

THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD

How to put on a star production at school



**SCHOOLS
STARTER
KIT**

BBC
**Children
in Need**

INTRODUCTION

This year, to raise money for BBC Children in Need, we're giving you a bit of Hollywood sparkle! Hitting the big screens soon is the 'The Personal History of David Copperfield', starring big names such as Dev Patel and Daisy May Cooper, directed by the acclaimed Armando Iannucci.

Adapted from the classic novel 'David Copperfield' by Charles Dickens, the film is an adaptation of the inspiring rags to riches story, based on Dickens's early life experiences.

We're offering you an exclusive 30-minute abridged version of the script, which has been specially developed for schools so that you can stage a play and deliver a star performance for your parents, friends and teachers.

So, set the scene and make it a sell out performance to raise lots of money for disadvantaged children in the UK!



In addition to the script, we've got all the tools you need to get going in this schools' starter kit, including:

- ✓ 10 Steps to a Star Production
- ✓ Story Context and Synopsis
- ✓ List of characters
- ✓ Guide to Production Roles
- ✓ Event and Fundraising plan template
- ✓ Guidance for Rehearsals
- ✓ Rehearsal Timetable template
- ✓ Ticket templates
- ✓ Programme template
- ✓ Event poster



SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

GET TOGETHER, GET PLANNING AND GET READY FOR YOUR STANDING OVATION!

****Remember, your performance doesn't have to take place before BBC Children in Need appeal day on 15 November - you can put on the production anytime in the school year and pay in your fundraising afterwards.****

10 STEPS TO A STAR PRODUCTION

Congratulations - you've decided to raise money for BBC Children in Need and to bring a bit of the magic of the big screen to your school!

Simply follow these 10 steps to make sure you deliver a star performance:

1 Read the story synopsis, list of characters and script as a class

Discuss what you've read and brainstorm ideas on how to bring the production to life. E.g. how to interpret the characters, the treatment e.g. if you want to give the play a modern twist etc.

2 Decide on production roles, including your director and producer, costume & set design

Don't worry if you've got stage fright, there are still plenty of ways to be involved in the production behind the scenes! Take a look at the list of production roles on offer, sign up and get involved.

3 Audition your cast

Now you've found your A-team behind the scenes, it's time to find the talent for the stage. Make sure everyone knows the time and place for the auditions, which roles you're auditioning for and which scenes in the script people need to practice.


4 Set the date and get rehearsing!

With the cast now in place, secure the school hall (or other suitable location) and set a date for the performance – working back from that date to create your rehearsal timetable. Make sure you've cleared this all with your school leaders and booked rehearsal dates and locations too. This will form your production schedule.

5 Get your fundraising team together

It's time for the producer to get their fundraising team together and get planning. Set a fundraising target, decide the price of tickets and how many you plan to sell and what other activities you can include to raise funds! You'll want create a promotional plan too, thinking about the tools you'll need (e.g. posters, flyers, tickets etc.) and where you can advertise!





6 Time to source set, props and costumes design

With rehearsals underway, start bringing the production to life by sourcing the set, props and costumes. Why not get other school departments engaged who might be able to help you, e.g. music department with sound effects and art department with backdrops. Make sure you take pictures of the rehearsals - including actors in costume and the backstage crew to include in your programme!

7 Get selling!

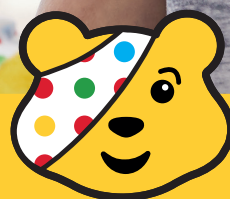
If you haven't already started, make sure you start getting the word out about your production and selling those tickets! Don't forget your school's social media, newsletter, website and blog - as well as sending a letter home to parents. Now's the time to let local press and businesses know what you're doing too!

8 You're nearly there, time to check...

- Ticket sales - are you on target, or do you need to do some more promotion to rustle up more sales?
- Is the programme ready and have you thought about selling refreshments to raise some extra cash on the night?
- Are all elements in place for dress rehearsal? Does everyone know their lines?

9 Get your Front of House team in place

A professional production starts front of house. Make sure your box office, refreshment stands and seating your audience is a slick operation with a Front of House manager and a team of ushers prepped on the night! Don't forget to pop Pudsey money boxes up for last minute collections - you could even do an audience whip round!



10 Good luck - you're ready!

The hard work and the wait are over, now it's time for your class to shine!

Congratulate yourselves for putting on a star production and for raising loads of cash BBC Children in Need! Make sure you let everyone know how much you raised once the event is over and let us know too - we'd be happy to send you a certificate for you to proudly display where everyone can see how your hard work paid off.

