Directions: On your own paper, take notes over the A&E Biography shown in class (which may be found at the following URL: http://www.biography.com/video.do?name=fullbioepisodes&bcpid=1896837674&bclid=40458090001&bctid=40043568001.

This episode of Biography presents the life and times of one of the world’s greatest literary geniuses: Charles Dickens. Born in London in 1812, Dickens would become the most read novelist of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Dickens’ characters have become part of the world’s common culture, recognizable and universal. Biography looks at both the literary giant and the man, whose work is perhaps the strongest social commentary on the polemic conditions of the industrial revolution.

1. The tales of Charles Dickens have been popular for over a century. What is it about Dickens’ work that makes it so enduring and memorable?

2. Charles Dickens’ work coincided with the height of the Industrial Revolution. How did this historic era influence Dickens’ life and work?

3. How did Dickens’ relationship with his parents and his boyhood influence his writings?

4. Dickens created some of the most memorable characters in the history of the written word. How did Dickens get the ideas for these characters? Are they purely fictional?

5. The first works of Dickens were published as serials. How did this method of publication contribute to Dickens’ popularity and success as a writer?

6. Today the Yuletide traditions of Christmas trees and gift-giving are well established. But they were just becoming popular in nineteenth century England. How did Dickens’ endearing work “A Christmas Carol” contribute to the establishment of Yuletide traditions?

7. Charles Dickens’ success was everything he had dreamed of as a boy and more, yet he was an intensely unhappy man. What made Dickens so unhappy? How did his melancholy influence his work?

8. How did Dickens internalize the world around him?

9. What is the legacy of Charles Dickens? How did his life change the world?