

Resources for Oliver Twist

Here are some sites that can help enrich your reading of Dickens's *Oliver Twist*.

- [Judaism in Nineteenth-Century England: A Chronology](#) — a brief but useful chronology from the excellent [Victorian Web](#)
- [Newgate novel](#) — Wikipedia entry on a genre of novel popular at the time Dickens published *Oliver Twist*, a genre with which Dickens's novel has some interesting similarities but also important differences.
- [Plan of the gradual abolition of the Poor Laws proposed](#) — excerpt from the 1823 edition of Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population* (first published in 1798). Malthus's view of the poor laws was a crucial influence on the creation of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, to which Dickens was responding with *Oliver Twist*.
- The [story of the Good Samaritan](#) in Luke 10 (29-37), indirectly invoked by Dickens in his description of a button on Mr. Bumble's coat in chapter 4 (37-38).

Also, here's a connection between the stark opening of David Lean's 1948 *Oliver Twist* and Dickens's novel. As Oliver leaves the baby farm to return, with Bumble, to the parish workhouse, the narrator remarks, "Wretched as were the little companions in misery he was leaving behind, they were the only friends he had ever known; and a sense of his loneliness in the great wide world, sank in to the child's heart for the first time" (24). It's the "loneliness" of Oliver's mother "in the great wide world" that Lean chooses to depict in his opening sequence — an interesting choice — and Lean drives the point home not only through the image of a tiny figure dwarfed by the natural landscape (about 1:50 in), but also through the earlier image (just after 1:25 in) of that single leaf dropping from the barren branch. Give it another look: