines, and by 1850 the main cities of England were linked by rail. Travel that had taken days by coach now took hours; fresh food, newspapers and letters moved across the country overnight.

Industry grew fastest in the north of England. Manchester, the centre of the cotton trade, was nicknamed "Cottonopolis". Its steam mills drew workers from the countryside and from Ireland faster than houses could be built; families lived in cellars and *back-to-back* houses with no running water or drains. Friedrich Engels, a young German working in his father's Manchester firm, described these streets in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (published in German in 1845). In 1842 the civil servant Edwin Chadwick showed that the urban poor died much younger than the rich; the Public Health Act of 1848 was the first, cautious answer. Cholera, which first reached Britain in 1831–32, returned in 1848–49, 1853–54 and 1866, killing more than ten thousand people each time.

1.1.2 The poor and the law

In 1834 Parliament passed the Poor Law Amendment Act, usually called the **New Poor Law** (*la nuova legge sui poveri*). Help for the able-bodied poor was now to be given only inside the workhouse (English 2, Unit 2), where conditions were deliberately made worse than those of the

poorest independent labourer, so that nobody would choose to enter. Families were separated by sex and age, food was plain and scarce, and the work was hard and dull. The law was meant to save money and to encourage self-reliance; the poor experienced it as a punishment for being poor.

Working people answered with **Chartism** (*cartismo*), the first mass movement of the British working class. Its programme was the People's Charter of 1838, which asked for six reforms: a vote for every man over twenty-one, a secret ballot, no property qualification for MPs, payment for MPs, equal constituencies and a new Parliament every year. Millions signed the petitions of 1839, 1842 and 1848; each time the House of Commons rejected them. Chartism faded after 1848, but most of its demands later became law, from the end of the property qualification (1858) and the secret ballot (1872) onwards. The Second Reform Act of 1867 gave the vote to many working men in the towns.

> **ERRORE FREQUENTE**
>
> ✗ «Nel 1832 il Reform Act diede il voto a tutti gli uomini, e i cartisti chiedevano il voto alle donne.» → ✓ Il Reform Act del 1832 allargò il voto soprattutto alla classe media; la Carta del 1838 chiedeva il voto per **tutti gli uomini** sopra i 21 anni, non per le donne (la questione femminile è nel capitolo 3).
>
> ✗ «Il cartismo fallì: le sue richieste non furono mai accolte.» → ✓ Le petizioni furono respinte, ma quasi tutti i sei punti divennero legge nei decenni successivi (tranne i parlamenti annuali).

The Corn Laws taxed imported grain to protect landowners and kept bread dear. The Anti-Corn Law League argued for **free trade** (*libero scambio*), and Robert Peel repealed the laws in 1846, splitting his own party. In the same years the Great Famine struck Ireland (1845–1849; chapter 8).

1.1.3 Ideas: useful, practical, respectable

Much Victorian thinking about society began with the philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832). His **Utilitarianism** (*utilitarismo*) judged every law and institution by its consequences: an action is right if it produces "the greatest happiness of the greatest number". Economists of the same school defended **laissez-faire** (French, literally "let do": leave things alone): the state should interfere as little as possible with trade, wages and working hours. John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) later made the doctrine more humane: in *Utilitarianism* (1861) he argued that some pleasures, such as those of the mind, are higher than others. Dickens's Mr Gradgrind is a caricature of its narrowest version.

The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, Prince Albert's project, was the age's portrait of itself. Its building, designed by Joseph Paxton in iron and glass and nicknamed the Crystal Palace, was nearly six hundred metres long and was put up in a few months from

prefabricated parts. Visitors of every class came by the new railways, and the profits helped to buy the land in South Kensington where great museums now stand.

Historians and critics have called the mood of these years the **Victorian compromise** (*il compromesso vittoriano*) — a label applied later, not a phrase the Victorians used of themselves. It describes a society that held together rapid economic progress and its human costs, public respectability and private hypocrisy, faith in reform and fear of revolution. Middle-class values — hard work, thrift, church-going, the family — were preached as universal; Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help* (1859) told readers that anyone could rise by effort, so those who did not could be blamed. Figura 1.2 sets the two sides of the compromise side by side.

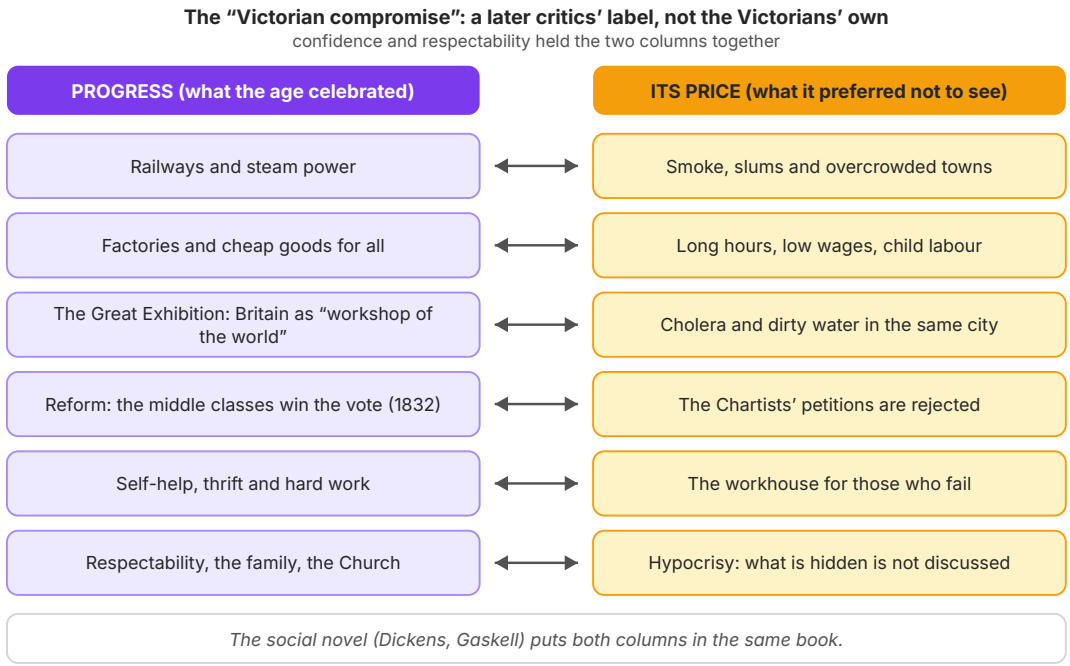


Figura 1.2 The "Victorian compromise" (schematic): what the age celebrated and what it paid for, or preferred not to see. The label is a modern one; the contrasts are those discussed in this chapter.

DA RICORDARE

1834 New Poor Law · **1837** Victoria's accession · **1838** People's Charter · **1846** repeal of the Corn Laws · **1851** Great Exhibition · **1867** Second Reform Act. **Victorian compromise**: a later label for an age that combined progress with poverty, and respectability with hypocrisy.

1.2 Literature: Dickens and the Victorian Novel

1.2.1 A new reading public

The Victorian age was the great age of the novel (English 4, chapter 6). More people could read, steam presses made print cheaper, and the railways carried books everywhere. Middle-class families borrowed expensive three-volume novels from circulating libraries such as Mudie's (founded 1842); many more readers bought novels in instalments.

This **serialisation** (*pubblicazione a puntate*) took two forms. In monthly parts, a novel appeared in thin paper-covered numbers of about thirty-two pages with two illustrations, for a shilling; a typical Dickens novel ran to twenty parts over nineteen months. In weekly magazines, a chapter or two appeared each week beside articles and poems. Serialisation shaped the novels themselves: each instalment needed a climax and a reason to buy the next; large casts of vivid characters helped readers to remember the story across months; and the author could react to sales and to readers' letters while still writing.