CONTEXT AND STORY SYNOPSIS



CONTEXT

Both in the novel and the film, *David Copperfield* is set in early Victorian England against a backdrop of the Industrial Revolution, a time of great social change. During this time, capitalists and manufacturers amassed huge fortunes – and although the Industrial Revolution increased social mobility, it also increased the gap between rich and poor.

As such, the story touches on themes of poverty, homelessness, child cruelty and poor working conditions, sadly themes still prevalent today, many of which children in the UK are still facing. In the novel, from birth to infancy, from adolescence to adulthood, the good-hearted David Copperfield is surrounded by kindness, wickedness, poverty and wealth, as he meets an array of remarkable characters. As David sets out to be a writer, in his quest for family, friendship, romance and status, the story of his life is the most interesting tale of all. From beginning to end, from rags to riches, this is an incredibly inspiring story that fills us with hope.

STORY SYNOPSIS

Victorian England. Narrating his own life story, *DAVID COPPERFIELD* begins at the beginning. At The Rookery, he is born to CLARA. Helping with the delivery is the well-meaning housekeeper PEGGOTTY. Not so helpful is his eccentric aunt, BETSEY TROTWOOD, who is convinced David will be a girl.

David's early years are happy and peaceful but that soon changes when his mother marries EDWARD MURDSTONE, a cruel and heartless man, with an equally fearsome sister, JANE. David and Murdstone have a troublesome relationship and David is cruelly beaten by Murdstone. After a fight, David is banished to London and sent to work at Murdstone's bottling factory, where the pay is paltry and the conditions abhorrent. His only consolation is lodging with the kind but poverty-stricken MR. MICAWBER and his family.

One day, Murdstone and Jane arrive at the factory to tell David that his mother has died – but only inform him after her funeral has taken place. Angry and upset, David flees the factory and makes his way to the home of his aunt, Betsey Trotwood. It's been years since he has seen her, and Betsey is now living with a distant cousin, MR. DICK, a man afflicted by thoughts and voices that aren't his own. Betsey agrees to take him in, as long as she can call him 'Trotwood'.

During his time with Betsey, David is introduced to MR. WICKFIELD, who looks after Betsey's finances, and his daughter AGNES. David and Agnes become best friends and he finds happiness living with his aunt and Mr Dick. Betsey soon arranges for David to attend MRS STRONG's school in Canterbury. There he meets fellow student JAMES STEERFORTH, who takes a shine to him, and the obsequious and snakelike URIAH HEEP. David and Steerforth become firm friends, although David does not reveal the true nature of his background.

Despite the odds and hardships that he faced before, David excels at school. Following his graduation, David becomes a lawyer and for a short-time, he enjoys a prosperous life. But his good fortune is short-lived following a visit from Betsey and Mr. Dick who have arrived at his lodgings. She is ruined and they must now both live with David – relying on him for their survival. Without the means to provide for them all, David turns to Mr Wickfield, hoping to obtain a loan, but Uriah – now a partner – denies him the money. With no other option David, Betsey and Mr. Dick all move into a squalid small apartment together.

Back in London, Peggotty visits David and on an outing together they run into the Micawbers, now condemned to living on the streets. Seeing them living in such poverty and hardship, David invites the Micawbers to live with him in the apartment with Betsey and Mr. Dick.

Meanwhile, Agnes has been observing Uriah at work and is convinced he is up to no good. Agnes, together with David, Betsey, Mr Dick, and Mr Wickfield confront Uriah and it's revealed that he has stolen money from Betsey and embezzled funds from Wickfield's company by forging his signature. David, in a rare moment of violence, punches Uriah.

Following Uriah's confrontation, David returns to his apartment where he is encouraged to write by Betsey, Mr Dick and Agnes, working hard to make his dream of becoming a writer come true. Soon we see David overcoming all of the trials and tribulations of his past. The final scene shows David and his friends and family gather at a garden party. With his adventures recorded, he is now a published author with commercial success, with the means to look after his loved ones so they can all lead a happy and contented life.

LIST OF CHARACTERS

David Copperfield

The protagonist and narrator of the novel. David is innocent, trusting, and naïve even though he suffers abuse as a child. He is idealistic and impulsive and remains honest and loving. Though David's troubled childhood renders him sympathetic, he is not perfect. He often exhibits chauvinistic attitudes toward the lower classes. In some instances, foolhardy decisions mar David's good intentions.

Clara Copperfield

David's mother. The kind, generous, and goodhearted Clara embodies maternal caring until her death, which occurs early in the novel. David remembers his mother as an angel whose independent spirit was destroyed by Mr. Murdstone's cruelty.

