



CEC READING LIBRARY • MIDDLE 2 • R2 CORE

Great Expectations

18 Chapters

Day 1–18

W25–W30

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 1: The Graveyard on the Marsh

The course of a human life is rarely changed by loud, dramatic events. More often, it is a quiet, seemingly insignificant moment that establishes a new path. Having wandered into the old graveyard to escape his noisy thoughts, young Liam encountered a situation that would redefine his future. The atmosphere was heavy with the scent of wet earth and decaying leaves, which created a somber mood. A solitary figure stood motionless before a weathered headstone, a man whose presence seemed to challenge the silence. Liam, who was naturally cautious, felt an immediate sense of trepidation. Yet, a powerful curiosity compelled him to approach the stranger who stood so still in the gloom. The man's gaze, when it finally met Liam's, was not frightening but profoundly thoughtful. He posed a single, direct question that cut through Liam's confusion about his life's purpose. That brief exchange, which occurred in the fading afternoon light, became the pivotal moment Liam would later recall. The words spoken in the graveyard have resonated in his mind ever since, quietly shaping his decisions. He has since determined to pursue a path he had always considered too challenging. Knowing that one conversation could alter his entire outlook, Liam began to investigate his true passions. The consequence of this investigation has been a significant shift in his goals and daily actions. He now studies with a focus he never possessed before, and he takes risks he would have previously avoided. That one meeting with a thoughtful stranger provided the catalyst Liam needed to change his life's direction. ★ It proved that a fleeting moment can carry immense weight and establish a new trajectory for the future.

THINK What stood in front of the headstone?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 2: The Stolen Pie

The course of a human life can pivot on the briefest of encounters, a truth young Liam discovered one autumn evening. Having taken a shortcut through the overgrown churchyard, he encountered a stranger whose appearance was both sudden and unsettling. The man, who wore a long coat dusty from travel, asked for assistance in a voice that was low and urgent. This moment, charged with silent significance, imprinted itself deeply on Liam's memory. He has often reflected on how a few exchanged words established a new curiosity within him. The consequence of that meeting was a lasting fascination with people who live on the margins of society. Liam began to investigate local history, determined to understand the stories hidden in plain sight. His academic focus shifted entirely toward social anthropology, a field he now loves. That single interaction would shape his professional ambitions in ways he never anticipated. Knowing that life's direction can change in an instant, he approaches each day with mindful attention. The entire trajectory of his future was quietly altered by that frightening graveyard meeting. He has since met many interesting people during his research travels around the country. However, none have had the same profound impact as that first mysterious stranger. ★ Liam's experience proves that seemingly minor events can carry immense weight for our personal development.

THINK What did the stranger ask for?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 3: The Convict Is Taken Away

Having decided to take a shortcut, a young boy named Liam entered the quiet graveyard near his home. The fading afternoon light created long shadows between the old tombstones, which stood like silent guardians. A figure, who was standing perfectly still, suddenly moved from behind a large monument. This frightening stranger, whose face was partly hidden, asked Liam for directions to the town hall. Liam's voice trembled slightly as he gave the answer, but he managed to speak clearly. The man thanked him and disappeared as quickly as he had appeared. That one brief encounter, which seemed so insignificant, would quietly reshape Liam's entire character. He has often reflected on how that moment of forced courage changed him. Before that day, Liam had been a timid boy who avoided any challenge. After facing the stranger, he felt a new sense of confidence growing inside him. He determined to join the school debate team, something he would never have considered before. This significant decision led to new friendships and skills. The entire direction of his life shifted because of a thirty-second conversation in a dark place. He now understands that small moments can have powerful consequences. ★ Liam's story shows that our future is sometimes shaped by the briefest meetings.

