

Founding Editor: John Milne

The Macmillan Readers provide a choice of enjoyable reading materials for learners of English. The series is published at six levels – Starter, Beginner, Elementary, Pre-intermediate, Intermediate and Upper.

Level control

Information, structure and vocabulary are controlled to suit the students' ability at each level.

The number of words at each level:

Starter	about 300 basic words
Beginner	about 600 basic words
Elementary	about 1100 basic words
Pre-intermediate	about 1400 basic words
Intermediate	about 1600 basic words
Upper	about 2200 basic words

Vocabulary

Some difficult words and phrases in this book are important for understanding the story. Some of these words are explained in the story and some are shown in the pictures. From Pre-intermediate level upwards, words are marked with a number like this: ...³. These words are explained in the Glossary at the end of the book.

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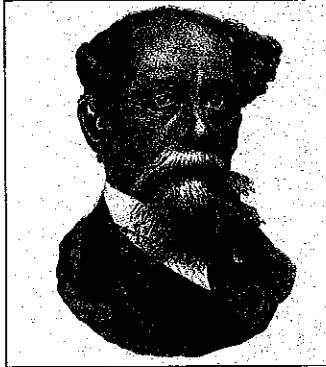
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A Map of London in the 1860s

A Note About the Author



Charles Dickens was born on 7th February 1812. The Dickens family lived near Portsmouth, on the south coast of England. Later, the family lived in London. Dickens had three brothers and three sisters. Dickens' father, John, was a clerk in

an office. He worked for the British Navy. But John did not spend his money carefully. He owed people money. In 1824, he was sent to a prison.

Dickens' father, mother, brothers and sisters all lived in the prison. Dickens had to work in a factory. He never forgot this difficult time.

Dickens went to school for only a few years. But he read many books and he educated himself. In 1834, Dickens became a newspaper reporter. He also began to write stories. His first stories were printed in magazines. These stories were very, very popular. Dickens became the most famous English writer in the nineteenth century.

In 1836, Dickens married Catherine Hogarth. They had ten children. But Catherine and Charles were not happy. In 1857, Dickens met an actress, Ellen Ternan. He fell in love with her. Dickens separated from his wife in 1858.

Dickens worked hard all his life. He became very rich. Dickens travelled in England, Scotland, Ireland and America. He read his stories in theatres. At this time, ghost stories were very popular. Everybody loved Dickens' ghost stories.

Some of Charles Dickens' stories are: *Oliver Twist* (1837–1839), *Bleak House* (1852–1853), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), *Great Expectations* (1860–1861), *A Christmas Carol* (1843) and *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–1865).

Dickens died on 8th June 1870. He was 58 years old. He was buried in the famous church, Westminster Abbey, in London.

A Note About These Stories

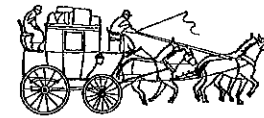
Time: 1861. **Places:** London and the south-east of England.

The two stories in this book are ghost stories. *The Signalman* is about a railway. The story was written in 1866.

There were no cars at this time. In towns, people travelled in coaches or carriages or omnibuses. All these were pulled by horses. But people could travel between towns and cities on railway trains.



a carriage



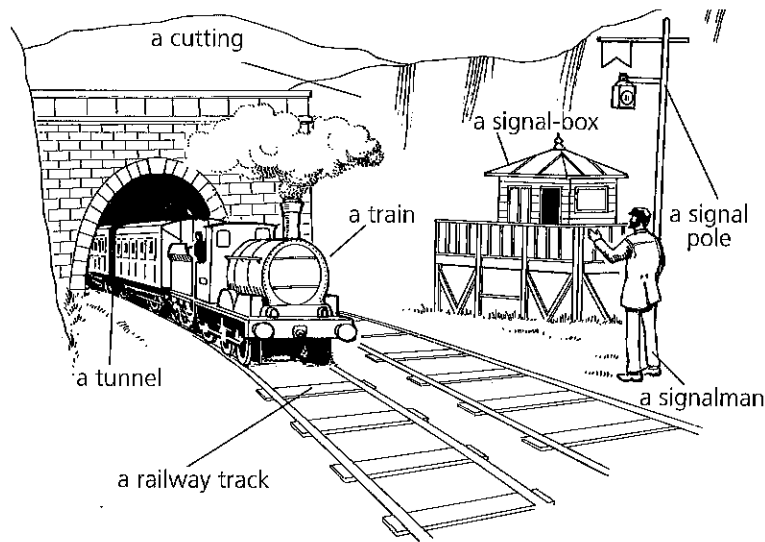
a coach



an omnibus

People first travelled on railway trains in 1825. This happened in Britain. From the 1830s to the 1860s, many railway lines were built in Britain. The lines were metal tracks. People could go on long journeys by railway. And they could travel quickly. A train had several carriages. These carriages were joined together. People sat on seats in the railway carriages. A train carried many people.

