

THE CANTERVILLE GHOST



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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.

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

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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.....

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

b.....

“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.....

“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/historic/wilde/>). **What do they mean to you? Do you agree with these messages? Why? Why not? Write and discuss with the whole class.**

“Life is much too important a thing ever to talk seriously about it.”
 – Lady Windermere’s Fan, 1892, Act I

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“To love oneself is the beginning of a life-long romance.”
 – “An Ideal Husband”

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“The public have an insatiable curiosity to know everything, except what is worth knowing.”
 – “The Soul of Man Under Socialism”

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4. Did you know that Oscar Wilde was sentenced to two years of hard labour? Do you know why? Because of his open homosexuality.

What do you think about that? Do you know any other famous writer who was sentenced because of his or her sexual orientation? Write and discuss with the whole class.

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5. Let's talk about *The Canterville Ghost* now! First of all, do you know the story? Write the right chapter number for each chapter beginning

(source: <https://www.ego4u.com>). The first one is already done :)

Underline the words you don't know and look them up in the dictionary :)

Chapter number

The ghost did not appear for the rest of the week. The only strange thing that happened was the bloodstain, which they found on the library floor every morning. It was also quite strange that the colour of the stain changed from time to time. Some mornings it was red, then brown or purple, or even green. These changes amused the family very much, and bets on the colour were made every evening. The only person who did not enter into the joke was Virginia. For some unexplained reason, she was rather annoyed at the sight of the bloodstain, and nearly cried the morning it was green.

Chapter number:

One day, Virginia was walking along the corridor, when she saw a person in one of the rooms and went in. To her surprise, it was the Canterville ghost himself and he looked really sad. "I am so sorry for you," she said, "but my brothers are going back to Eton tomorrow, and then, if you behave yourself, no one will annoy you." "It is absurd asking me to behave myself," the ghost answered, "I must rattle my chains, and groan through keyholes, and walk about at night. It is my only reason for existing." "It is no reason at all for existing, and you know you have been very nasty. Mrs Umney told us that you had killed your wife."

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| Chapter number: | <i>About ten minutes later, the bell rang for dinner, and, as Virginia did not come down, Mrs Otis sent up one of the servants. After a little time he returned and said that he could not find Miss Virginia anywhere. So, the whole family started looking for her. The hours passed, but they could find no trace of Virginia. So, after dinner, Mr Otis ordered them all to bed, saying that nothing more could be done that night, and that he would contact Scotland Yard in the morning. Just when everybody was about to leave the dining-room, the clock struck midnight, and when the last stroke sounded, a secret door opened in the wall and in that door stood Virginia with a little box in her hand. Everybody ran up to her.</i> |
| Chapter number: 1 | <i>When the American, Mr Otis, bought Canterville Castle, everyone told him that this was very foolish, as the place was haunted. But Mr Otis answered, "I come from a modern country, where we have everything that money can buy. And if there were such a thing as a ghost in Europe, we would have it at home in one of our museums."</i> |
| Chapter number | <i>Four days later, a funeral started from Canterville Castle. In a quiet corner of the churchyard, Sir Simon's skeleton was buried. When the ceremony was over, Virginia stepped forward and laid a large cross made of white and pink almond-blossoms on the coffin.</i> |
| Chapter number | <i>For five days, the ghost did not leave his room. He was very weak and tired and his nerves were completely shattered. He also gave up the point of the bloodstain on the library floor. If the Otis family did not want it, they clearly did not deserve it. Whenever the Canterville ghost roamed the house now, he was careful to have oiled his chains and not to make a sound. However, the twins still played their tricks on him. They stretched strings across the corridor, over which he tripped in the dark, and once he slipped on a butter-slide, which the twins had constructed for him on the staircase. This so annoyed the ghost, that he decided to teach the twins a lesson and give them the fright of their lives.</i> |
| Chapter number | <i>There was a horrible storm that night, but apart from that nothing scary happened. The next morning, however, when the family came down to breakfast, they found the terrible stain of blood once again on the floor. Washington cleaned it a second time, but the second morning it appeared again. The third morning it was there, too, although the library had been locked up at night by Mr Otis himself.</i> |

Have you learnt any new word so far? Write their meaning (in English) here.

| Word | Meaning (in English) |
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5. Now work in 7 groups. Each group will be in charge of one different chapter. In groups, find information about your chapter (you can use internet or find the original copy of *The Canterville Ghost* in the library) and fill in the following table. Then share your answers with the whole class.

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Chapter number: | |
| Characters: | |
| Main fact: | |
| Tone of the chapter: | |

6. As you can see from the information you found, the characters are from Great Britain and the USA.

How do you think Oscar Wilde presents those characters? What are their main features? How are the two countries depicted? Fill the following table. Then share your answers with the whole class.

| Name of the character |  |  |
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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 ;)

After the play

7. 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.

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8. Now work in groups. Put the following sequences of scenes in order. Then share your answer with the whole class.

Virginia and Otis talk about the story of the Bloody Heart.

Cecil finds out that the bloodstain is back.

Virginia, Otis and Cecil have a very scary contact with Sir Simon.

Virginia says: "Simon's finally leaving. He's gone now."

A session of spiritism begins.

Virginia meets the Ghost for the first time.

Everybody turns out to be treasure hunters.

Lady Eleanor and Sir Simon have a tragic fight.

There is a fight for the Bloody Heart.

Lord Canterville, Otis and Virginia talk about the Ghost for the first time.

Cecil discovers a strange interference, the chain noise.

There are now three things lost in this house: the Bloody Heart,
Sir Simon's body, and Virginia.

Virginia comes back to her world.

Otis and Cecil try to clean up an ancient bloodstain.

Otis notices that Lord Canterville has a particular cufflink.

Virginia talks to Sir Simon in the library and he takes her.

Virginia, Cecil, and Otis find out that their conversations have been recorded.

9. 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, read all the information you found about the chapter you were in charge of again.

Step 2

Write a short script of the chapter.

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 lasts 5 minutes 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?





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)

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

G.....

H.....

O.....

S.....

T.....

Thanks for your great work!





THE CANTERVILLE GHOST

Theatre for Upper Secondary School

www.transeduca.com

info@transeduca.com

934 740 002

transeduca 