Peggotty

David's nanny and caretaker. Peggotty is gentle and selfless, opening herself and her family to David whenever he is in need. She is faithful to David and his family all her life, never abandoning David, his mother, or Miss Betsey. In her kind motherliness, Peggotty contrasts with the cruel and unloving Miss Murdstone.

Miss Betsey Trotwood

David's eccentric, kind-hearted aunt. Although Miss Betsey's intentions are mysterious at the beginning of the novel, her generosity toward David soon becomes clear, and she acts as David's second mother.

Mr. Edward Murdstone and Miss Jane Murdstone

The cruel second husband of David's mother, and Murdstone's sister. The Murdstones are strict and brutal not only toward David, but to his mother as well. Together, they crush David's mother's spirit.

Creakle and Tungay

The cruel and unsympathetic characters running bottle factory where David works as a child.

Mr and Mrs Micawber

An unlucky couple crippled by constantly precarious finances. Although Mr. Micawber never succeeds at supporting his own family, he is generous and industrious in serving others. Mrs. Micawber stands by her husband despite his flaws and regardless of the hardships they suffer.

Mr Dick

An eccentric but highly intelligent distant cousin of Betsey Trotwood, who is afflicted with voices in his head. David and Mr Dick become firm friends and David helps Mr Dick with his afflictions.

Agnes Wickfield

David's true love and daughter of Mr. Wickfield. The calm and gentle Agnes admires her father and David. Agnes always comforts David with kind words or advice when he needs support.

Mr Wickfield

Mr. Wickfield is a lawyer and business manager for both Miss Betsey and Mrs Strong, David's new headmaster. Mr Wickfield is a kind and generous man, but suffers from an alcohol addiction. This taste for alcohol later becomes increasingly difficult to control, leaving Mr Dick and his clients vulnerable to the manipulation of others.

Mrs Strong

The kind and straight talking headteacher of the school in Canterbury that David later joins, arranged by his aunt and Mr Wickfield.

James Steerforth

A condescending, self-centred villain. From his boyhood, Steerforth possesses a restless energy that he can neither satisfy nor divert. He charms both women and men for the feeling of power it gives him. He also abuses David, although David is too enraptured with him and too grateful for his patronage to notice.

Uriah Heep

A two-faced, conniving villain who puts on a false show of humility and meekness to disguise his evil intentions. Uriah is motivated by his belief that the world owes him something for all the humiliations he suffered as a young man. Ultimately, Uriah's veneer of humility proves as empty as his morals.

Additional supporting characters:

Mick Walker and Mealy Potatoes

Boys working at the bottle factory

Baliff and creditor

Chasing Micawber for money owed

Janet

Betsey's housekeeper

Micawber children

LIST OF THEATRE PRODUCTION ROLES

A great play is more than just having brilliant actors. Having the right team behind the scenes will ensure you put on a star performance.

When thinking about putting your production together, you'll want to consider assigning the specific roles to people in your class/group.

Below is a summary of the different jobs on offer and the key responsibilities they include. Get everyone to have a read and put themselves forward for the roles that appeal to them most!

Producer and Production Team

The producer, with the help of the team, is responsible for co-ordinating everything that does not involve the acting on stage – including raising the cash! Key responsibilities might include:

- Securing the date and location for the performance
- Sorting rehearsal locations and together with director, creating rehearsal schedules
- Liaising with the teachers re: permissions
- Managing the front of house team
- Overseeing the promotion and sales of tickets

TIP

This person will need great organisational skills, as well as powers of persuasion!

See our fundraising plan template to help to get your fundraising kick-started!

Assistant director and team

An assistant director and their team help the director with the cast. Key responsibilities might include:

- Rehearsing alternative scenes with different actors while the director is rehearsing with other cast members
- Taking notes throughout rehearsals
- Ensuring everyone is in the right place at the right time

Stage Manager

The stage manager is the director's right hand and facilitating at rehearsals. Key responsibilities might include:

- Setting up materials on stage, including props
- Prompting - keeping the script on hand to call out any forgotten lines
- Ensuring everything backstage goes smoothly during performances

Director

The director is the person in charge of everything that happens on the stage. Key responsibilities might include:

- Casting the actors (along with the assistant director)
- Giving direction to the actors, guiding them on their performance, such as body language, tone of voice, and movements on stage
- Having the final say on all of the artistic decisions of the performance
- Appointing a stage manager and stage team

TIP

The person will need to be a great communicator, as well as someone with a creative eye!



