

WARM UP

1 Tick (✓) the forms of pollution you would expect to have found in Dickens' time.

- 1 air pollution
- 2 radioactive contamination
- 3 water pollution
- 4 noise pollution
- 5 light pollution
- 6 visual pollution
- 7 stationary pollution sources

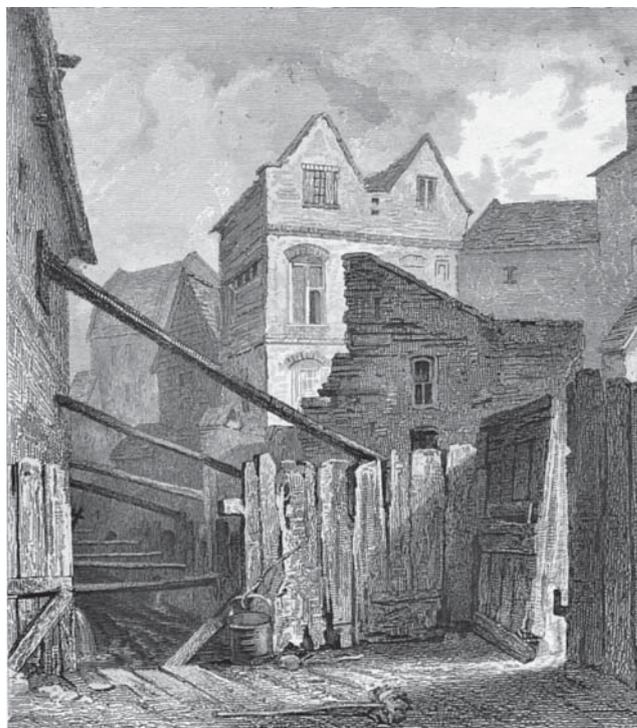
GLOSSARY

abuts: *confina, è adiacente*
banks: *banchine*
colliers: *navi carboniere*
filthiest: *la più sudicia*
maze: *labirinto*
muddy: *fangose*
thronged: *popolate*
waterside: *del lungofiume*
apparel: *indumenti*
dangle: *pendono*
jostling: *urtando*
ballast-heavers: *scaricatori*
coal-whippers: *carbonai*
brazen: *di malaffare*
stacks: *mucchi*
tottering: *vacillanti*
neglect: *abbandono*

Dickens' London

Jacob's Island

Near to that part of the Thames on which the church at Rotherhithe abuts, where the buildings on the banks are dirtiest and the vessels on the river blackest with the dust of colliers and the smoke of close-built low-roofed houses, there exists the filthiest, the strangest, the most extraordinary of the many localities that are hidden in London, wholly unknown, even by name, to the great mass of its inhabitants. To reach this place, the visitor has to penetrate through a maze of close, narrow, and muddy streets, thronged by the roughest and poorest of waterside people, and devoted to the traffic they may be supposed to occasion. The cheapest and least delicate provisions are heaped in the shops; the coarsest and commonest articles of wearing apparel dangle at the salesman's door, and stream from the house-parapet and windows. Jostling with unemployed labourers of the lowest class, ballast-heavers, coal-whippers, brazen women, ragged children, and the raff and refuse of the river, he makes his way with difficulty along, assailed by offensive sights and smells from the narrow alleys which branch off on the right and left, and deafened by the clash of ponderous waggons that bear great piles of merchandise from the stacks of warehouses that rise from every corner. Arriving, at length, in streets remoter and less-frequented than those through which he has passed, he walks beneath tottering house-fronts projecting over the pavement, dismantled walls that seem to totter as he passes, chimneys half crushed half hesitating to fall, windows guarded by rusty iron bars that time and dirt have almost eaten away, every imaginable sign of desolation and neglect.



From *Oliver Twist*, by C. Dickens



Go to <http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/50/oliver-twist/981/chapter-50-the-pursuit-and-escape/> for an MP3 version

READING COMPREHENSION

2 **PET** Read the passage about Dickens' London and decide if the statements below are true (T) or false (F).

- 1 The majority of people in London do not know the name of the area described in the text.
- 2 At the start the man finds it easy to walk through the streets.
- 3 The people who live in this area do not belong to the upper class.
- 4 There are a lot of warehouses in this area.
- 5 The houses are in good condition.
- 6 The windows are filthy.

T	F
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

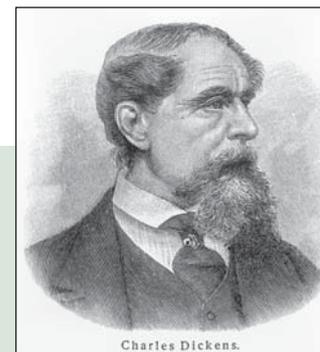
3 Read the passage again and answer the questions.

- 1 Why do you think the majority of people in London do not know the name of the area described in the text?
- 2 What kind of people can be seen in the streets?
- 3 What are the buildings like in this area?
- 4 What general impression does the writer give in his description?

WRITING

4 **PET** Write a short description (about 100 words) of the area where you live including the following information.

- The houses and buildings
- The people
- The streets and shops



Charles Dickens.

MORE ABOUT...

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) was one of England's greatest writers. He is best known for novels such as *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations*. Dickens wrote about the London he lived in, the conditions of the poor and the growing tensions between the classes. In fact, the author was a social reformer who used fiction to criticise economic, social and moral conditions in Victorian England.