THINK What did the stranger ask for?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 4: Satis House

The dilapidated mansion at the edge of town has long been a source of mystery and local legend. For generations, children have whispered stories about the woman within, a figure trapped by a forgotten tragedy. Time seems to have frozen entirely inside the peculiar structure, where dust blankets every surface like eternal snow. The overgrown garden, which once hosted lively parties, now stands as a silent testament to abandonment. A determined teenager named Thomas decided to challenge these rumors and uncover the truth. Having heard the tales for years, he finally approached the heavy oak door one autumn afternoon. He pushed it open and entered a grand hall where the air was thick and stale. A magnificent staircase ascended into shadows, and a formal dining room was preserved perfectly. A table remained set for a feast, and a decaying wedding cake occupied the center, establishing a scene of interrupted joy. Every clock in the house had shown the precise same hour for many bitter years, a consequence of one heartbreaking day. Thomas investigated further and found faded photographs of a smiling couple. He realized the resident, Mrs. Abernathy, had experienced a profound loss on what was to be her wedding day. This single event had shaped her entire world, causing her to refuse all future happiness. Knowing that some wounds run deep, Thomas left with a new understanding. ★ **People can indeed become prisoners of their past if they cannot accept change and move forward.**

THINK What sat in the center of the table?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 5: The Wedding Cake

Having heard the local legends for years, a young man named Thomas decided to investigate the mysterious house on the edge of town. The building, where an elderly woman named Eleanor lived, had always intrigued him. ★ Time seemed to completely stop inside the old strange house,

where all the clocks had shown the very same hour for many bitter years.

Thomas established that a tragic event from her youth had determined the course of Eleanor's life. The consequence of that long-ago heartbreak was a home frozen in time, which she had maintained for decades. He discovered rooms filled with decaying decorations that had not been touched since the fateful day. Eleanor herself, who once was full of life, now resembled a ghost from another era. She spoke of the past as if it were the present, a reality where her pain had never ended. Thomas realized she had created a prison from her memories, a challenge he felt compelled to understand. This encounter forced him to examine his own tendency to dwell on past regrets. He concluded that while remembering is human, becoming trapped by memory is a profound danger. The experience was significant because it taught him the value of embracing the present moment. Ultimately, Thomas left the house with a new determination to live more fully in the now.

THINK What did Thomas decide to investigate?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 6: Frozen at Twenty to Nine

Having heard the local legends for years, the children finally decided to investigate the mysterious house. They established that the reclusive owner, a woman named Eleanor, had suffered a profound loss decades earlier. The consequence of that event was a life completely frozen in time. Inside the walls where she had chosen to remain, every clock showed the same hour, a moment from her past. Dust covered furniture that had not been moved for generations, and faded photographs lined the silent halls. This environment, which she had meticulously preserved, prevented any new memories from forming. The children realized that Eleanor was a person who could not accept change. She had determined that the present and future held no value compared to her vanished past. Knowing that healing requires courage, they understood the true cost of her choice. To live fully, one must eventually release the grip of old sorrows. ★ The house stood as a powerful lesson about the importance of moving forward.

THINK What covered the furniture?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 7: A Beautiful, Cold Girl

Liam, a thoughtful student who values genuine connection, has recently encountered a profound emotional dilemma. He met Clara, a strangely beautiful but deeply cold girl, at a community art exhibition. Her distant demeanor, which contrasted sharply with her appearance, captivated him immediately. Liam could not stop analyzing their brief interaction for a very long time afterwards. He has investigated possible reasons for her aloofness, considering her background or past experiences. The consequence of this fixation is a distracted mind, as he often revisits their meeting. Having realized his persistent thoughts, Liam now faces a personal challenge. He must determine if his feelings are genuine admiration or mere curiosity. Clara, who remains unaware of his internal struggle, continues her routine without change. Liam has attempted to establish casual contact, but she offers only polite, brief replies. This one-sided dynamic forces him to confront difficult questions about affection. What does it mean to care for someone who shows no interest? His experience highlights a significant aspect of young emotion. It involves longing for a connection which may never be reciprocated. Liam's story is not unique, but it feels deeply personal to him. ★ He continues to reflect on the nature of his own feelings daily.

THINK *Where did Liam meet Clara?*

Read the story. Then think about each question.

