

THE CANTERVILLE GHOST

Teachers' notes



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BEFORE GOING TO THE THEATRE



Welcome to **The Canterville Ghost**! Are you ready to go to the theatre?
We are sure you will have a lot of fun!

Before going to the theatre, please answer the following questions. Good luck!

As you may know, *The Canterville Ghost* was written by Oscar Wilde. What do you know about Oscar Wilde? In groups of four, do some research on internet about the author. Find the correct answer to the following questions. Then share them with the whole class.

The answer is open and free. The main aim of the activity is for the students to properly select reliable information from the internet. Please encourage students to discuss their ideas in English and with the whole class.

1. Oscar Wilde lived during the Victorian Era of the late 19th century. Can you list three interesting things about Victorian society?

a).....
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b).....
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c).....
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2. Oscar Wilde wrote plenty of short stories and plays. Find the right title for each description (source: <http://www.cmgww.com/historic/wilde/>). **Use your dictionary, maybe there are words that you don't know :)**

a. **The Happy Prince and Other Tales.**

"A collection of short stories for children which contains five stories [...]."

b. **The Picture of Dorian Gray**

"Wilde's only full-length novel, which brought critical scrutiny in his time, but endured to become a classic work of fiction, and an icon in the author's cannon of literary works."

c. **The Importance of Being Earnest**

"A farcical comedy in which the protagonists maintain fictitious personae to escape burdensome social obligations. Working within the social conventions of late Victorian London, the play's major themes are the triviality with which it treats institutions as serious as marriage and the resulting satire of Victorian ways."

3. As you may know, Oscar Wilde is famous worldwide for his quotes. Read the following ones (source: <http://www.cmgww.com>). **What do they mean to you? Do you agree with these messages? Why? Why not? Write and discuss with the whole class.**

The answer is open and free. Please encourage students to discuss their ideas in English and with the whole class.

<p><i>"Life is much too important a thing ever to talk seriously about it."</i> — Lady Windermere's Fan, 1892, Act I</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p><i>"To love oneself is the beginning of a life-long romance."</i> — "An Ideal Husband"</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p><i>"The public have an insatiable curiosity to know everything, except what is worth knowing."</i> — "The Soul of Man Under Socialism"</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

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4. Let's talk about The Canterville Ghost now!

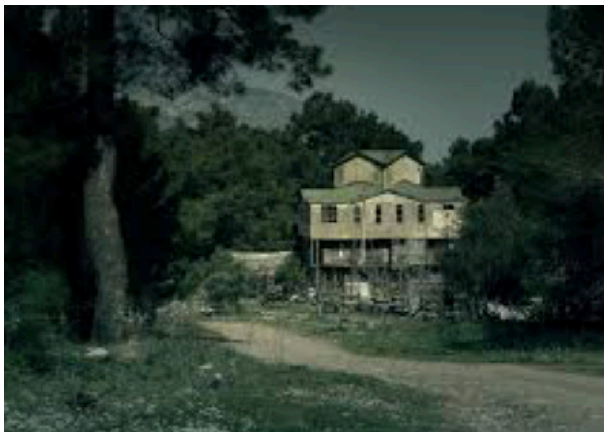
Sir Simon, the Ghost, still lives in Canterville Chase, that's why Canterville Chase might be considered a haunted house. Oscar Wilde described the house in detail: the library, the armour in the hallway...

Now it's your turn! Work in 5 groups. Name each group with a number from 1 to 5.

How do you imagine Canterville Chase?

Design and draw your own haunted house on a poster. Remember to put in as many details as possible! Later you will find out why ;)

Here you have some pictures to get inspired.



The activity is open and free. Please encourage students to use the vocabulary they already know; also, please write new words they might use on the whiteboard. Please set up the classroom as follows: one table per group of four students. For this activity each group will need a piece of white cardboard to draw the final version of its haunted house.

Draw a first draft of your haunted house here.

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5. Can you imagine living in a house with a ghost? Now that you have created your own haunted houses, imagine that they are for sale and that you are working as real estate agents. Write and draw an advertisement for the haunted houses for sale. But be careful because...

Group 1 will have to sell group 2's haunted house

Group 2 will have to sell group 3's haunted house

Group 3 will have to sell group 4's haunted house

Group 4 will have to sell group 5's haunted house

Group 5 will have to sell group 1's haunted house

You have to say that the house comes with a terrifying ghost!