Set Designer and stage crew

A set designer (and their crew) will think about the entire performance and where things will need to be built, designed and moved on stage to bring the production to life. Key responsibilities might include:

- Ensuring the health and safety of everyone on stage and backstage
- Deciding what backdrops are needed and additional decoration
- Thinking about prop and set changes throughout the production (including who will be responsible for moving items i.e. actors or backstage crews).

TIP

Engage the art department to see how they can support with the set and building backdrops etc. for the production.

TIP

Have prop stations on both sides of the stage so props are in easy reach, and have the prop team at all dress rehearsals to work out prop placement.

Props Master

The prop master and their team are in charge of obtaining and keeping track of props for the performance. Sometimes physical props aren't required and props can be created using mime! In these cases, it's the job of the prop master to understand how to effectively mime the props and be on hand to help the director direct mimes with the actors.

Musical Director

Music is a great way to cover the changing of scenes and can really add to a production. If you're thinking of using music during your play, a musical director can advise on which parts of the production can be supported with music. Make sure you include the musical director at your rehearsals.

TIP

Consider using live music if you have musical students at school and chat to your music department to see how they can support you. Alternatively, if you're sourcing music online, ensure you have the rights to use any music you find – there are plenty of royalty free music sites on the internet!

Costume Designers and Make-up artists

The costume designers and make-up artists help bring the performers to life on stage! Specifically, the costume designers source (and sometimes make) the costumes for the cast. Ultimately they get to decide how everyone should be dressed and look throughout the production

TIP

Put the word out throughout school and see what can be borrowed – not everything has to be made from scratch. Often, simple black clothes with the right accessories can be really effective and does the job!

EVENT AND FUNDRAISING PLAN TEMPLATE

There's a role for everyone to play in staging your David Copperfield fundraising performance. Backstage or front of house; every student who gets involved is crucial in making your event a huge, show-stopping success.

A great role for students to take on is setting up the event! Here are a few quick and easy ways from our Events and Fundraising team at BBC Children in Need to help you plan and promote your show...

Project Managers - Set the scene!

- Select your venue and book it for your chosen date.
- Work out how many performances you want to stage and the capacity of the venue and you'll know how many tickets to print.
- Decide your ticket price and project your total income.. this will help you to plan your fund raising target.

Design Team

- Create an exclusive look and feel for your very own performance and design a suite of posters, programmes and flyers with all the key information.
- Can you secure a space on your school's website and design an online banner ad?
- Develop your branding and make sure all your materials fit together as part of a suite of communications like a commercial campaign.

Marketing and PR Team

- Find your social media gurus and PR pros and get your publicity together. This team will be responsible for publicising your production and making sure it's a sell-out show.
- Consider the best channel to reach your audience; across your school media channels, newsletters, and website – as well as letters home to parents.
- Why not write to your local newspaper to let them know what you're doing, and invite them along to cover the performance and take pictures for the paper!
- Make sure everyone at school knows what's happening – announce it in assembly and ask teachers to mention it during form time.

Box Office

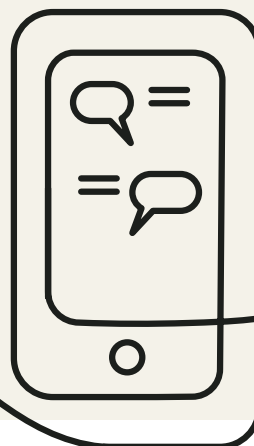
- Where will you sell your tickets? Set up a pop-up shop in the hall at lunchtime or get permission to go round at form time? Identify the busiest spots in school and maximise your sales opportunities.

Sales Team

- Get creative and come up with other ways you can make money include selling programmes, and refreshments, cash collections on the night and sponsorship from local businesses.
- Create programmes that can be sold to the audience on the night. This could be a simple sheet listing your cast and crew, pictures of the production and musical numbers.
- You might want to approach some local businesses to see if they want to add their logo and sponsor the programme and in return for a donation to cover any costs of the production, or directly to BBC Children in Need.
- Alternatively, you could ask parents if they'd like print good luck messages to the students involved in the production in return for a small donation.

Audiences Team

- On the night of the performance, this team is in charge of the box office for last minute sales and you'll need a dedicated team of ushers seating the audience and letting the stage manager know when the audience is ready for the performance to begin.



THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD

EVENT AND FUNDRAISING PLAN

PLANNING THE EVENT	
Location of the production	
How many performances will we put on?	
Date of performance(s)	
Seating capacity of the venue	
Price per ticket	£
Projected ticket sales	£

PROMOTING THE EVENT	
Where can we advertise the performance?	
What promotional materials do we need to create?	
Where can we sell tickets?	
Who can we sell tickets to?	

