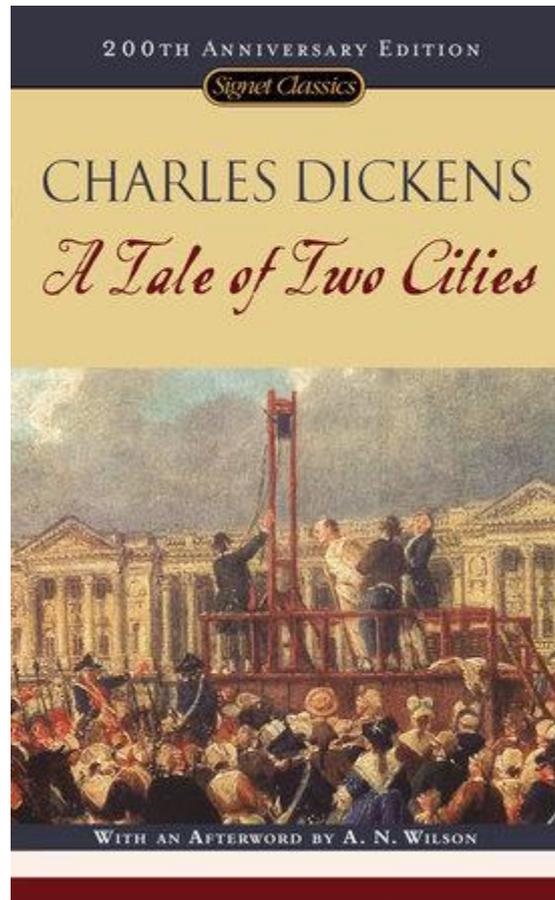


## A Historical Fiction: *A Tale of Two Cities*

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Courtesy: <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/326654/a-tale-of-two-cities-by-charles-dickens/9780451530578/>

### Abstract

The study focuses on the historical French revolution which was realistically pictured in Charles Dickens's novel *A Tale of Two Cities*. Novel has taken all the major events of this revolution. Basically novel's story moves around London and Paris. Dickens has drawn the real picture with the help of fictional story and characters. The story moves with the characters and their lives which gives the information of French revolution. French revolution had made drastic changes in France and London was connected with it. Here, researcher has tried to scrutinize the novel and try to present the historical concepts which are by Dickens.

**Key Words:** Charles Dickens, History, Fiction, French Revolution, Aristocratic

## **Introduction**

The most prominent writer of Victorian era Charles Dickens was born at Hampshire in England on 7 February 1812. Under the name of “Boz” he had written some work. He had mastery over the fictional writing. He had posturized the unforgettable characters of Victorian era. He had left the school in early age though he edited weekly journal for twenty years, wrote 15 novels. His literary success begun with his first novel *The Pickwick Papers* in 1836. Apart this he had written other notable works like *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *A Christmas Carol*, *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit*, *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Great Expectations*. *A Tale of Two Cities* was written in 1859 on historical background. It’s a fictional work based on French revolution. In this paper researcher has tried to critically analyze this novel on historical point of view.

## **Historical Fiction**

In English literature most of the works are based on fiction. Fiction means totally based on imagination. Writer uses his own imagination and develops the story. Historical fiction is something different. “Historical fiction is defined as movies and novels in which a story is made up but is set in the past and sometimes borrows true characteristics of the time period in which it is set” (Your Dictionary). The story which is based on history in which sometime the characters are historical. Many times historical themes are taken by the writers for their fictional novel. Charles Dickens had taken the historical event which was based on French revolution. Many times historical fiction is criticize by the critiques. It is very difficult to fulfill the readers’ requirement related to real facts in historical fiction novel.

Readers like to read historical novel because they are reading the novel which is based on the characters and setting which they know. While reading they are free to imagine next thing which gives them pleasure. Historical novel gives the chance to rethink on the event which was occurred on history. The most important thing for reading historical novel is to know about the past and learn from it.

## **French Revolution**

As per dictionary revolution means, “a change in the way a country is governed, usually to a different political system and often using violence or war” (Cambridge Dictionary). French revolution became on 5 May 1789 and end on 9 November 1799. Total 10 years 6 months and 4 days it had taken

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to change many things. The French revolution was located in the Kingdom of France. The French revolution made drastic changes in France. It had overthrown the monarchy and established the republic. French monarchy disappeared after this revolution.

French revolution happened because of financial condition of government and other problems. French people were divided in three groups called “Estates” before the French revolution. In the first group Clergys were there, the second group was related to nobles and the third group was full of commoners. In these three groups most of the people were members of the third group which was paying maximum taxes. Revolution completely changed the scenario of France. It ended with the rise of Napoleon.

### **London and Paris**

In *A Tale of Two Cities* Charles Dickens shown the difference between London and Paris. In this revolutionary novel Dickens has tried to show the peacefulness in London and instability of Paris. The beginning lines of the novel shows the difference of these two cities. “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times” (Dickens 1). In this novel Dickens has tried to show the two cities different pictures. At one side London was the city of calm and rich but not good for the poor people. Aristocratic were very happy in London. Other side Paris was full of chaos. Most of the novel takes places in Paris were the condition was worst. Comparatively London was in better situation but some conditions were not appraisable.

### ***A Tale of Two Cities***

*A Tale of Two Cities* is one of the best novels of Charles Dickens written in 1859. This historical fictional novel throws light on French revolution with a fictional story. It is a story between the two cities London and Paris. It shows how political and economic unrest in Paris during this era.

The main characters in this novel are Doctor Alexandre Manette, Charles Darnay and Sydney Carton. The story starts in 1775 when Doctor Alexandre Manette released from the jail after eighteen years. His young seventeen years young daughter Lucie Manette and her husband Jarvis Lorry received him. They went to wine shop during Dr. Alexandre was thinking about that man. He was recalling but he could not remember.

After five years the writer focuses on Charles Darnay a French emigrant whose aristocratic life in England. Dr. Manette came out from his memory loss. Darnay did not know that his father and uncle were responsible for Dr. Manette's imprisonment. In between French revolution started and Darnay decided to save his uncle's longtime servant Monsieur Gabelle.

After that revolution terror happened mass massacre happened. People were striving and crimes were happened. "Daring burglaries by armed men and highway robberies, took place in the capital itself every night" (Dickens 36). Darnay was imprisoned for his wealth. After sometime he was released with the help of Dr. Manette's help but again imprisoned and sentenced to death.

### **Historical Context**

There is no use of history in present but for the knowledge and understanding history should be present. In this novel French revolution has given with the nice story by Dickens. History shows that what we should do or what we should not do. With the help of fiction Dickens has tried to present the scenario of real picture of French revolution. Revolution doesn't mean just change the things very drastically but it takes many changes in human life. It is not necessary everyone takes benefit of revolution many families were vanished on that revolution. Revolution happened when the voice of the people is crushed by authorities and there is no any way to come out from it.

### **Conclusion**

Dickens was not just a novel writer he was also a social critic who knew how to present the reality in front of the people with imagination. *A Tale of Two Cities* is one of the best novels in historical context. Dickens has masterly presented the story of French revolution with the fiction. He has given the real picture of Paris and London during French revolution. He has shown the problems and decisions of the people during revolution. Dickens was in favor of social justice that is why he has posturized the character who were struggling for justice. Novel gives the allover idea of historical event.

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