1.2.2 The social novel

In 1843 the historian Thomas Carlyle opened *Past and Present* with the words "The condition of England" and asked why so rich a country left so many people hungry. Several novelists of the 1840s and 1850s put that question into fiction. Their books are known as the **social novel** (*romanzo sociale*), or "condition-of-England novel", a critics' term derived from Carlyle: novels that place characters of different classes in one plot, set the action in factories, slums and workhouses, and ask readers to feel — and to act. Elizabeth Gaskell set *Mary Barton* (1848) in Manchester and *North and South* (1854–55) in Milton, a city modelled on it; Benjamin Disraeli wrote *Sybil, or The Two Nations* (1845) and Charles Kingsley *Alton Locke* (1850). The most widely read of these novelists was Dickens.

1.2.3 Charles Dickens (1812–1870)

Dickens was born in Portsmouth on 7 February 1812. You know the episode that marked him for life (English 2, Unit 2): in 1824, at twelve, he worked in a blacking factory while his father was held in a debtors' prison. He then became a solicitor's clerk, learned shorthand and worked as a parliamentary reporter and journalist; his sketches of London were collected as *Sketches by Boz* (1836). Fame came at once with *The Pickwick Papers* (1836–37), comic adventures published in monthly parts. In all he completed fourteen novels; he also edited the weekly magazines *Household Words* (from 1850) and *All the Year Round* (from 1859), and campaigned for schools for poor children and for sanitation. He died at Gad's Hill, in Kent, on 9 June 1870, leaving *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* unfinished, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

IN SINTESI

Five Dickens novels to know

- ***Oliver Twist* (1837–39).** An orphan born in a workhouse falls among London thieves; the secret of his birth is revealed at the end.
- ***David Copperfield* (1849–50).** A first-person narrator looks back on his life, partly Dickens's own.
- ***Bleak House* (1852–53).** An endless lawsuit, told by two narrators: an anonymous voice in the present tense and Esther Summerson in the past tense.
- ***Hard Times* (1854).** Weekly in *Household Words*, 1 April – 12 August 1854: Coketown and a school built on "Facts".
- ***Great Expectations* (1860–61).** Weekly: the orphan Pip, a convict, Miss Havisham, a secret benefactor.

1.2.4 Dickens's art: caricature, humour and pathos

Dickens draws a character with a few strong lines. A **caricature** (*caricatura*) exaggerates one feature — a habit, a phrase, a part of the body — until it stands for the whole person: Mr Gradgrind is "square" in every part; Uriah Heep in *David Copperfield* keeps calling himself "umble". Names do the same work: Gradgrind grinds the young, the schoolmaster M'Choakumchild chokes the child. Humour and pathos (the power to move the reader to pity) sit side by side, and the omniscient narrator (English 4, chapter 8) comments openly, turns irony against the powerful and appeals to the reader's heart for the weak. Dickens was not a revolutionary: he attacked cruel institutions and selfish individuals, but put his hope in kindness, imagination and a change of heart.

1.2.5 *Hard Times* (1854): Facts and Fancy

Hard Times, Dickens's shortest novel, is set entirely in an industrial town. It was dedicated to Carlyle, and its three books have farming titles — "Sowing", "Reaping", "Garnering" — because it shows what an education produces years later. Thomas Gradgrind, a retired merchant and MP, raises his children Louisa and Tom on facts alone and runs a school on the same principle. Sissy Jupe, the daughter of a circus clown, cannot define a horse in the school's words, although she has grown up among horses. Mr Sleary's circus stands for *Fancy* — imagination, play, feeling — against the *Facts* of Gradgrind and of the factory owner Josiah Bounderby.

The "sowing" bears fruit. Louisa, taught never to wonder, accepts a loveless marriage to Bounderby, thirty years older; Tom robs a bank and lets the blame fall on Stephen Blackpool, an honest weaver. Only when his daughter breaks down does Gradgrind understand what his system has done. Dickens visited Preston, in Lancashire, during a long strike in January 1854, and Coketown is often linked with that town; but it is a fictional, typical place.

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ «*Hard Times* racconta l'infanzia di Dickens in fabbrica.» → ✓ Il romanzo non è autobiografico: la fabbrica di lucido da scarpe torna piuttosto in *David Copperfield*.

✗ «Dickens era un socialista rivoluzionario.» → ✓ Dickens denuncia le istituzioni crudeli, ma confida nella riforma e nel cambiamento del cuore dei singoli; in *Hard Times* diffida perfino dei sindacalisti.

1.3 Texts: Facts, Smoke and a Stopped Clock

Three short extracts: the first page of *Hard Times*, its portrait of Coketown, and Pip's first sight of Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations*. Read each twice: once for what happens, once for how it is written.

1.3.1 T1 · Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*, I.1: "The One Thing Needful"

Context. The novel opens in Gradgrind's model school, in mid-lesson: we hear a voice before we know whose it is. The next chapter is called "Murdering the Innocents".

Tabella 1.1 T1 — *Hard Times*, Book I, ch. 1 (Project Gutenberg eBook #786, transcribed from the 1905 Chapman and Hall edition; checked against Wikisource; [...] marks omitted sentences)

'NOW, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir!'

The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a school-room, and the speaker's square forefinger emphasized his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster's sleeve. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellarage in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's mouth, which was wide, thin, and hard set. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's voice, which was inflexible, dry, and dictatorial. [...]

The speaker, and the schoolmaster, and the third grown person present, all backed a little, and swept with their eyes the inclined plane of little vessels then and there arranged in order, ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim.

Glosses. *root out*: destroy completely · *vault*: an arched room, like a cellar or a tomb · *commodious cellarage*: roomy storage, as in a cellar · *hard set*: firmly closed · *underscoring*: underlining · *dictatorial*: commanding like a dictator · *backed*: stepped back · *inclined plane*: a slope (here, rising rows of benches) · *imperial gallon*: about 4.5 litres

Analysis

The speech is built on imperatives (*Teach… Plant… root out… Stick to Facts*) and on one word, *Facts*, always capitalised, as if it were a god; the gardening metaphor turns the children's minds into soil to be weeded. The narrator then describes the speaker through a mechanical frame, repeated three times — *The emphasis was helped by…* — and hard adjectives (*square, inflexible, dry*): the sentence structure is as rigid as the man. In the final image the children are *little vessels* waiting for *imperial gallons of facts*: the language of measurement makes the school a factory.

1. How many times does *Facts* appear in the first paragraph? Why the capital letter?
2. Find two words that suggest hardness or death.
3. Explain the metaphor of the *little vessels*.
4. Why do you think the speaker is not named in this chapter?

1.3.2 T2 · Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*, I.5: Coketown

Context. Before following the Gradgrind children into town, the narrator pauses to "strike the key-note": the place where the whole novel happens.

Tabella 1.2 T2 — *Hard Times*, Book I, ch. 5 "The Key-note" (Project Gutenberg eBook #786; checked against Wikisource)

> It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood, it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness. It contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and to-morrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next.

Glosses. *as matters stood*: as things really were · *interminable*: endless · *uncoiled*: unrolled, like a snake · *dye*: a chemical that colours cloth · *piston*: the part of an engine that moves up and down · *counterpart*: an exact copy

Analysis

Almost every sentence opens with the same frame — *It was a town of… It had… It contained…* — an anaphora (English 4, chapter 11); the last sentence repeats *like one another* three times and *same* five times. The images show nature gone wrong: smoke like endless *serpents*, a *purple* river, a piston like *an elephant in a state of melancholy madness*. The comparison with *the painted face of a savage* uses a word common in Dickens's time and offensive today; it shows how naturally a

Victorian writer used other peoples as an image of the "uncivilised", even while criticising his own civilisation. Reading historically means noticing this, not hiding it.

1. List the colours. Which are "unnatural", and why?
2. Are the animal images frightening, comic or sad? Explain.
3. How does the rhythm of the last sentence imitate the life it describes?
4. Find one idea that connects the school in T1 with the town in T2.

