A Before Reading

1. Describe the picture on the front cover of this book. Write a list of four adjectives that you think might describe the story you are going to read.

B While Reading

2. Keep a list of the numbers of the pages where Dickens writes about the lives of poor people in England at this time.

3. *Bleak House* is a complicated story. The story of Esther Summerson and the story of Lady Dedlock are mixed together in this book. Keep a chart to show what happens to each of them. (The chart will be long!)

4. Read to the end of Chapter 15. Who do you think killed Mr Tulkinghorn?
C After Reading

5 Look back at the pages you wrote down for Question 2. Write a report about what you have learnt about the lives of poor people.

6 Read the beginning of the book again. The first three paragraphs give you a “picture” in words of London in bad winter weather. Write three paragraphs about bad weather in your country. Write as good a “picture” as Dickens does.

7 Are there any clues that tell you about Esther’s relationship to Lady Dedlock? (Look back at Chapter 7 and Chapter 10.)

8 Tell Allan Woodcourt’s story.

9 Who are these people? Explain why each person is important in the story.

Have you read Our Mutual Friend which is another Upper Level Reader by Charles Dickens?
Or have you read The Return of the Native by Thomas Hardy?