

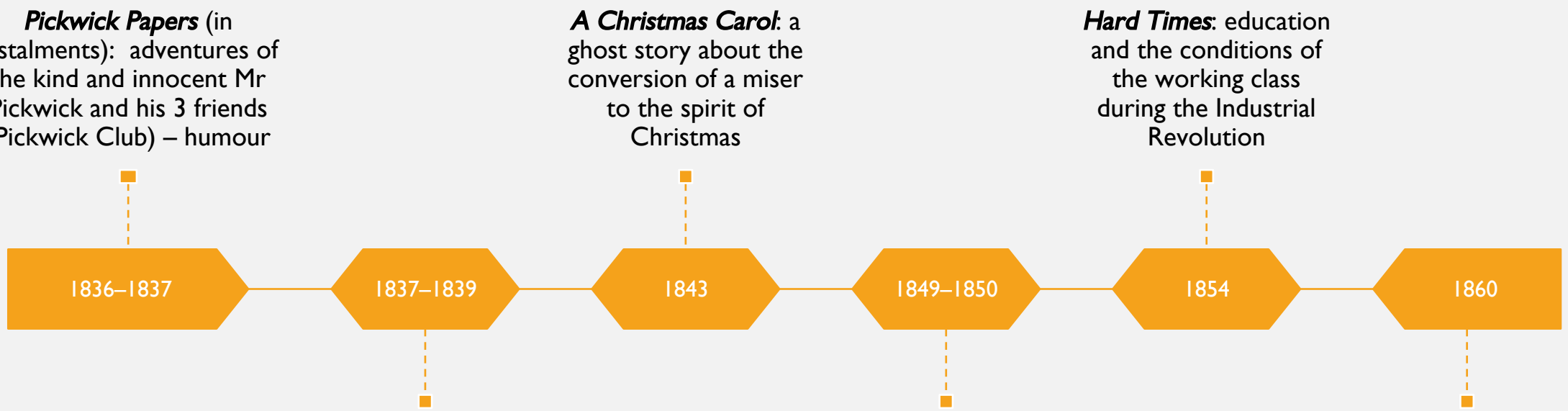
CHARLES DICKENS

(1812 – 1870)

BIOGRAPHY

- 1812, Portsmouth – the second of 8 children
- 12 years old: his father was imprisoned for debts and all the family followed him
- Work in a factory
- The experiences, the places, the people -> material for his work
- Journalist
- First novel: ***Pickwick Papers*** (1836)
- Prolific author – 15 novels
- Travels to America and Italy
- He had 10 children but then left his wife for his mistress
- Died in 1870

WORKS AND THEMES



PLOTS, CHARACTERS AND SETTING

Inventiveness + Sympathy with the oppressed + Indignation against social injustice

Serial publication -> need to mantain interest from one episode to another

Each episode ended with a dramatic turn of events = **suspense**

A lot of characters and climaxes

Plots and **sub-plots**

Melodrama

- **Typical characters – vices** or **virtues**
- No psychological depth
- Gentlemen, lawyers, industrialists, tradesmen, teachers, shopkeepers, pickpockets, criminals
- urban life – **London** with its foggy, dark and dirty streets

SOCIAL CRITICISM

- Consequences of the Industrial Revolution on the lives of the poor
- The living and working conditions of the working classes
- Education
- Child labour
- The legal system and crime
- Purpose: **to describe the social evils of the time and to make the readers aware of them**
- Against the Victorian idea that some people had a tendency to vice (**poor ≠ criminal**)
- Prostitution and crime were the consequences of a corrupt society