1.3.3 T3 · Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, ch. 8: Miss Havisham

Context. Pip, a poor orphan, is sent to "play" at the house of a rich recluse, abandoned by her bridegroom on her wedding day. The adult Pip tells the story in the first person.

Tabella 1.3 T3 — *Great Expectations*, ch. 8 (Project Gutenberg eBook #1400; checked against the Wikisource text of an 1890 edition, whose punctuation differs slightly; […] marks omitted sentences)

She was dressed in rich materials,—satins, and lace, and silks,—all of white. Her shoes were white. And she had a long white veil dependent from her hair, and she had bridal flowers in her hair, but her hair was white. […]

But I saw that everything within my view which ought to be white, had been white long ago, and had lost its lustre and was faded and yellow. I saw that the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress, and like the flowers, and had no brightness left but the brightness of her sunken eyes. I saw that the dress had been put upon the rounded figure of a young woman, and that the figure upon which it now hung loose had shrunk to skin and bone. […]

It was when I stood before her, avoiding her eyes, that I took note of the surrounding objects in detail, and saw that her watch had stopped at twenty minutes to nine, and that a clock in the room had stopped at twenty minutes to nine.

Glosses. *materials*: fabrics · *dependent*: hanging down · *lustre*: shine · *withered*: dried up, like an old flower · *sunken*: deep in the face · *took note of*: noticed

Analysis

The colour of the bride is repeated until it turns ironic — dress, shoes, veil, flowers, *but her hair was white* — and then everything that *ought to be white* proves *faded and yellow*. The anaphora *I saw that…* builds the scene slowly, as a child's eyes adjust to the candlelight, while the adult narrator understands what the child could not. The detail kept for the end, two clocks stopped at *twenty minutes to nine*, explains everything: Miss Havisham has tried to stop time, and has only decayed with it. In a novel about "expectations", she is a life that refuses a future.

1. Where does the pattern of *white* break in the first paragraph?
2. Which words belong to the field of plants? What do they suggest?
3. Why are the stopped clocks kept for the end of the extract?

4. Colloquio link: connect Miss Havisham with a text about time you have read in Italian or Latin (60–80 words).

ESEMPIO SVOLTO

From noticing to writing. *How does Dickens make Coketown seem monotonous?* Underline the repetitions, name the device, explain its effect, and use the literary present: *Dickens makes Coketown seem monotonous through the shape of his sentences. Every sentence begins with "It", the first two with "It was a town of…", and the last repeats "same" five times, so that the reader feels the sameness the inhabitants live with.*

1.4 Language: Choosing Tenses in Writing about Literature and History

1.4.1 Recap: four structures from English 4

First, four structures from English 4 that you will need in every formal text this year (Tabella 1.4); the exercises practise them.

Tabella 1.4 Four B2 structures from English 4, with examples from this chapter

Structure	Form	Example
inversion after a negative adverbial (chapter 3)	*Never / Rarely / Not only…* + auxiliary + subject	*Never had London seen such a crowd as at the Crystal Palace.*
cleft sentences (chapter 6)	*It was… that…* · *What… is / was…*	*It was the water from one pump that spread the disease.* · *What Gradgrind wants is Facts.*
the subjunctive and *as if* (chapter 7)	verb + *that* + base form · *as if* + past	*The Charter demanded that every man be given the vote.* · *He talks as if children were vessels.*
inverted conditionals (chapter 8)	*Had / Were / Should* + subject…	*Had the pump stayed open, more people might have died.*

1.4.2 The world of the text, the life, the influence

Writing about a novel, you write about three times at once: the time inside the text, the time when the author lived, and the time between then and now. English keeps them apart with different tenses (Figura 1.3, Tabella 1.5), and a reader notices at once when they are mixed.

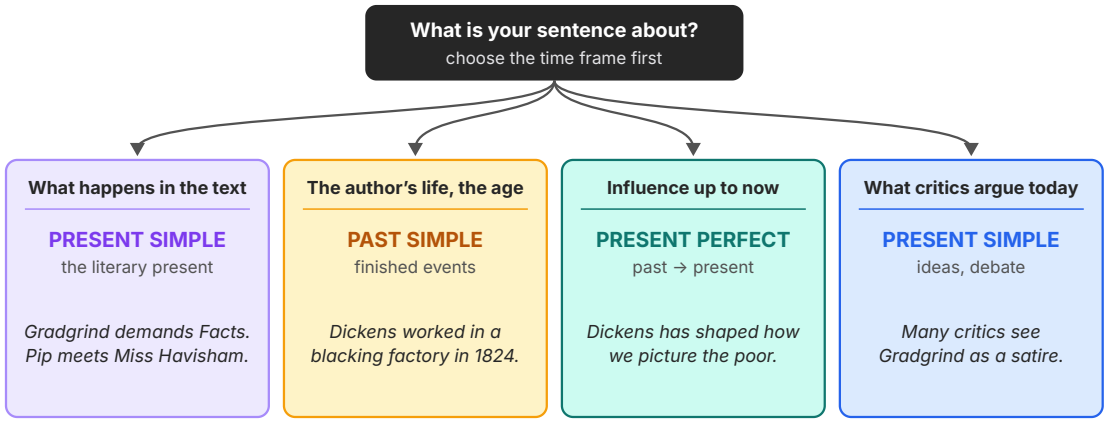


Figura 1.3 Choosing the tense when you write about a text: what happens in the text (present simple), the author's life and the age (past simple), influence up to now (present perfect), and what critics argue today (present simple).

The world of the text. A story happens again every time someone opens the book, so English describes it in the present simple. This convention is the **literary present** (*presente letterario*): *Gradgrind demands Facts; Pip meets Miss Havisham, who still wears her wedding dress.* The same holds for what the author does: *Dickens repeats "same" five times.* For something earlier in the story, step back with the present perfect or the past: *Miss Havisham, who was abandoned on her wedding day, has stopped all the clocks.*

Life, history, influence. Real, finished events take the past simple and the narrative tenses of English 3: *Dickens worked in a blacking factory in 1824; he had already published two novels when Victoria came to the throne.* When you connect the past with now, use the present perfect: *Coketown has become a name for any grim industrial town.* Arguments, like texts, are always available, so critics take the present: *Many critics see Gradgrind as a caricature of Utilitarianism.*

Tabella 1.5 Tenses for writing about texts and history

You are writing about…	Tense	Example
what happens in the text	present simple (continuous for an action in progress)	*In chapter 8 Pip is visiting Satis House when he sees the clocks.*
what the author does in the text	present simple	*Dickens uses anaphora to suggest monotony.*
an earlier event in the story	present perfect / past simple	*Sissy's father has left her; Miss Havisham was abandoned years before.*
the author's life, historical events	past simple, past perfect	*The novel came out in 1854, after Dickens had visited Preston.*
influence up to now	present perfect	*The novel has influenced generations of teachers.*
critics, ideas, your argument	present simple	*Critics disagree about the ending. I would argue that…*
a quotation	unchanged — never alter the author's verbs	*The narrator observes that Coketown "was a town of red brick".*

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Il presente letterario (*literary present*). In un saggio in inglese la trama di un testo si racconta al **present simple**: *Gradgrind demands Facts*. La vita dell'autore e i fatti storici vanno al **past simple**: *Dickens died in 1870*. L'influenza che arriva fino a oggi vuole il **present perfect**: *Dickens has influenced…*. Le citazioni non si toccano: il loro tempo resta quello del testo.

Confronto con l'italiano. L'italiano usa volentieri il **presente storico** anche per storia e biografie (*Nel 1824 Dickens entra in una fabbrica*); l'inglese dei saggi no: per i fatti reali usa il passato. E il passato prossimo *Dickens ha scritto quattordici romanzi* diventa *Dickens wrote…*, non *has written*: la sua vita è conclusa.

