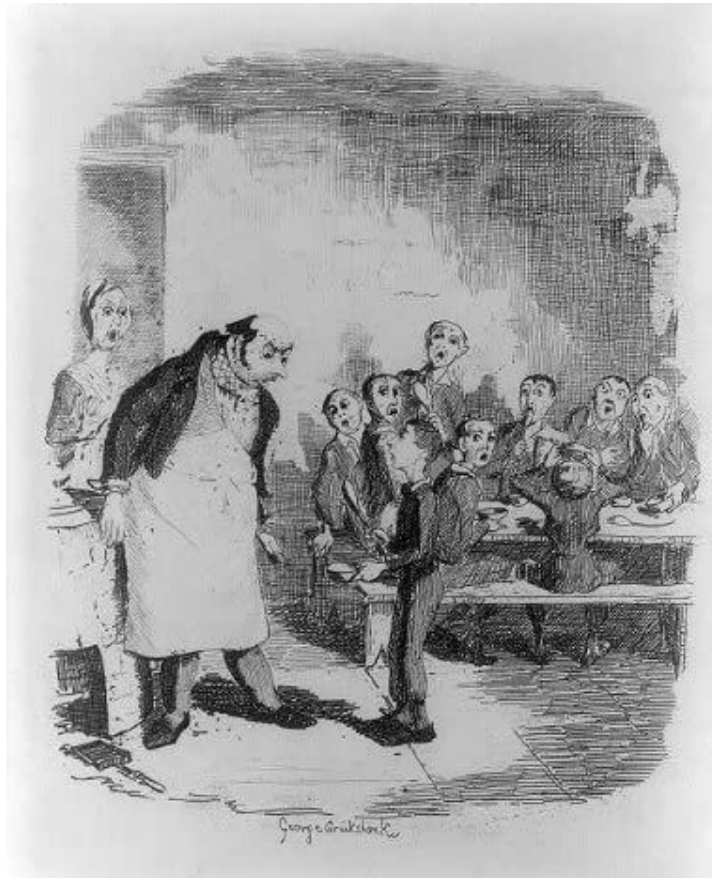


THE ROSENBACH

Charles Dickens Social Activism, Lesson One

Level: Grades 6-12

Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens is a story about an orphan who is taken in by a gang of thieves in London. Dickens was concerned with the plight of the poor and the imprisoned because he had first hand knowledge of it. When he was only 12 years old, his father was jailed because he owed the equivalent of \$1300. Charles had to leave school and go to work to support the family. This is an illustration created by the illustrator George Cruikshank for the first edition of *Oliver Twist* in 1837.



After Charles Dickens died, George Cruikshank claimed that Dickens stole the idea for *Oliver Twist* from him. Most people thought Cruikshank was crazy. But some people said that because the two started working together on the illustrations before the book was complete, Cruikshank has a right to say that he was the co-author. What do you think?