For this activity you will need to show pictures of houses for sale to the students.



Design a first draft of your advertisement here.

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Now it's your turn! Let the house-selling contest begin!

Each group has to show its advertisement to the whole class and be persuasive!

Remember, everybody has to talk and you have to tell your imaginary clients that there is a ghost in the house! Your classmates can ask you questions about the house (3 questions per group).

Which is the most convincing group?

Please make sure the students do this activity in English. Please write words and expressions they might need during the contest on the whiteboard.

5. What about the characters? Let's have a look at the main characters of *The Canterville Ghost* by Oscar Wilde. Match each name with the right description.

Lord Canterville	He killed his wife, Lady Eleanor, in 1575. He lived for nine years after that, and then he disappeared very mysteriously. His body was never discovered, but his soul still haunts Canterville Chase.
Mr. Otis	She was a nice fifteen-year-old girl. She was a good sportswoman and loved to ride horses. She didn't share the jokes about the ghost.
Miss Virginia	He is a very rich man who thinks that everything can be bought with money. He bought Canterville Chase and went there to live with his family. He doesn't believe in ghosts.
The Ghost	He belongs to a very old British family which was the owner of Canterville Chase for a long time. He sold the haunted house to Hiram Otis. He warned him about the ghost

But guess what? The play you are going to see is a freely adapted version of the plot written by Oscar Wilde! We will talk about it later ;)

Now we are almost ready to go to the theatre. But first, let's play!

Since we are going to the theatre... Let's do some acting!

This game is called SCENES FROM THE HAT

You will need: a hat (one for the entire class) and one piece of paper (one per person).

Write a situation on the piece of paper (for example, "you won the lottery" or "the train is late") and put the piece of paper in the hat.

One of you will randomly pick a piece of paper. He or she will have to act out the situation written on the paper by using the following mysterious sentence you will hear during the play.

"When the young lady makes a prayer bloom from the sinner's lips and gives freedom to the tears, then the house shall become calm again, and peace shall return to Canterville."

Good luck, improvisers!

Maybe at the beginning it will be difficult to involve the students in the game. Please be the first in playing, they will follow your example, for sure :)



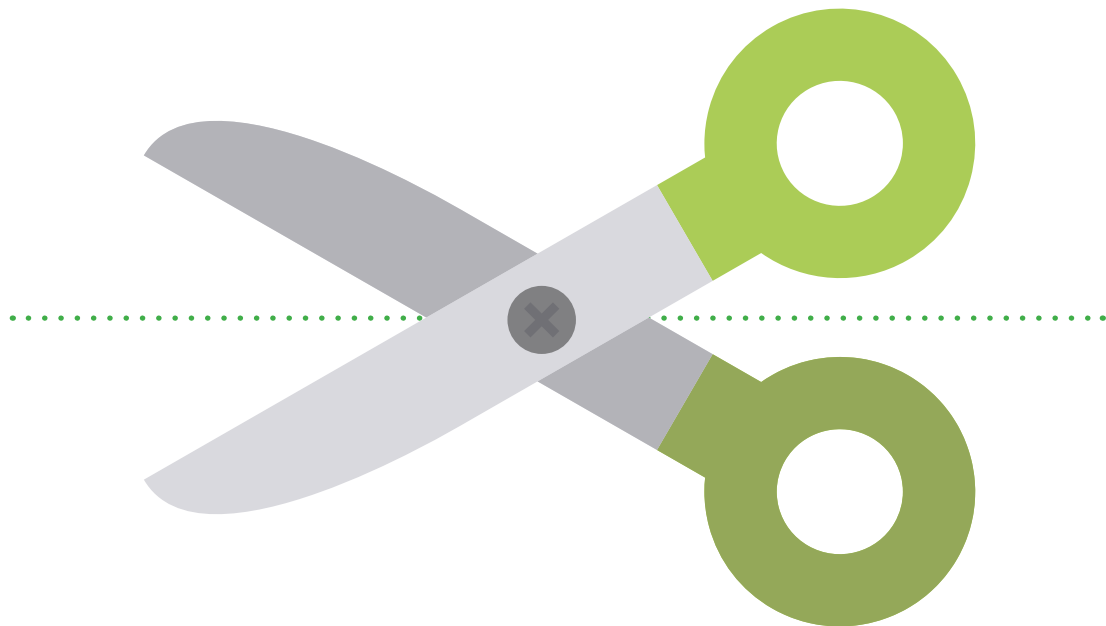
After the play

6. Here we are again! Did you like the play? Why? Was there anything in the play that surprised you? Give us your personal opinion about it. Then share your answer with your classmates.