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ *In chapter 1 Gradgrind told the teacher that he wanted Facts.* → ✓ *In chapter 1 Gradgrind **tells** the teacher that he **wants** Facts.* (literary present)

✗ *Dickens is born in Portsmouth in 1812 and works in a factory.* → ✓ *Dickens **was born** in Portsmouth in 1812 and **worked** in a factory.* (fatti reali: passato, non presente storico)

✗ *Dickens has written Hard Times in 1854.* → ✓ *Dickens **wrote** Hard Times in 1854.* (data precisa = past simple) · ✓ *Dickens **has influenced** many novelists.* (influenza fino a oggi)

ESEMPIO SVOLTO

Correcting the tenses in a student paragraph. *Dickens published Hard Times in 1854. In the novel Gradgrind ran a school where children learned only facts. Dickens is visiting Preston during a strike, and since then Coketown became a symbol of industrial England.*

Sentence 1 is a dated real event: *published* is right. Sentence 2 is the world of the text: *runs, learn*. Sentence 3 mixes two times: the visit is finished history (*visited*), while *since then* reaches the present (*has become*). **Corrected:** *…In the novel Gradgrind runs a school where children learn only facts. Dickens visited Preston during a strike, and since then Coketown has become a symbol of industrial England.*

1.5 Skills: Then and Now

1.5.1 Vocabulary: industry, poverty and reform

The words in Tabella 1.6 describe the nineteenth century and the same problems today.

Tabella 1.6 Industry, poverty and reform: key words

Word	Meaning	Collocation
slum (n.)	an overcrowded, very poor area of a town	*the slums of Manchester*
workhouse (n.)	a public institution where the poor lived and worked	*born in a workhouse*
factory (n.)	a building where goods are made with machines	*a cotton factory*
wage (n.)	money paid, usually weekly, for work	*low wages, long hours*
labour (n.)	work, especially physical; workers as a group	*child labour*
reform (n., v.)	a change that improves a law or system	*political reform*
charity (n.)	help for people in need; an organisation that gives it	*a children's charity*
overcrowding (n.)	too many people in a space	*overcrowding in cellars*
sanitation (n.)	clean water, drains and waste removal	*poor sanitation*
inequality (n.)	an unfair difference in wealth or chances	*growing inequality*

Word formation: *-hood*, *-ship*, *-dom*

You met *-ship* in English 2 (Unit 1). These three suffixes make abstract nouns, each with its own field (Tabella 1.7). They are not freely productive (✗ *poorhood*): learn the common words as words.

Tabella 1.7 Three noun suffixes

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
-hood	a stage of life; a relationship; a group	*childhood, adulthood, motherhood, neighbourhood, likelihood*
-ship	a condition or status; a skill; a relationship	*hardship, citizenship, leadership, scholarship, friendship*
-dom	a state or condition; a territory ruled	*freedom, boredom, wisdom, kingdom, stardom*

1.5.2 Reading: Why *Hard Times* is still about schools

Before you read. Which lessons do you remember better: those where you repeated information, or those where you discovered something? Sam, in his first year of English at university in Manchester, wrote this post for the Link Reading Club, which is reading *Hard Times* this term.

Tabella 1.8 Reading text — Sam's post on the Link Reading Club forum

Why *Hard Times* is still about schools
My first university seminar was on the opening chapters of *Hard Times*, and I went in expecting to talk about smoke and factories. After all, I live in Manchester now, and every morning I walk past old cotton mills that have been turned into flats. Instead, our tutor wrote one word on the board — "definition" — and asked us what a horse was.
Nobody answered properly, of course. That is exactly what happens in chapter 2. Sissy Jupe, whose father works with horses in a circus, is asked to define one and cannot. Then Bitzer, the model pupil, rattles off a list: "Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth…" He is praised; she is humiliated. Our tutor pointed out that Sissy knows far more about horses than Bitzer does. She just doesn't know it in the form the school wants.
This is why I think the novel is still about schools. Gradgrind is easy to laugh at, with his square forehead and his "imperial gallons of facts", but the idea behind him has not disappeared. Whenever learning is measured only by what can be counted — marks, rankings, the right word in the right box — we are a little closer to his classroom. My sister Lily is seven. Last week she spent an evening memorising the definition of a "subordinate clause", and when I asked her what one was for, she looked at me as if I had asked something very stupid. She knew the definition. Nobody had asked her to use one.
I don't want to be unfair. Facts matter, and Dickens knew that: he was a journalist who checked his figures. Giulia, who is preparing for her final exams in Turin, would say that you cannot discuss Dickens without knowing when he lived and what he wrote — and she would be right. The problem in *Hard Times* is not facts, but facts *alone*. Gradgrind's children are never allowed to wonder, and the novel shows the result years later: Louisa marries a man she does not love because it is the reasonable thing to do, and Tom becomes a thief.
What surprised me most was how modern the circus felt. Sleary's people are poor, they drink, and they are kind. They are the only characters who work together for pleasure, and they save Gradgrind's son at the end. Dickens does not ask us to choose between a school and a circus. He asks for a school with some of the circus in it: imagination, play, feeling.

So here is my question for the club: what would Sissy Jupe's ideal lesson look like? And Giulia — do Italian schools have their own Gradgrinds? I suspect every country does.

After reading. a) Why did the seminar surprise Sam? b) What does Sissy know that Bitzer does not? c) Explain the difference between "facts" and "facts *alone*". d) Find one example of the literary present and one of the present perfect. e) Exchange task: answer Sam's question in a reply of 60–80 words.

1.5.3 Speaking: comparing two pictures, then and now

Compare two pictures of the same kind of place at different times: what has changed, and what has not. Your teacher gives you the pictures; here they are described in words.

- **Picture A.** An engraving of a narrow street in a northern English town around 1860: brick houses across a muddy lane, washing on a line, a woman filling a bucket at a pump, barefoot children on a doorstep, factory chimneys smoking behind.
- **Picture B.** A colour photograph of the same kind of street today: repainted brick terraces, bicycles, a small park, a café with tables outside, teenagers in school uniform — and, in one doorway, a man sleeping under a blanket.

Tabella 1.9 Useful language — comparing two pictures

Function	Phrases
contrasting	*Whereas in picture A..., in picture B... · Unlike the children in the first picture, ...*
noticing continuity	*One thing that hardly seems to have changed is... · In both cases...*
speculating	*I imagine the people in the first picture... · It looks as if... · They might well be...*
giving an opinion	*What strikes me most is... · I'd say the biggest difference is...*

1. **Pairs (one minute each).** Student A says what has improved; Student B says which problem of picture A still exists in picture B.
2. **Towards the colloquio.** In two minutes, link picture A to *Hard Times* and to one other subject: history, science or Italian.

1.5.4 Writing: a feature article

A **feature article** (*articolo di approfondimento*) explores a topic in depth and in a personal style, unlike a news report. Giulia wrote this model for her school's English magazine; the expert is invented.

Tabella 1.10 Model text — a feature article

Facts, Fancy and Five Hours of Sleep

More than a hundred and seventy years after Hard Times*, are our schools still Gradgrind's? A fifth-year student goes looking for the answer.*

It is eleven at night, and Marta is still copying dates into a notebook. "The French Revolution, the Restoration, the Unification," she reads aloud, without looking up. "I don't need to understand them. I need to remember them until Thursday."

If Charles Dickens could see her, he would recognise the scene. In *Hard Times*, published in 1854, Mr Gradgrind, who runs a school, wants nothing but facts and treats his pupils as "little vessels" to be filled. The novel is a satire, but its question is serious: what happens to children who are never allowed to wonder?

Much has changed since then. Nobody in our school is forced to work in a factory at twelve, as Dickens himself was, and teachers ask us to discuss and compare. Yet many students say the pressure has simply changed shape. "We have more information than ever," says Elena, who is in my class, "and less time to think about any of it."

Dr Laura Galli, an educational psychologist (an invented expert for this model), puts it this way: "Memory is not the enemy of imagination. The problem begins when memorising is the only thing we reward."