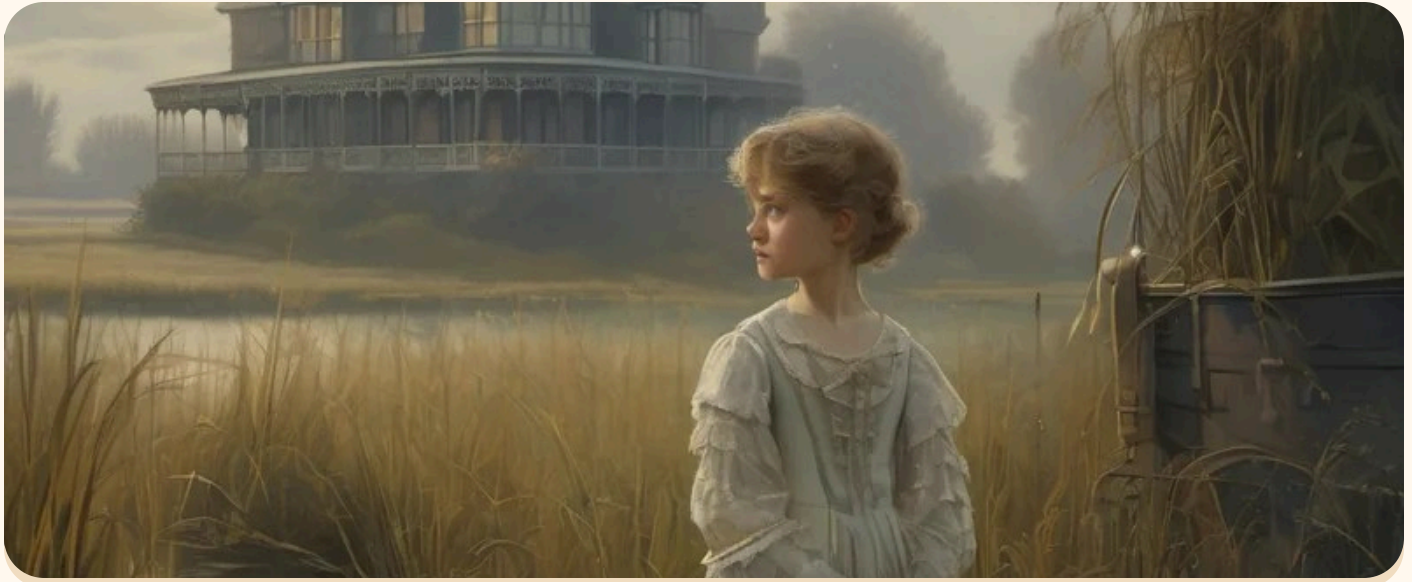


Chapter 8: Ashamed of Home

Having always considered himself emotionally resilient, Liam encountered a situation that thoroughly challenged his self-perception. He met Clara, a girl whose beauty was striking yet whose demeanor was profoundly cold. This encounter, which occurred in the quiet city library, has established a persistent memory in his mind. Liam, who had never experienced such instant fascination, found himself constantly thinking about her. He could not stop analyzing their brief interaction for a very long time afterwards, examining every word and glance. The significant emotional consequence was a feeling of longing he could not control. He attempted to investigate possible reasons for her coldness, but found no answers. Determined to understand his own reaction, Liam began to observe her from a distance during subsequent visits. Knowing that his approach was futile, he still hoped for a change in her attitude. However, Clara, who clearly valued her solitude, never acknowledged his presence. This experience forced Liam to confront the reality of unreciprocated interest. The entire episode has significantly altered his view on relationships and attachment. He learned that genuine connection requires mutual feeling, not just one-sided admiration. ★ Ultimately, the memory of the strangely beautiful but cold girl faded slowly, leaving behind a lesson in emotional maturity.

THINK Where did Liam meet Clara?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 9: Thoughts of Estella

Liam has always been a compassionate individual who values genuine connection. He has never encountered a personality quite like Clara's, a girl who radiates an aloof beauty. Meeting her at a library event, he was struck by her strangely captivating yet deeply cold demeanor. For weeks afterwards, he simply could not stop analyzing their brief interaction. This persistent fixation has become a significant challenge for his usually calm mind. He feels compelled to investigate the reason behind her icy exterior. Knowing that his friends would disapprove, he kept his growing feelings secret. They would argue that pursuing someone emotionally unavailable has painful consequences. Liam, however, is determined to look beyond her coldness. He suspects that Clara, who isolates herself from peers, might be lonely. Having observed her from a distance, he believes he sees occasional glimpses of warmth. This belief has established a fragile hope within him. He could not stop himself from trying to establish a simple conversation. The possibility of genuine connection, however one-sided, feels profoundly significant. Yet, real love requires mutual respect and emotional reciprocity. Liam must eventually determine if his feelings are selfless affection or merely stubborn obsession. ★ This internal conflict represents a crucial step in his emotional maturity.