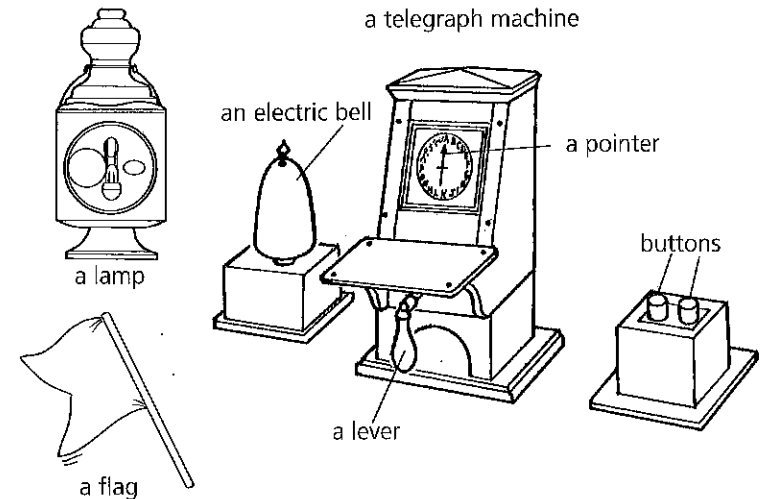
The trains travelled along the metal tracks. But the trains could not travel up hills and mountains. There were long tunnels through large hills and mountains. The railway trains travelled on the metal tracks through these tunnels. The ground of small hills was cut away. The railway track was on the flat ground, at the bottom of these cuttings.



The first railways were very dangerous. There were

many accidents on the railway lines. Then signalmen made the railways safer. Signalmen used special machines. These were called telegraph machines. These telegraph machines sent messages about trains. The messages were sent by electricity.

Signalmen worked in signal-boxes – special buildings near the railway tracks. There was a signal-box at every railway station. And there was a signal-box at each end of every tunnel. Signalmen watched the trains carefully. They sent messages to each other – messages about the trains.



The story, *The Ghost at the Trial*, was first called 'A Trial for Murder'. Dickens wrote the story in 1865. The story is about a trial in a famous law court in London – the Old Bailey. The Old Bailey is a large building. There are many courtrooms in the building.

In this story, there is going to be a trial for murder. The police have arrested a man. The man is accused of murdering his friend. In the court, the accused man will be asked many questions.

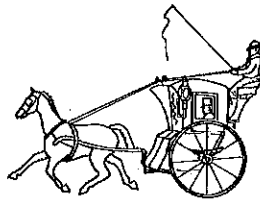
A lawyer for the prosecution will ask the accused man questions. This lawyer will say, 'This man is Guilty. He is guilty of murder.' A lawyer for the defence will also ask the accused man questions. This lawyer will say, 'This man is Not Guilty. He did not murder his friend.'

Many people will come into the court. Some of them will speak about the accused man. Some of them will speak about the murdered man. Some of them will speak about the murder. These people are witnesses. And their words are evidence.

A judge is in charge of the court. The judge and a jury listen to the evidence. The jury makes a decision about the accused person – Is the person Guilty or Not Guilty? Twelve people are in a jury. One of them – the foreman of the jury – is the leader.

At the time of this story, judges, lawyers and the people in juries were men. Women did not work in the courts in Britain. Murderers were hanged. A rope was put around a guilty person's neck. The rope was then pulled tight and the person died.

In this story, people travel in hansom cabs. These were small carriages pulled by one horse. These carriages were taxis.



a hansom cab

THE SIGNALMAN

1

The Railway Cutting

It was nine o'clock on a warm summer evening. I stood at the top of a steep slope. The slope was one side of a railway cutting. I looked down. The cutting was very deep. There were two railway tracks at the bottom of the cutting.

I looked to the right – towards London. The railway tracks disappeared into a tunnel. It was a long tunnel through a large hill. The entrance to the tunnel was very dark.

Then I looked to the left – towards Dover. The railway tracks were straight for many miles. I did not see any trains on the tracks.

I looked down into the cutting again.

There was a signal-box at the bottom of the cutting. The signal-box was a small wooden building. Its floor was four feet above the ground. The signal-box was next to the railway tracks. And it was fifty feet from the entrance to the tunnel.

A signalman was standing by the metal tracks. He was standing outside the signal-box. He was holding a red flag. The flag was a piece of red cloth on a long wooden handle.

There was another flag on a tall metal pole near the tunnel entrance. That flag was white. There were also two lamps on the ground, near the pole. The lamps were not lit. A metal ladder was fixed to the pole.

The signalman walked to the pole and he lit one of the lamps. He climbed the ladder and he took the white flag from the pole. Then he put the red flag on the pole and he put the lamp under the flag. The light from the lamp was red.

The signalman climbed down the ladder and he lit the other lamp. The light from this lamp was white. The man held up the lamp and he looked around. Then he started to walk back to the signal-box.

I shouted down to him.