Perhaps the answer is Dickens's own. At the end of his novel it is the circus people, not the schoolmasters, who show kindness and imagination. Nobody wants a circus in the classroom. But one lesson a day in which someone asks "what if?" might be enough to make Gradgrind uncomfortable.

Marta closes her notebook. "Ask me about Napoleon," she says. "Just don't ask me why."

Structure. Headline (a play on Fact and Fancy) → standfirst (English 2: topic and angle) → a scene with direct speech → the link to the book → then and now → an expert → an ending that returns to the opening. Tenses: past for Dickens's life, literary present for the novel, present perfect for change (*Much has changed*).

Checklist. ✓ one clear angle · ✓ an opening scene or question · ✓ at least two voices · ✓ anything invented marked as invented · ✓ the right tenses · ✓ an ending that echoes the beginning.

Task. Write a feature article (250–300 words) for a student magazine: "Then and now: growing up poor" *or* "Then and now: what is school for?". **Research (TIC):** real figures only from an official source (ISTAT, the UK Office for National Statistics), named in the article; otherwise no numbers.

LEARNING TO LEARN

Planning your last year. The year ends with the esame di maturità, and before it come the INVALSI tests in English (reading and listening, on a computer, in the spring) and the class simulations. Start two habits now.

- **A calendar.** Note the dates your school gives you and count the weeks backwards; plan one English literature revision afternoon a month.
- **A revision log.** After each chapter, add one row to a table: *author and work · theme · one short quotation · one image or document · one link to another subject*. For this chapter: *Dickens, Hard Times · education, the industrial city · "nothing but Facts" · Snow's map · Verga (Italian), Mill and Marx (philosophy), Menander (Greek)*.

In the colloquio you start from a material and link subjects: this log is your map of links, as for Italian, Latin and Greek.

1.6 Connections: Dickens and Verga; Menander; John Snow

1.6.1 Two child labourers: Dickens and Verga

Twenty-four years after *Hard Times*, Giovanni Verga (1840–1922) published a story about a boy who works in a red-sand quarry in Sicily. "Rosso Malpelo" first appeared in 1878 and was collected in *Vita dei campi* (1880). It opens:

> *Malpelo si chiamava così perchè aveva i capelli rossi; ed aveva i capelli rossi perchè era un ragazzo malizioso e cattivo, che prometteva di riescire un fior di birbone.*
>
> — Giovanni Verga, «Rosso Malpelo», *Vita dei campi* (Wikisource, from the 1881 edition)

"Malpelo was so called because he had red hair; and he had red hair because he was a malicious, wicked boy, who promised to turn out a first-class rogue." The logic is upside down because it is not Verga's but the quarry workers': the narrator adopts the voice and prejudices of the community and never steps outside it to judge. Both writers show working children, in years of public inquiry — in Italy, Franchetti and Sonnino's *La Sicilia nel 1876* (1877) described children in the sulphur mines. But they are two kinds of realism. Dickens's omniscient narrator uses caricature and pathos and asks us to cry and to reform. Verga's **verismo** (the Italian realism of the 1870s–80s) aims at **impersonality** (*impersonalità*): the author disappears, the story seems to tell itself, and nobody offers comfort.

1.6.2 Classico: foundlings and recognitions

Many Dickens plots turn on a secret birth: Oliver Twist proves to be the son of a respectable family; Esther in *Bleak House* discovers that her mother is Lady Dedlock; Pip learns who Estella's parents are. A classico reader knows the pattern. Greek **New Comedy** (*Commedia Nuova*), the Athenian comedy of the late fourth century BC, put families on stage — lovers, anxious fathers, slaves, abandoned babies — and ended with **anagnorisis** (ἀναγνώρισις, "recognition"), Aristotle's word for the change from ignorance to knowledge (*Poetics* 11), often brought about by tokens left with a foundling. Roman playwrights adapted Menander (c. 342–c. 290 BC), whom you read in Greek this year, and through Rome the pattern reached the novel. In his *Samia*, Moschion, the adopted son of Demeas, has secretly fathered a baby; Demeas, who believes the child is his own by his companion Chrysis, refuses to bring up a bastard, and Moschion asks who is really "legitimate":

Tabella 1.11 Menander, *Samia* 141–142 (Greek text as transcribed on Greek Wikisource, standard line numbering; translation by the editors)

Original	English (translation by the editors)
«ἀλλ' εἰ δικαίως ἐξετάσαι τις, γνήσιος ὁ χρηστός ἐστιν, ὁ δὲ πονηρὸς καὶ νόθος» (*all' ei dikaiōs exetasai tis, gnēsios / ho chrēstos estin, ho de ponēros kai nothos*)	"But if one examines it fairly, the good man is legitimate, and the bad man is a bastard" — and, the sentence goes on, a slave.

Dickens did not take his plots from Menander: the resemblance is a family one, passed down through comedy and romance. But both writers judge people by character rather than birth, and both use recognition to bring hidden family — and social — ties into the light.

COLLEGAMENTI

Science and data: John Snow and the Broad Street pump. Most doctors of the 1850s held the **miasma theory** (*teoria dei miasmi*): disease came from bad air. John Snow (1813–1858) argued that cholera was carried by contaminated water. When it broke out in Soho at the end of August 1854, he took the addresses of the dead from the official register and marked them on a map (Figura 1.4). The deaths clustered around the Broad Street pump, and the exceptions confirmed it: a workhouse and a brewery nearby, with their own wells, had very few victims, while a widow in Hampstead who had Broad Street water fetched because she liked its taste died. On 8 September the parish authorities removed the pump handle, although the outbreak was already falling (Figura 1.5).

Snow's study is often called a founding moment of **epidemiology** (*epidemiologia*), the study of how diseases spread in populations, with data, maps and comparisons. In the same year Filippo Pacini, in Florence, saw the bacterium under the microscope; Robert Koch identified it again in 1883–84. Clean water and sewers made cholera rare in Europe; it still kills where clean water is lacking.

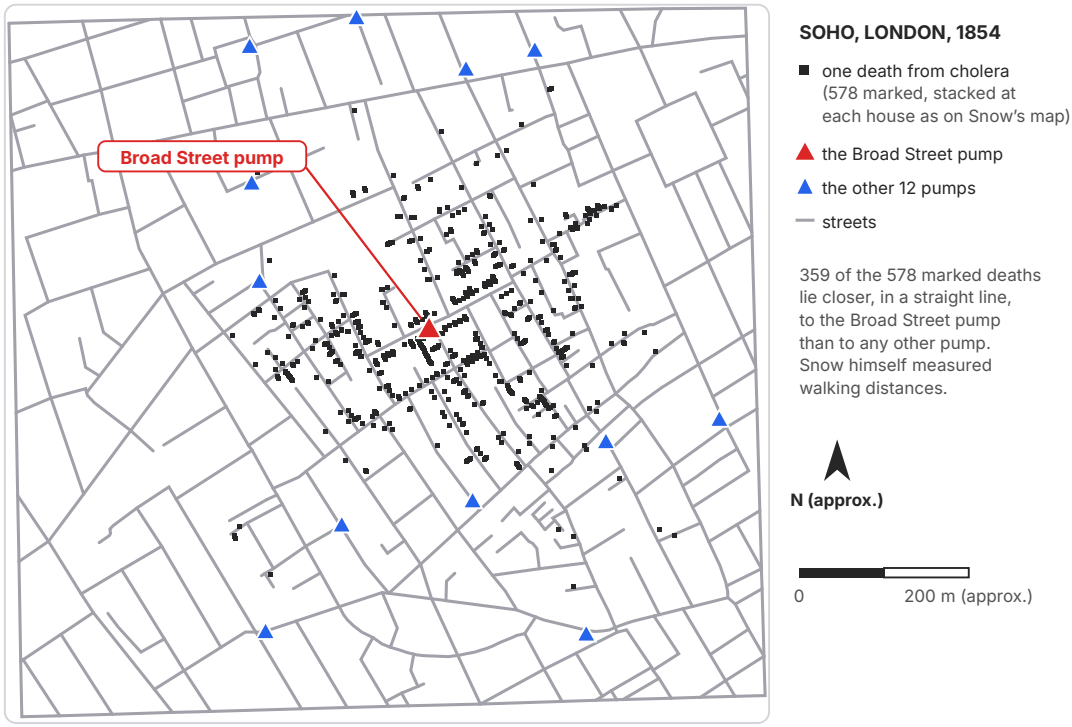


Figura 1.4 Cholera deaths and water pumps in Soho, London, August–September 1854: a simplified map redrawn from the digitised data of John Snow's map (digitised at the NCGIA by R. Dodson and W. Tobler, via the HistData collection; positions approximate). Straight-line distances computed for this book.