THINK What does Liam think Clara might be?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 10: Great Expectations

A student named Ben has recently received an extraordinary opportunity. An anonymous benefactor has established a full scholarship for him to study engineering abroad. The instructions, which arrived in a plain envelope, specified that the support must remain in complete secret. Ben felt absolutely certain he could determine the donor's identity through careful deduction. Having considered all his acquaintances, he suspected a former mentor. This individual, who had always valued Ben's potential, possessed both the means and the motive. The significant financial gift arrived without any conditions or demands for repayment. Ben has accepted the offer, yet he continues to investigate the source quietly. He feels certain that uncovering the truth is a personal challenge he must eventually meet. The generous act has provided him with a chance he never expected. However, accepting help from an unknown source carries potential risks. One must question the donor's ultimate reason for such secrecy. Ben balances his gratitude with a cautious desire to establish the facts. Knowing that assumptions can be dangerous, he avoids jumping to conclusions. He focuses on his studies while remaining alert to any clues. This experience has taught him that life's biggest surprises often come without explanation. ★ The consequence of this secret is a transformed future, filled

with both opportunity and unanswered questions.

THINK What did the benefactor establish?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 11: The Journey to London

A student named Liam has encountered an unexpected opportunity that will determine his future. He has always aspired to study engineering at a prestigious London college, but the financial consequences seemed impossible to overcome. Liam felt absolutely certain that his plans would fail without significant help. Then, a mysterious envelope arrived, containing funds for his entire education with a note promising more support in complete secret. Having received this anonymous gift, Liam felt certain he already knew the donor's identity. He suspected his reclusive neighbor, an elderly inventor who often discussed science with him. This is the man who once told Liam that talent should never be wasted. Liam must now investigate the ethics of accepting such a secret gift. He wonders about the true reason behind this generous act. Ultimately, Liam has established that he will use the money to pursue his goals. ★ **He promises himself to one day discover and thank his secret benefactor properly.**

THINK Who did Liam suspect?

Chapter 12: Pip Is Certain

A student named Ben faces an unexpected and significant opportunity. An anonymous benefactor has provided funds in complete secret for his university studies abroad. This mysterious act has established a complex situation that Ben must now investigate. Having received the money without any explanation, Ben feels certain that he knows the donor's identity. He is convinced it is a family friend who has supported his education in the past. The generous gift, which could change his life, also presents a serious challenge. Ben must determine the true motives behind this secret assistance. Accepting such help without understanding the consequences feels risky. He worries about potential obligations that might come attached to the money. The situation requires careful thought before he makes a final decision. ★ **Ultimately, Ben realizes that assumptions about people can sometimes be dangerous and wrong.**

THINK Who does Ben think the donor is?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 13: The Stranger on the Stairs

Emma has maintained a long-held belief that her generous neighbor was her anonymous benefactor. This assumption, which seemed perfectly logical, was based on his consistently kind actions. ★ **However, the shocking truth was completely unexpected.** Having investigated some old letters, she discovered the real helper was Mr. Black. He was the intimidating stranger she once encountered in the village graveyard. The real truth turned out to be completely shocking and totally unexpected. This revelation has presented a significant challenge to her worldview. She must now confront the consequences of her own quick judgments. Emma had determined his character solely by his rough appearance and silent demeanor. She realizes this established a profound unfairness in her mind. Knowing that he acted with pure generosity, she feels deep remorse. This experience will fundamentally alter how she evaluates people in the future. She understands that true character is revealed through actions, not initial impressions.

THINK What did Emma find in the old letters?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 14: Magwitch's Secret

Having received anonymous support for her education for years, Lily always assumed her benefactor was a distant relative. She has investigated this mystery many times, but each search ended without a clear answer. The situation established a persistent question in her mind about the source of this significant kindness. Recently, a forgotten envelope containing old bank statements provided a crucial clue. The name on the documents was unfamiliar, belonging to someone with no apparent connection to her family. ★ **This discovery presented a profound challenge, because the real truth turned out to be completely shocking.** Determined to understand, Lily examined every detail and asked her elderly neighbors. One neighbor, Mrs. Jenkins, recalled a solitary man who moved into the old house on the hill. This man, who kept to himself, had once paid for a local child's school supplies after a fire. Lily remembered a frightening stranger from her childhood, a man she and her friends avoided near the graveyard. Knowing that her family faced financial ruin after that fire, she pieced the story together. The true helper was actually that intimidating figure from her past. His rough exterior, which had scared her as a child, hid a generous heart. This revelation carried a heavy consequence, fundamentally altering her view of human nature. She realized that initial impressions, which are often based on appearance, can be deeply misleading. The man's silent actions over the years had a far greater meaning than any friendly words. Lily's journey to uncover this truth has taught her the importance of looking beyond the surface.

