

Guess the mystery objects!

Every day between breakfast and lunch, Charles would go to his study to write. These items were very important to him. See if you can match the clue to the picture and work out what each one is.



He used this to bring his characters to life

He used this to prepare a new book or newspaper to be read

He used this to store his ink

He used this to light up his workspace

He used this for storing matches



Charles Dickens Museum

Answers

(don't peek until you have finished!)

This is a taper stand. He used this to light up his workspace. Tapers were a cheaper alternative to candles. They were made of dried reeds, dipped in tallow (animal fat). They would be held by the clip at the top of the taper stand and lit at the end. This would give you about the same amount of light as a matchstick. If you were working really hard and needed more light, you could light the other end too. This is where the saying "burning the candle at both ends" comes from!

This is an inkwell. He used this to store his ink. This glass jar contained ink that Charles would then dip a quill into. A quill was a pen made from a sharpened goose feather! The ink would stay wet for a long time and was easily smudged – take another look at the page from *A Christmas Carol* – can you see why it was so easy to make a mess?

This is a paper knife. He used this to prepare a new book or newspaper to be read. When new books and newspapers are printed, the pages are folded over so that the pages were bound together. Today, the printers cut the pages for us before we buy them but in Charles' day they were often sold uncut. Before you could read them, you'd have to slice open the pages using a paper knife.

This is a match-holder. He used this for storing matches. This pottery container was a gift. The centre is hollow for storing matches and the green sloped sides have a bumpy surface which light the match when rubbed against it.

This is a mirror. He used this to bring his characters to life. Charles always kept mirrors in his study. When he was creating his characters he wanted to know everything about them – how they looked, the expressions they might have, the way they might move and the way they sounded. Charles acted his characters out using a mirror, helping his characters to become as lifelike as possible!

