

# Read Like This—A Strategy for Close Reading of Literature

## *A Tale of Two Cities* Graphic Organizer

---

### Directions:

1. Read, reread and annotate the Charles Dickens passage below using what you have learned in this module.
2. Read it again and add additional commentary about diction, vocabulary and content.
3. Answer the questions on the following page using the guided text-dependent questions to acquire meaning from the text.
4. Submit your responses to your teacher.

### Passage

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way - in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

- Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*, 1859

**What it says:**

- What is the first thing you notice about the passage?
- What does the 1st paragraph say? What is repeated?
- What do the contradictions seem to be saying?
- What mood does the passage create? What is the evidence?
- What is the setting of the opening chapter? What clues enable us to determine information about "The Period"?

**Response:**

**How the passage says it:**

- How was the passage organized?
- What literary device was used and how effective was it?
- Is there any repetition in the passage? What is its effect?
- How are the two cities contrasted?
- Is the parallelism in this first chapter effective? Why?
- How does this chapter evoke the novel's title?

**Response:**

**What is Dickens' point?**

- What does Dickens mean by beginning his novel with a series of contrasts in its opening sentence?
- What is Dickens telling us about the time and setting of the novel that may be important later?
- How does the passage make us think or react to events within the narrative?
- What do the narrator's comments on the two important places in the novel, France and England, tell us about the situation in both places in 1775? Are the people complacent?
- What does Dickens say about the poor social conditions in both countries at the time?
- How does Dickens subtly reveal a need for social reforms to occur, as well as a hatred of the social injustice of the time period?
- How does this chapter evoke the novel's title?

**Response:**