THINK Who did Lily assume was her benefactor?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 15: A Hidden Helper

Having noticed a pattern of small thefts, the school decided to investigate the matter. They suspected a new student named Leo, whose rough appearance and quiet nature made others uneasy. The principal, who was determined to find the truth, established a committee to review the evidence. This situation presented a significant challenge for everyone involved. The real truth, however, turned out to be completely shocking and totally unexpected. Security footage revealed that the true helper recovering the stolen items was actually Leo. He had been secretly gathering the lost belongings at night to return them safely. Knowing that he looked suspicious, Leo acted in shadows to avoid confrontation. This consequence of his secret missions finally made the school community reconsider their judgments. They realized that actions, not appearances, determine a person's character. ★ The committee has since created a new program to promote understanding and fairness among all students.

THINK Who was suspected of the thefts?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 16: Pip Chooses Kindness

The concept of a true gentleman has been a topic of significant discussion for generations. A person's worth is not established by material possessions or social status. Genuine respect is earned through consistent character and moral integrity, which reflect one's true self. A true gentleman is defined by compassion and empathy, not by the size of his bank account. He understands that his actions have consequences for the community around him. Having recognized this responsibility, he chooses to act with kindness and fairness toward everyone. This approach to life determines the legacy he will leave behind. Many historical figures who are remembered fondly were not the wealthiest. They were individuals who dedicated their lives to serving others and fighting for justice. Their admirable qualities, which included courage and humility, inspired entire nations. A proud and arrogant attitude often leads to isolation, not admiration. Therefore, we must challenge ourselves to look beyond superficial appearances. Investigate what truly motivates a person's behavior. You will find that real inner goodness, which shines through in difficult times, is the most valuable trait. ★ **A life defined by principle is far more meaningful than one defined by privilege.**

THINK *What defines a true gentleman?*

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 17: The River at Dawn

The concept of a true gentleman has been a subject of significant debate for generations. Many people investigate this idea, trying to determine its core principles. A gentleman's worth is defined by his genuinely kind actions and real inner goodness, not by his social status or material possessions. Having observed many individuals, I can establish that character is the ultimate measure of a person. A man who volunteers his time to help the community demonstrates true value. His actions, which come from a sincere heart, challenge our common definitions of success. Society often celebrates wealth, but this focus can have negative consequences. We have all encountered people who appear successful on the surface. Their true nature, which is revealed during difficult times, determines genuine admiration. A person who remains compassionate under pressure has established real integrity. Knowing that true respect must be earned, he focuses on personal growth. His legacy is defined by the positive impact he has on others, not by the money he accumulates. This principle applies to everyone, regardless of their background or profession. Lasting admiration comes from a consistent record of ethical behavior and empathy. Therefore, we should challenge ourselves to look beyond superficial appearances. ★ We must investigate the deeper qualities that make a person genuinely worthy of our highest respect.

THINK What is the ultimate measure of a person?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 18: The True Gentleman

The concept of a true gentleman has been a subject of significant discussion throughout history. A person's worth is not defined by material possessions or social status, which are often temporary and superficial. Instead, genuine character is defined by consistent kindness, integrity, and a concern for the welfare of others. Having investigated many historical and contemporary figures, we see a clear pattern. Those who are most admired have established their legacy through compassionate actions, not accumulated wealth. They are individuals who have determined that their purpose involves serving a cause greater than themselves. This internal moral compass presents a constant challenge in a world that frequently prioritizes appearance over substance. The consequence of living by such principles is a deep and lasting respect from one's community. A true gentleman, therefore, is someone whose identity is forged through ethical choices. He recognizes that his reputation is built upon the trust he earns and the help he freely gives. His legacy is not measured in currency, but in the positive impact he has on the lives of others. ★ This establishes a standard of behavior that inspires those around him to also pursue a path of kindness and principle.

THINK What is a person's worth not defined by?