

# Great expectations – short summary and review essay sample

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



## Summary

Pip was a common working boy; he was used to his status and was happy. But after he met the cold and proud Estelle, he fell foolishly in love with her. He became ashamed of himself, ashamed of his family and ashamed of his work. That was when he discovered his “ great expectations”. A few years later, Pip was told that he was chosen to inherit a great fortune, whose name must remain a secret until that person decided to tell Pip himself. Pip foolishly thought that it must be Miss Havisham, who made him an apprentice to Joe Gargery – his sister ‘ s husband and his friend. Pip, amazed by his luck, was soon moved to London to start a new life. During that period, Pip discovered the real person who was generous to him – a convict whom he helped a long time ago. Pip also discovered that Estella, the girl he loved, was indeed the daughter of Magwhich. Magwhich was captured by the police later, but before he was sentenced, Magwhich died peacefully in jail after he heard from Pip that his beloved daughter was still alive. Pip then started a new life and it wasn’t until 11 years later that he met Estella again, who was married to a cruel husband, now divorced and changed to a better person, and given Pip a place in her heart.

## How it relates to self-discovery

The story is mainly focused on Pip’s discovery of his “ great expectations” from his interview with Estella. He also discovered the importance of status in this society and therefore he is willing to live at a higher class and be respected. “ What I dreaded was, that in some unlucky hour I, being at my grimmest and commonest, should life up my eyes and see Estella looking in at

one of the wooden windows of the forge. I was haunted by the fear that she would, sooner or later, find me out, with a black face and hands, doing the coarsest part of my work, and would exult over me and despise me.” His quote shows clearly how Pip is willing to reach a higher status.

Pip’s other important discovery was when he discovered that Abel Magwitch was his true adopter. This is shocking news to Pip. However, Pip took up the responsibility of Magwitch even though he stopped using his money afterwards. From this experience Pip learnt his mistake of abandoning Joe and his friends at the forge and also discovered his bonds with Joe.

#### Techniques used

The story is written in first person. This is essential in order for the audience to reach the narrator’s mind in such an emotive story. From the use of such a technique, Pip’s inner conflicts (when he heard about his “ great expectations”) are clearly revealed and when he discovered his emotional bond with Joe and Biddy.

Dialogues played a significant role in this novel. The story is set during a range of years. By the use of dialogue, it is clear how Pip changed from a hotheaded boy to a more mature man. An example is when Pip describes his first visit to Miss Havisham, “ She was sitting, I, ‘ in a black velvet coach.’ Mr Pumblechook and Mrs Joe stared at one another.” When we come to this scene we must pay tribute to the author’s wonderful and seemingly effortless ability to get inside a boy’s mind as this is exactly a story a boy

could invent. This also contrasts to Pip's later thoughts, therefore suggesting a time change.

Comparing with prescribed text

Compared with “What's Eating Gilbert's Grape”, Pip's discovery of his “great expectations” did not really make him a happier person. If Pip did not meet Estella at Miss Havisham's, he would never be ashamed of being a common working boy. He will probably follow Joe's example of becoming an honest and hardworking man. His later discovery of Magwitch also shocked him and at the same time gave him more responsibilities. This is unlike Gilbert, who was able to throw away all his responsibilities.

However, in the end when Pip found out that Estella had changed to a better person, it seemed to come to a final resolution and turning point of Pip's life and which also suggested that his life will be happier onwards. This is similar to Gilbert, who was also able to lead a happier life.