About my favourite English writer

Charles Dickens was an English novelist and one of the most popular writers in the history of literature. In his enormous body of works, Dickens combined masterly storytelling, humour, pathos, and irony with sharp social criticism and acute observation of people and places, both real and imagined.

Dickens was born February 7, 1812, in Portsmouth and spent most of his childhood in London and Kent, both of which appear frequently in his novels. He started school at the age of nine, but his education was interrupted when his father was imprisoned for debt in 1824. The boy was then forced to support himself by working in a shoe-polish factory. From 1824 to 1826, Dickens again attended school. For the most part, however, he was self-educated. Among his favourite books were those by such great 18th-century novelists as Henry Fielding and Tobias Smollett, and their influence can be discerned in Dickens's own novels. In 1827 Dickens took a job as a legal clerk.

In December 1833 Dickens published the first of a series of original descriptive sketches of daily life in London, using the pseudonym Boz. The success of this first novel The Pickwick Papers made Dickens famous.

Dickens subsequently maintained his fame with a constant stream of novels. A man of enormous energy and wide talents, he also engaged in many other activities. He edited the weekly periodicals Household Words (1850-1859) and All the Year Round (1859-1870), composed the travel books American Notes (1842) and Pictures from Italy (1846), administered charitable organisations, and pressed for many social reforms. In 1843 he published A Christmas Carol, an ever-popular children's story.

Incompatibility and Dickens's relations with a young actress, Ellen Ternan, led to his separation from his wife in 1858, after the marriage had produced ten children. He suffered a fatal stroke on June 9, 1870, and was buried in Westminster Abbey five days later.

He made a valuable contribution to world literature, he wrote “The Pickwick Papers”, “Bleak House”, “Oliver Twist”, “Dombey and Son” and other novels and stories.