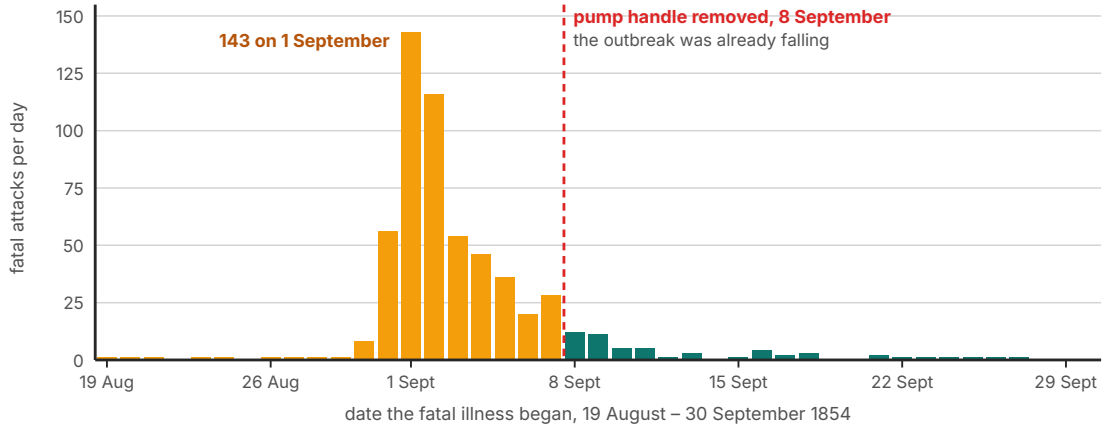


Figura 1.5 Fatal attacks of cholera per day in the Broad Street outbreak, by the date the illness began (Snow, *On the Mode of Communication of Cholera*, 2nd ed., 1855, table 1, via the HistData collection): 571 dated attacks; 45 more had no known date.

SINTESI

- Victoria reigned from 1837 to 1901; her marriage to Albert (1840–1861) made the royal family a model of domestic respectability.
- Railways, factories and fast-growing cities such as Manchester brought wealth, but also slums, overcrowding and cholera.
- The New Poor Law (1834) offered help to the able-bodied poor only inside the workhouse, deliberately harsh.
- The Chartists' People's Charter (1838) asked for six democratic reforms; Parliament rejected their petitions, but most of the six points later became law.
- Free trade triumphed with the repeal of the Corn Laws (1846); Utilitarianism judged institutions by their usefulness, and Mill made it more humane.
- The Great Exhibition (1851) celebrated progress; the "Victorian compromise" is a later label for an age that combined progress with poverty and respectability with hypocrisy.
- Serialisation in monthly parts and weekly magazines created a huge reading public and shaped the form of the Victorian novel.
- The social novel (Gaskell, Disraeli, Kingsley, Dickens) put the "condition of England" and its classes into fiction.
- Dickens (1812–1870) combined caricature, humour and pathos with attacks on cruel institutions; he hoped for kindness and reform rather than revolution.
- *Hard Times* (1854) sets Gradgrind's Facts against the circus's Fancy in industrial Coketown.
- In essays, use the literary present for what happens in a text, the past for lives and events, and the present perfect for influence up to now.
- Verga's impersonal verismo contrasts with Dickens's emotional narrator; Menander's recognitions are a distant ancestor of Dickens's plots; John Snow's map is a founding moment of epidemiology.

ESERCIZI

History and Literature

1. ● The New Poor Law of 1834…
   - **A.** gave the poor a weekly allowance at home
   - **B.** offered help to the able-bodied poor only inside the workhouse
   - **C.** closed the workhouses
   - **D.** was one of the Chartists' demands

2. ● Which of these was NOT one of the six points of the People's Charter?
   A. a secret ballot
   B. payment for MPs
   C. votes for women
   D. annual parliaments

3. ●● The expression "Victorian compromise" is…
   A. the name of a law passed in 1851
   B. the title of a novel by Gaskell
   C. a slogan of the Anti-Corn Law League
   D. a label used by later critics and historians

4. ● True or false? Correct the false statements. a) Victoria became queen in 1837, at eighteen. b) The Great Exhibition was held in Manchester. c) Engels's *The Condition of the Working Class in England* first appeared in English in 1845. d) *Hard Times* first appeared in monthly parts. e) Peel repealed the Corn Laws in 1846. f) Dickens died in 1870, leaving a novel unfinished.

5. ● Match each work (1–6) with its author and date (a–f). 1 *Oliver Twist* · 2 *Mary Barton* · 3 *Past and Present* · 4 *The Condition of the Working Class in England* · 5 *Self-Help* · 6 *Great Expectations* — a) Gaskell, 1848 · b) Carlyle, 1843 · c) Dickens, 1860–61 · d) Smiles, 1859 · e) Engels, 1845 · f) Dickens, 1837–39

6. ●● Explain each term in one sentence: a) Victorian compromise · b) social novel · c) serialisation · d) caricature.

7. ●● Short answer (50–80 words): how did serial publication shape the Victorian novel? Give two effects.

Text Analysis

8. ● In T2, the repetition of "It was a town of…" at the start of several sentences is an example of…
   A. anaphora
   B. oxymoron
   C. onomatopoeia
   D. understatement

9. ● T1. a) Paraphrase "Plant nothing else, and root out everything else." b) Which metaphor turns the children into objects? c) Why does the narrator repeat "The emphasis was helped by…"?

10. ●● T2. Choose two images (one of smoke or the river, one of the steam engine) and explain what each suggests about Coketown (60–80 words).

11. ●● T3. Write a PEE paragraph (80–100 words): how does Dickens show that Miss Havisham has tried to stop time?

12. ●●● Compare T1 and T3 (80–100 words): in what sense do Gradgrind and Miss Havisham both impose a fixed system on children?

13. ●● Compare Dickens's working children with Verga's Malpelo (60–80 words). Use *verismo*, *impersonality* and *omniscient narrator*.

14. ●● Colloquio link (60–80 words): start from John Snow's map (Figura 1.4) and connect it with science and with the Victorian city.

Language

15. ● Recap of English 4. Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first, using the word given. a) Britain had never seen such a crowd before. NEVER — ___ such a crowd. b) Gradgrind wants only Facts. WHAT — ___ Facts. c) If Snow had not collected the data, nobody would have believed him. HAD — ___, nobody would have believed him. d) The Chartists asked for every man to have the vote. THAT — The Chartists demanded ___ the vote. e) The water, not the air, spread the disease. IT — ___ spread the disease. f) Gradgrind treats the children like empty containers. IF — Gradgrind treats the children ___ empty containers.

16. ● Put the verbs in brackets in the correct tense. Charles Dickens (1) ___ (publish) *Great Expectations* in weekly instalments in 1860–61. In the novel Pip, an orphan, (2) ___ (live) with his sister and her husband. One day he (3) ___ (send) to play at Satis House, where Miss Havisham, who (4) ___ (abandon) on her wedding day years before, still (5) ___ (wear) her bridal dress. Since its publication the novel (6) ___ (adapt) for the cinema many times, and critics still (7) ___ (disagree) about its ending.

17. ● Choose the correct verb. a) Gradgrind (believed / believes) only in Facts. b) Dickens (visited / visits) Preston in January 1854. c) Coketown (became / has become) a name for any grim industrial town. d) In chapter 5 the narrator (compared / compares) a steam engine to an elephant. e) Carlyle (published / has published) *Past and Present* in 1843. f) Today many critics (argue / argued) that the ending is too neat.

18. ●● Each sentence contains a mistake. Find it and correct it. a) ✗ In T3 Pip saw that the clocks had stopped. b) ✗ Dickens is dying at Gad's Hill in 1870. c) ✗ Since 1854 *Hard Times* inspired many debates about education. d) ✗ The narrator says that Coketown "is a town of red brick". e) ✗ Dickens has published *Hard Times* in *Household Words*.

19. ●● Rewrite this plot summary in the literary present. *Sissy Jupe's father, a circus clown, disappeared, and Gradgrind took the girl into his house. Years later Louisa married Bounderby, although she did not love him, and Tom robbed the bank where he worked.*

20. ●● Write sentences about influence with the present perfect. a) Coketown / become / a symbol of the industrial town. b) the adjective *Dickensian* / come to describe / poor, overcrowded conditions. c) Snow's map / become / one of the most famous maps in the history of medicine.

21. ●● Translate into English. a) Nel romanzo Gradgrind dirige una scuola in cui si insegnano solo fatti. b) Dickens lavorò in una fabbrica quando aveva dodici anni. c) Da allora il nome di Coketown è diventato un simbolo.

22. ●● Present perfect or past simple? a) Dickens ___ (write) fourteen completed novels. b) *Hard Times* ___ (be) on the club's reading list since September. c) The Crystal Palace ___ (burn down) in 1936. d) Historians ___ (debate) the Victorian compromise for decades. e) Cholera ___ (not disappear) from the world yet.

23. ●●● Integrate each quotation into a sentence of your own, with a present-tense reporting verb (*notes, observes, insists, describes*). Do not change the quotation. a) T1: "nothing but Facts" b) T2: "every year the counterpart of the last and the next" c) T3: "her watch had stopped at twenty minutes to nine"

Vocabulary

24. ● Complete with words from Tabella 1.6. a) Many families lived in cellars in the ___ of Manchester. b) Low ___ meant that children had to work too. c) Without clean water and drains, poor ___ helped cholera to spread. d) Ten people in one room: ___ was normal. e) The Chartists wanted political ___. f) Growing ___ between rich and poor worried many writers.

25. ●● Form nouns with *-hood*, *-ship* or *-dom*. a) The Chartists fought for political ___ (free). b) Dickens never forgot the ___ (hard) of his ___ (child). c) Victoria's ___ (king) included Ireland. d) Drinking from the Broad Street pump increased the ___ (likely) of falling ill. e) In Coketown ___ (bore) is part of daily life. f) Feargus O'Connor was famous for his ___ (leader) of the Chartists.

26. ● Match the verbs (1–6) with the nouns (a–f) to make collocations. 1 earn · 2 live in · 3 carry out · 4 improve · 5 give to · 6 reduce — a) a slum · b) inequality · c) a wage · d) charity · e) sanitation · f) a reform

Writing and Speaking

27. ●●● Write a feature article (250–300 words) following the task in the Writing section. Check it against the checklist before you hand it in.

28. ●● Speaking. Compare pictures A and B in the Speaking section for one minute; then say which problem of picture A still exists in picture B.

Towards the Exam

29. ●● Open cloze (one word per gap). The Great Exhibition opened (1) ___ 1 May 1851 in Hyde Park. The building, (2) ___ was made of iron and glass, was designed by Joseph Paxton. (3) ___ only did it amaze visitors, but it was also built in a few months. Visitors came from all over the country, many of (4) ___ by train. Not everyone was enthusiastic: some people feared that the crowds (5) ___ cause disorder. In the (6) ___, the Exhibition was a great success, and its profits (7) ___ used to buy land in South Kensington.

30. ●● Word formation. Use the word in capitals to form a word that fits the gap. Victorian Britain was the first (1) ___ (INDUSTRY) nation in the world. In its cities, (2) ___ (POOR) forced families into cellars, and (3) ___ (CROWD) made every epidemic worse. Reformers demanded better (4) ___ (SANITARY), but many children spent their (5) ___ (CHILD) in factories. The growing (6) ___ (EQUAL) between rich and poor worried writers such as Dickens, for whom (7) ___ (FREE) without food or education meant little. Yet the age was proud of its (8) ___ (RESPECT).

31. ●●● Key-word transformations (2–5 words, including the word given). a) Dickens did not become famous until *Pickwick* appeared. DID — Only when *Pickwick* appeared ___ famous. b) People say that Coketown is based on Preston. SAID — Coketown ___ based on Preston. c) It's a pity I didn't read *Hard Times* earlier. WISH — I ___ *Hard Times* earlier. d) Snow got the authorities to remove the pump handle. HAD — Snow ___ removed. e) The poor received help only if they entered the workhouse. UNLESS — The poor received no help ___ the workhouse.

32. ●●● Colloquio prompt. Material: the sentence "It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever" (T2) and a photograph, described by the commission: a modern Asian or European city under a thick grey smog, with commuters wearing masks. a) Describe the two materials. b) Link them to Dickens and the Victorian city. c) Connect them with at least two other subjects. d) Say what has changed and what has not. Prepare a two-minute answer.

PER APPROFONDIRE

- [SAN] A. Sanders, *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*: the pages on the early Victorian novel and on Dickens.
- [NOR] S. Greenblatt (ed.), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, vol. E, *The Victorian Age*: the introduction to the period.
- [ABR] M. H. Abrams, G. G. Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*: the entries on the novel and on realism.
- [SWA] M. Swan, *Practical English Usage*: the entries on the present tenses and on the present perfect and the past simple.
- [IND] *Indicazioni nazionali per i licei*, Lingua e cultura straniera: the quinto anno.

Glossario del capitolo

Anagnorisis
agnizione, riconoscimento — in Greek tragedy and comedy, the moment in which a character discovers the truth about someone's identity (Aristotle's term).

Caricature
caricatura — a portrait that exaggerates one feature of a person until it stands for the whole character.

Chartism
cartismo — the British working-class movement (1838–c. 1850) that campaigned for the six points of the People's Charter.

Epidemiology
epidemiologia — the study of how diseases spread in populations, using data, maps and comparisons.

Feature article
articolo di approfondimento — a magazine or newspaper article that explores a topic in depth and in a personal style, with scenes, voices and quotations.

Free trade
libero scambio — trade between countries without taxes or limits on imports and exports.

Impersonality
impersonalità — in Verga's verismo, the author's disappearance from the story, which seems to tell itself in the voice of its characters.

Laissez-faire
liberismo, «lasciar fare» — the idea that the state should interfere as little as possible with trade, wages and working conditions.

Literary present
presente letterario — the use of the present simple to describe what happens in a literary text.

Miasma theory
teoria dei miasmi — the nineteenth-century belief that diseases such as cholera were caused by bad air from dirt and decay.

New Comedy
Commedia Nuova — the comedy of Athens in the late fourth and early third centuries BC (Menander), based on private family life, love plots and recognitions.

New Poor Law
nuova legge sui poveri — the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, which gave help to the able-bodied poor only inside the workhouse.

Serialisation
pubblicazione a puntate — the publication of a novel in instalments, in monthly parts or in a magazine.

Social novel
romanzo sociale — a Victorian novel of the 1840s–50s about the "condition of England": classes, industry and poverty; also called the condition-of-England novel.

Utilitarianism
utilitarismo — Bentham's philosophy, which judges actions and laws by whether they produce "the greatest happiness of the greatest number".

Verismo
verismo — the Italian realist movement of the 1870s–1880s (Verga), which aimed at an impersonal representation of humble lives.

