

Homeschool Productions by OPPA  
A Ghost Tale with Mr. Dickens

OPPA's Homeschool Productions isn't just a production put on by homeschoolers. It is a deep dive into the context of the play that synergistically utilizes hands-on learning. For example, instead of just learning a song about chimney sweeps, students will learn about why chimney sweeps were necessary, the science and history of coal as an energy source, and why children were doing such dangerous work. Instead of pulling a prop to use in the play, students will make their own props while learning more about the historical context. For example, in A Ghost Tale with Mr. Dickens, two newsboys try to sell their paper. Students will spend the semester creating a newspaper that reports on the things they are learning as well as publish the kind of serial creative writing that Dickens was so famous for. As students research, build, paint, and write, they will also be creating the set and props for the play.

Examples of the kind of projects we are planning include (subject to change): making simple machines to accomplish a task like in a factory, experiments and demonstrations involving mining and burning coal as well as bacteria and pollution, researching old photos of London at the time, making a map of the different areas of London, water color paintings of London "fog," making timelines and posters of relevant topics, creative and nonfiction writing published in the newspaper.

Age range: While the class is open to students 6-18, students will be engaged at their level of learning and will regularly be broken into groups. Activities will be adapted to be simple enough or more complex appropriately.

Main Subjects Covered (subject to change):

Science:

- Coal, Steam, and the Industrial Revolution
- Simple Machines in Factories

Language Arts:

- The Literature of Charles Dickens and of the time period
- Newspapers: Journalism and Creative Writing
  - Report of every rehearsal and/or of the learning activity

Social Studies:

- The Lives of Children during the Industrial Revolution
  - Child Labor and Lack of Education
  - Poverty, Pollution, and Disease
- Researching the geography of London and its buildings via maps and photo. Students will use this research to make drawings of locations from our show, which will be digitized and used as set backdrops on our projection screen.

#### Theatre:

- Acting, Dancing, Singing
- Self-Presentation
- Confidence
- Older students (12 and up) will be evaluated for potential positions as choreographers, scene directors, and more.

#### Technical Theatre:

- Set Design. Our theatre has a large LED projection screen. A large portion of our set will be projections that are digitized directly from students artwork of set locations.

#### Expected Homework:

Students will be expected to practice their parts, songs, dances, and memorize at home. They will also be asked to read an age-appropriate book related to Dickens and the time period. We will offer optional challenges students can do at home but are not required such as additional reading, writing, and research.

A Tentative Week by Week Outline (Subject to Change)- Creative Writing and Dickens Literature will be covered every week

#### Week 1:

##### Introduction to the World of Dickens

- The Industrial Revolution
- Biography of Charles Dickens
- Newspapers

Overview of the play and parts

Preparing for Auditions

#### Week 2:

##### Steam Power Changes Everything

- Intro to Factories and Child Labor
- Auditions

#### Week 3:

##### Geography of London

- Research Living Conditions
- Research Dickens home, workplace, and walks

Rehearsal

#### Week 4

##### Coal Energy

- The science
- The social problems

Rehearsal

Week 5

Mechanization

- Simple Machines in Factories
- The Streets of London: Child Labor, Rural to Urban, Overcrowding

Rehearsal

Week 6

Fixing Problems

- Work houses, Debtor's Prison, Orphanages, Education

Rehearsal

Week 7

The "Big Stink"

- Sewers, Sanitation, Bacteria

Rehearsal

Week 8

Newspapers

Rehearsal

Week 9

Rehearsal

Week 10

Rehearsal

Materials Students Need to Provide:

- 3 ring binder with pockets and with lined notebook paper. Line sizes can be age appropriate, up to parental discretion. Clearly mark with students name.
- Pencils and Eraser in a pencil pouch clearly marked with students name.
- Water Bottle with name on it