The answer is open and free. Please encourage students to discuss their ideas in English and with the whole class.

7. Now work in groups. Cut up the following sequences of scenes. Put them in order. Then share your answer with the whole class.

Please set up the classroom as follows: one table per group of four students or more. Even if each student has his or her own copy of these guidelines, each group can only cut up one copy of the sequence of scenes below. Once each group has made its own order of scenes, please correct it with the whole class involving all the groups in the correction.



Virginia and Otis talk about the story of the Bloody Heart.	6
Cecil finds out that the bloodstain is back.	8
Virginia, Otis and Cecil have a very scary contact with Sir Simon.	7
Virginia says: "Simon's finally leaving. He's gone now."	17
A session of spiritism begins.	14
Virginia meets the Ghost for the first time.	4
Everybody turns out to be treasure hunters.	12
Lady Eleanor and Sir Simon have a tragic fight.	1

There is a fight for the Bloody Heart.	16
Lord Canterville, Otis and Virginia talk about the Ghost for the first time.	2
Cecil discovers a strange interference, the chain noise.	5
There are now three things lost in this house: the Bloody Heart, Sir Simon's body, and Virginia.	13
Virginia comes back to her world.	15
Otis and Cecil try to clean up an ancient bloodstain.	3
Otis notices that Lord Canterville has a particular cufflink.	9
Virginia talks to Sir Simon in the library and he takes her.	11
Virginia, Cecil, and Otis find out that their conversations have been recorded.	10

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8. As we said before, the version of *The Canterville Ghost* that you saw was a freely adapted one of the plot written by Oscar Wilde.

Now, to do this activity, you will need to work in groups. You will also need a working smart phone with an internet connection. Are you ready? Follow the steps and have fun!

Step 1	First of all, do some research on internet about the original version of <i>The Canterville Ghost</i> .
Step 2	Each group will work on a specific scene of the play. Your teacher will tell you which scene each group is going to work on. Find information about your scene and write a short script of it.
Step 3	Act out your scene! Decide how to distribute the roles. You will need actors, a cameraman, and a director. Make a video of your scene that is 5 minutes long at most.
Step 4	Download all the videos and watch them with the whole class, from scene 1 to scene 5. Is the story understandable?

Please set up the classroom as follows: one table per group of four students or more. Internet is full of different versions of *The Canterville Ghost*. The main aim of the activity is for the students to properly select reliable information from the internet and to work in a group. Once you assign one chapter per group (*The Canterville Ghost* has 7 chapters), they can work independently. Still, if you go table by table to supervise their research and their work as they go along, it might be helpful for them. Once they find the information they need (about the seven chapters that shape the book) they can start with step number 2. If they cannot organise themselves, assign roles to each one of them (one can write the script, the other can draw the character, etc).

Be careful! This activity is quite long — you might need an entire morning for it!



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What do you think about changing famous stories and adapting them to another time? Can you think of a famous example of that? Now work in four groups. Two groups will think about the pros of adapting famous stories to the present time. The other two groups will think about the cons.

And now... let's debate! Each group will have to support their thesis (*for* and *against* adaptations)

Please set up the classroom as follows: one table per group of four students or more. Please draw the following sample list on the whiteboard and assign the pros list to two groups and the cons list to the other two. Please encourage them to fill in the list and give examples for them.

Pros (group 1 and 2)	Cons (group 3 and 4)
The play is less boring	The play doesn't reflect the reality of the time in which they wrote it

Then each group can choose a spokesperson to participate in the debate. Please encourage everyone to be the spokesperson at least once. Please act as a moderator of the debate and fill in a group list of pros and cons on the whiteboard.

Did you like the *Canterville Ghost* experience? Fill in the acrostic poem below with words that express how you feel now.

The answer is open and free. Please encourage students to express their feeling in English and with the whole class.

G.....

H.....

O.....

S.....

T.....

Thanks for your great work!





THE CANTERVILLE GHOST

Theatre for 3rd and 4th of ESO

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