Board game
KS3 > Prose > Oliver Twist

How it works
I've always liked a challenge and I've always liked Dickens, so any resource that finds imaginative ways to open up a novel like *Oliver Twist* with a Key Stage 3 class is up there on my list. Add in the prospect of a game of snakes and ladders and Bob's your proverbial.

This resource is a lovely clear, structured set of instructions, the kind I only remember to produce after we've had a totally mad lesson teetering on that fine line between creativity and chaos. Students are held on a rein while they think of good and bad things that happen to Oliver during the story, punishments, rewards and consequences, and the correct sequencing of these things. With examples and variations to guide their thinking, they are then unleashed to devise a board game.

Then comes the good bit. Just when they're having too much fun and thinking English is just mucking about, though of course we all know this was about understanding key plot issues, they are then asked to write the rules of their game – a nice real instructional writing task.

Try this!
I'd take it a little further than the instructions given here. Once the students have written their rules, get them testing their clarity and efficacy. Swap games and rules between groups, and get them making notes and additions of where the instructions aren't clear, and/or any variations they would add to make the game more interesting. Then they swap back again and do whatever redrafting is needed. An alternative might be for them to test their game with younger children, perhaps also producing a simplified version of the story to go with it.

Or this!
And if you think Key Stage 3 pupils get all the fun, why not try it with KS4 or even KS5 … A Not-So-Trivial Pursuit could have students devising questions for six categories such as six key themes, or six aspects of the novel such as plot, character, setting, theme, style, genre.
You are going to make a relatively simple ‘snakes and ladders’ style game using the story of Oliver Twist to shape events on your board. But before you begin turning your blank board frame into something resembling the example on this page, you need to do some planning and preparation:

- Think of six or seven bad things that happen to Oliver during the story.
- Think of five or five good things that happen.
- For each event think of a suitable punishment or reward.
- List these events and their ‘consequences’ in a table (see below).
- Transfer this information on to your board – but be careful to make sure you put the events in the correct sequence in which they happen in the story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BACKWARD-MOVING EVENTS</th>
<th>FORWARD-MOVING EVENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sikes murders Nancy – go back to Fagin’s den</td>
<td>Oliver runs away from the Undertakers – go on to LONDON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Sally steals the locket – go back to the start ('Workhouse')</td>
<td>The bookseller saves Oliver from jail – go on to Mr Brownlow’s house</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will notice that on the mini-example below there are two squares with a big ‘?’ on them. If you land on either of these squares you have to answer a question about the story or the author, Charles Dickens. If you fail to provide the correct response – then you forfeit a go. It makes for a more interesting game. So you need to mark two such squares onto your board – and make up 12 to 15 quiz questions as well!

Finally, you will need to write the rules for your game – so players can clearly understand how it is supposed to work. You must explain each of the following:

- equipment needed
- how to start (who goes first)
- what happens when you land on a question square
- how to finish/win (do you need to throw the exact number to get ‘Home’?)