Victorian compromise
compromesso vittoriano — a later critics' label for the Victorian balance between progress and its human costs, respectability and hypocrisy.

Soluzioni

1. B — help was given only inside the workhouse, where conditions were deliberately made harsh.

2. C — the Charter asked for a vote for every man over twenty-one, not for women.

3. D — it is a later label, not a phrase the Victorians used of themselves.

4. a) True. b) False: it was held in Hyde Park, London. c) False: it was first published in German (1845). d) False: it appeared weekly in *Household Words* (April–August 1854). e) True. f) True (*The Mystery of Edwin Drood*).

5. 1 f · 2 a · 3 b · 4 e · 5 d · 6 c.

6. Model answers: a) a later label for the Victorian balance between progress and its human costs, respectability and hypocrisy; b) a novel of the 1840s–50s that shows the "condition of England" — classes, factories, poverty — and asks the reader to feel and act; c) publication of a novel in instalments, in monthly parts or weekly magazines; d) a portrait that exaggerates one feature of a person until it stands for the whole character.

7. Model answer: Because a novel came out in monthly parts or weekly chapters, each instalment needed its own climax and a reason to buy the next one, so plots are full of suspense and surprises. Readers followed a story for many months, so authors created large casts of memorable, sharply drawn characters. Writers could also react to sales and readers' letters while the book was still being written, and cheap parts made novels available to a much larger public. (77 words)

8. A — anaphora, the repetition of an opening phrase (English 4, chapter 11).

9. a) Teach only facts and destroy every other kind of knowledge or feeling in the children's minds. b) "little vessels" waiting to be filled with "imperial gallons of facts". c) The frame "The emphasis was helped by…" is repeated for the forehead, the mouth and the voice: it is mechanical, like the speaker, and builds a caricature in which every part of the man insists on the same idea.

10. Model answer: The smoke is compared to "interminable serpents" that "never got uncoiled": the image suggests something endless, dangerous and unnatural hanging over the town. The piston moving "like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness" is half comic, half sad: a huge, patient animal reduced to one repeated movement. Both images show nature distorted by industry, and the monotony that the whole paragraph imitates. (67 words)

11. Model answer: Dickens shows that Miss Havisham has tried to stop time by freezing her wedding day in every detail. She still wears the bridal dress, veil and flowers, but "everything within my view which ought to be white, had been white long ago, and had lost its lustre". The point is made explicit at the end, when Pip notices that her watch and the room's clock "had stopped at twenty minutes to nine". Time has not stopped, however: the bride has "withered like the dress", so her refusal of change has only produced decay. (95 words)

12. Model answer: Both adults use children to serve an idea. Gradgrind fills his pupils with "nothing but Facts", as if they were "little vessels", and leaves no room for feeling. Miss Havisham, who has stopped every clock at the moment of her humiliation, brings Pip to "play" in a room where nothing can change, and (as the novel later shows) raises Estella to take revenge on men. In both cases a rigid adult system — reason without feeling, or feeling without reason — damages the young. Readings may differ: some will stress the comedy of T1, others the Gothic horror of T3. (99 words)

13. Model answer: Both writers show children exploited by work, but their methods differ. Dickens's

omniscient narrator comments, uses caricature and pathos, and openly asks the reader to feel pity and to support reform. Verga's verismo aims at impersonality: the story of Malpelo is told in the voice and with the prejudices of the quarry workers, the author never judges, and there is no consolation or hope of improvement at the end. (68 words)

14. Model answer: Snow's map of Soho shows cholera deaths clustered around the Broad Street pump. In science, it is a founding moment of epidemiology: Snow used data and comparison to show that cholera spreads through contaminated water, against the miasma theory; Pacini saw the bacterium the same year. In history, it shows the price of the Victorian city — overcrowding and no sanitation — which Dickens describes in Coketown and which led to sewers and public-health laws. (73 words)

15. a) Never before had Britain seen such a crowd. b) What Gradgrind wants is Facts. c) Had Snow not collected the data. d) that every man (should) be given / have the vote. e) It was the water, not the air, that spread the disease. f) as if they were empty containers.

16. 1 published · 2 lives · 3 is sent · 4 was (or had been) abandoned · 5 wears · 6 has been adapted · 7 disagree.

17. a) believes (text) · b) visited (life) · c) has become (influence) · d) compares (text) · e) published (dated event) · f) argue (critics today).

18. a) In T3 Pip sees that the clocks have stopped (literary present). b) Dickens died at Gad's Hill in 1870. c) Since 1854 *Hard Times* has inspired… d) … that Coketown "was a town of red brick" (never change a quotation). e) Dickens published *Hard Times*…

19. Sissy Jupe's father, a circus clown, disappears, and Gradgrind takes the girl into his house. Years later Louisa marries Bounderby, although she does not love him, and Tom robs the bank where he works.

20. a) Coketown has become a symbol of the industrial town. b) The adjective *Dickensian* has come to describe poor, overcrowded conditions. c) Snow's map has become one of the most famous maps in the history of medicine.

21. a) In the novel Gradgrind runs a school where only facts are taught. b) Dickens worked in a factory when he was twelve. c) Since then the name Coketown has become a symbol.

22. a) wrote (his life is finished) · b) has been · c) burned (or burnt) down · d) have debated / have been debating · e) has not disappeared.

23. Models: a) Gradgrind insists that children should learn "nothing but Facts". b) The narrator observes that in Coketown every year is "the counterpart of the last and the next". c) Pip notes that "her watch had stopped at twenty minutes to nine", just like the clock in the room.

24. a) slums · b) wages · c) sanitation · d) overcrowding · e) reform · f) inequality.

25. a) freedom · b) hardship, childhood · c) kingdom · d) likelihood · e) boredom · f) leadership.

26. 1 c (earn a wage) · 2 a (live in a slum) · 3 f (carry out a reform) · 4 e (improve sanitation) · 5 d (give to charity) · 6 b (reduce inequality).

27. Guidance: assess the headline and standfirst (angle clear), an opening scene or question, one developed angle with a then-and-now comparison drawn from the chapter (workhouse, factory children, schools), at least two voices, any invented expert or number marked as invented (real figures only with an official source), correct tenses (past for history, present perfect for change, literary present for novels), and an ending that echoes the opening. Word count 250–300.

28. Model answer: Both pictures show a street of brick houses, but the first seems to date from around 1860 and the second from today. Whereas in picture A the lane is muddy and a woman has to fetch water from a pump, in picture B there are bicycles, a park and a café, so living conditions have clearly improved. What strikes me most, though, is the man sleeping in a doorway. It looks as if poverty has not disappeared; it has simply become less visible, surrounded by comfort. I'd say the children are the biggest difference: in the first picture they sit

barefoot on a step, in the second they are on their way to school.

29. 1 on · 2 which · 3 Not · 4 them · 5 would (might, could) · 6 end · 7 were.

30. 1 industrial (also industrialised) · 2 poverty · 3 overcrowding · 4 sanitation · 5 childhood · 6 inequality · 7 freedom · 8 respectability.

31. a) did Dickens become (inversion, English 4, chapter 3) · b) is said to be · c) wish I had read · d) had the pump handle (causative) · e) unless they entered (went into).

32. Model answer: The sentence comes from *Hard Times* (1854), where Dickens describes Coketown, a fictional industrial town; the photograph shows a modern city covered by smog. Both show air poisoned by industry and people who must live with it. Dickens uses the image of endless serpents of smoke to suggest something unnatural and threatening, and repetition to show the monotony of factory life. In history, the industrial city of the 1840s and 1850s led to Chadwick's report and the Public Health Act of 1848; in science, it connects with John Snow and with today's studies of air pollution; in Italian, Verga's "Rosso Malpelo" shows another child working in unhealthy conditions. What has changed is that pollution is now measured and regulated; what has not is that the poorest still live closest to it. (Any well-supported set of links is acceptable.)