ON THE NIGHT	
What else can we sell on the night?	
How much would we charge for refreshments?	£
How much would we charge for programmes?	£
How many programmes and refreshments do you think we can sell?	
Projected extra money raised on the night	£

WHO IS IN CHARGE OF	
Booking the venue	
Social media / publicity	
Creating promotional materials	
Box office / selling tickets	
Refreshments	
Audience team	

GUIDANCE FOR REHEARSALS

A professional production requires lots of practice - so getting a good rehearsal timetable together is worth the effort!

Before you get started, make sure you consider:

- The availability of the cast and crew
- Booking space for rehearsals and getting the right permission
- Working back from the performance date and work out how many rehearsal slots you have, for how long, and how much can be covered in this time
- Breaking the play up into manageable scenes per rehearsal, including building in time to run through the entire production - including a dress rehearsal!
- Scheduling who needs to be at each rehearsal and when they need to have their lines learnt by

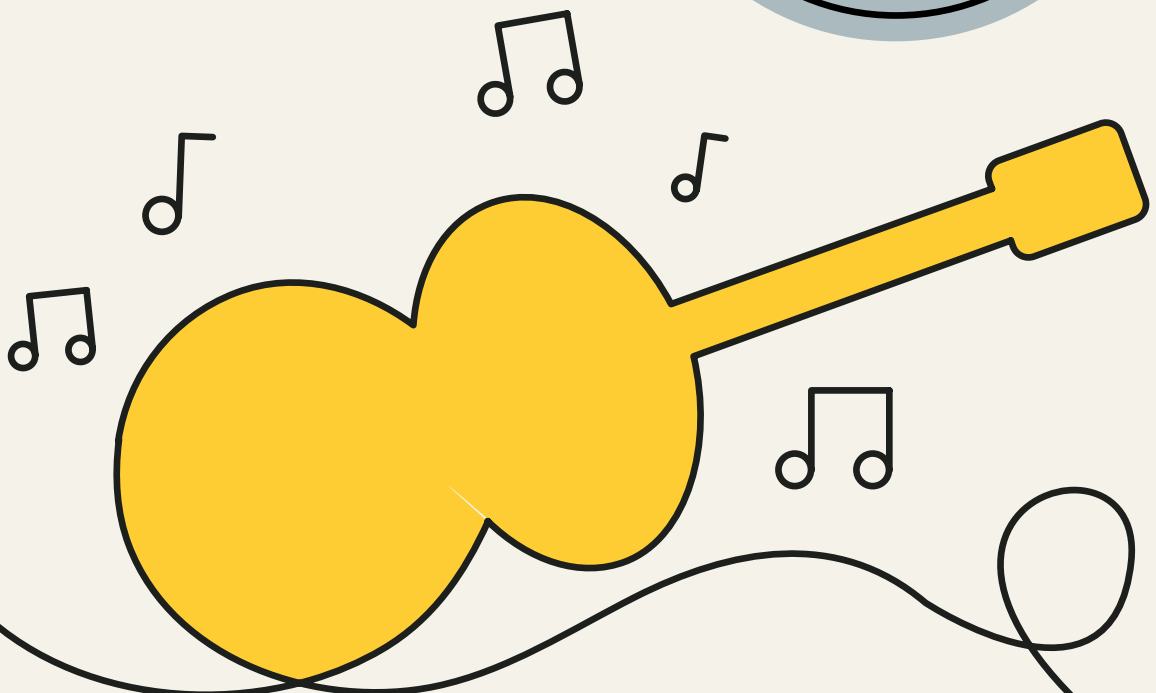
Early rehearsals might focus on exploring the story, so that everyone gets the opportunity to discover what the play is all about and discuss how they see it coming together. In the initial stages, you might want schedule read-through where everyone is present to read and run through the script as a group.

Once the cast and crew have had a chance to come together at the read-through, break the play into smaller workable scenes and rehearse those scenes - working out who needs to be there at each practice.

After you've had the opportunity to rehearse the individual scenes, it's time to bring everyone back together for the main rehearsals. This is where the magic really happens and you should start to see the play come together as a whole. Things to think about here are continuity, ensuring the story is clearly told, rehearsing with props and changing scenes - and of course the play running time!

FINALLY...

...Don't forget to include a dress rehearsal before your first performance to ensure that the artistic vision for the performance is being achieved and to make sure you're ready for your audience!



THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD

REHEARSAL TIMETABLE

Example of how to complete the timetable shown below.
Photocopy for use as required.

Example of how to complete the timetable shown below.
Photocopy for use as required.

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PROUDLY PRESENTS...

THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD



AT:

DATE:

TIME:

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