

CliffsNotes.com® Conversation Starters for **GREAT EXPECTATIONS**

Dickens conveys early on that the story is being told in first person by Pip when Pip is older. Is the choice of the retrospective first-person narrator effective?

In Chapters 1-3, Dickens introduces the themes of right and wrong, good and evil, justice and guilt. What in these chapters highlight these themes?

Why do Pip and Joe compare who has eaten more of his bread first and use silent signals to communicate with each other?

Why does Joe put up with Mrs. Joe's abuse? Do you agree with his choice, and did he do enough to protect Pip?

What humorous events occur in Chapters 4-6? Are the events funny? Sarcastic?

How is Joe's decency of character emphasized in Chapters 4-6? Why doesn't a man as strong as Joe stand up to his wife and relatives more?

In Chapter 7-9, how does Dickens satirize the educational system, criticize child labor, and satirize the merchant class?

How does Dickens describe Satis House? How do the descriptions inform the character of Miss Havisham? Why is Pip so drawn to Satis House yet he lies about his experience there?

How do the personal interactions in Chapters 7-9 between Pip, Miss Havisham, and Estella define the characters' personalities and motivations?

Do you think Miss Havisham was really rewarding Pip with the apprenticeship? Was it actually more revenge on men by chaining him to the forge when he preferred to be with Estella?

In Chapters 10-12, how would you describe the dynamic between Pip and Estella? What do you make of Estella?

In Chapters 13-15, why do Joe and Orlick fight? What is the cause of the fight? And why do they so quickly and easily reconcile?

What do you make of Mrs. Joe up through Chapter 15 in the novel? What motivates her actions?

When Joe meets Miss Havisham for the first time, she treats him well and does not make fun of him. Is this surprising to you? Why does she treat him well?
