

# THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

3rd and 4th of ESO  
Teacher's Guide





## BEFORE GOING TO THE THEATRE

### 1. The Story

The aristocrat Dorian Gray is a handsome young man living in the nineteenth century, in England. He enjoys life very much. However, his soul is not as attractive as his face and he does as he likes without minding the consequences of his acts. He hurts people's feelings all the time, even leading one of his lovers to commit suicide. One of his best friends, Basil, paints his portrait. He looks magnificent and wishes to remain so for all eternity. He gets his wish and over the years it is Dorian's portrait and not he himself who gets old. However, the portrait not only shows his appearance as an old man but also the evilness of his soul. In the end, being unable to stand the sight of the portrait, he destroys it, killing himself in doing so.

**Answer the following questions related to the text:**

a) Who is Dorian Gray?

He is a young and handsome aristocrat.

b) Where does he live? When?

He lives in England in the 19th century.

c) Is he a good person? Why or why not?

No, he isn't. He hurts people's feeling all the time and he doesn't mind the consequences of his acts.

d) What does his friend Basil do for him?

He paints his portrait.

e) What's Basil's profession?

He is a painter.

f) Why is the present special?

Because it gets older instead of Dorian.

g) Is Dorian's ending a happy one? Why?

No, it isn't. Because in the end he kills himself.



h) Why do you think Dorian's portrait gets older? Why did the author make up this story?  
Student's ideas.

i) Is there any symbology in doing this?  
Student's ideas.

Define the following words appearing in the text: Suggested definitions of Merriam-webster

- **Portrait:** A pictorial representation of a person usually showing the face
- **Century:** A period of 100 years.
- **Suicide:** The act or an instance of taking one's own life voluntarily and intentionally.
- **Eternity:** A seemingly endless or immeasurable time.
- **Evilness** Arising from actual or imputed bad character or conduct.
- **Feeling** An emotional state or reaction.



**Find all the adjectives appearing in the text and build their comparative and superlative forms.**

- Young - younger - the youngest
- Handsome - more handsome - the most handsome
- Attractive - more attractive - the most attractive
- Magnificent - more magnificent - the most magnificent
- Old - older - the oldest

**The summary is written in present simple. Rewrite it in past simple:**

Dorian Gray was a handsome young man living in the nineteenth century, in England. He enjoyed life very much. However, his soul was not as attractive as his face and he did as he liked without minding the consequences of his acts. He hurt people's feelings all the time, even leading one of his lovers to commit suicide. One of his best friends, Basil, painted his portrait. He looked magnificent and wished to remain so for all eternity. He got his wish and over the years it was Dorian's portrait and not he himself who got old. However, the portrait not only showed his appearance as an old man but it also showed the evilness of his soul. In the end, being unable to stand the sight of the portrait, he destroyed it, killing himself in doing so.



## 2. The characters

**DORIAN GRAY** is the main character. He is a person with a lot of money and who does not care about the consequences of his actions. He would like to be handsome and young forever.

**HENRY WOTTON** is Dorian's best friend. He loves to enjoy youth and parties. He is the one who encourages friends not to worry about problems and to spend time enjoying small pleasures.

**BASIL HALLWARD** is an artist. He is the one who paints Dorian's portrait. Unlike Henry, Basil is a good-natured person. He believes in the good qualities of people, although he does not talk too much.

**SIBYL VANE** is an artist who sings in a theater where Dorian likes to hang out. Henry thinks she doesn't have much talent, and describes her as cute but not beautiful.

**JAMES VANE** is Sibyl's brother. He is aggressive and very protective of people who want to approach his sister. He doesn't seem to like Dorian very much.

## 3. Oscar Wilde



As you may know, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was written by Oscar Wilde.

What do you know about Oscar Wilde?

In groups of four, do some research on the internet about the author. Find the correct answer to the following questions. Then share them with the whole class.

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

- .....  
.....
- .....  
.....
- .....  
.....



- Oscar Wilde wrote plenty of short tales and plays. Do some research to find the right title for each description. You can use your dictionary if there are words that you don't know.

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

**The Happy Prince and Other Tales**

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".

**The Picture of Dorian Gray**

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".

**The Importance of Being Earnest**

**As you may know, Oscar Wilde is worldwide famous for his quotes. Read the following ones and answer the questions:**

- What do they mean to you?
- Do you agree with these messages?
- Why? Why not? Write and discuss them in open class.

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

*"Life is much too important a thing ever to talk seriously about it."*  
– Lady Windermere's Fan, 1892, Act I

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

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



**4. Put the following words in order to create coherent sentences. You have to add the necessary articles and prepositions:**

a) going/parties/Dorian/likes

Dorian likes going to parties.

b) Dorian/Basil/friends/best/one/is/'s

Basil is one of Dorian's best friends.

c) works/Basil/painter/as

Basil works as a painter.

d) forever/Dorian/like/young/would/be

Dorian would like to be young forever.

e) year/Dorian/portrait/'s/every/older/gets

Dorian's portrait gets older every year.

f) portrait/finally/destroyed/is/owner/its

The portrait is finally destroyed by its owner.

## 5. Vocabulary

Look at the vocabulary from the play and learn it.

PAINTING	TO WASTE	PORTRAIT	SHOULDER	WEAK	TO GO OUT
SPOTLIGHT	PERFORMANCE	PROTECTIVE	TO CHARM	MARRIAGE	SNOB
AWFUL	TO BOTHER	BLIND	MERMAID	TO DROWN	TO OWE
REVENGE	HEARTBROKEN	PARANOID	PERSISTENT	SELFISH	



## 6. In the play there are some colour idioms or expressions.

Look at these idioms using colours and match them to the correct meaning. If you don't know the answer, have a guess!

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. To be tickled <b>pink</b> .          | A. To be skillful in the garden.           |
| 2. To be <b>black</b> and <b>blue</b> . | B. To be sad.                              |
| 3. To be in the <b>red</b> .            | C. To be in debt.                          |
| 4. To have a <b>green</b> thumb.        | D. To be the odd or bad member of a group. |
| 5. To be the <b>black</b> sheep.        | E. To have no courage.                     |
| 6. To be <b>blue</b> .                  | F. To be very shocked.                     |
| 7. To go as <b>white</b> as a ghost.    | G. To be extremely pleased.                |
| 8. To be <b>yellow</b> .                | H. To be badly bruised all over.           |

Answers:

1 - G    2 - H    3 - C    4 - A    5 - D    6 - B    7 - F    8 - E

## 7. Odd one out

Choose the odd one out and give a reason. Careful! There may be more than one answer.

- |            |           |           |          |                |
|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------------|
| a) Want    | Hot       | What      | How      | Watch          |
| b) Cow     | Kitten    | Puppy     | Lamb     | Cub            |
| c) Bra     | T-shirt   | Vest      | Knickers | Underpants     |
| d) Swim    | Sail      | Dive      | Fly      | Waterski       |
| e) Wanted  | Landed    | Waited    | Wished   | Painted        |
| f) Pop     | Classical | Drum      | Rock     | Jazz           |
| g) Pound   | Cent      | Euro      | Peseta   | Dollar         |
| h) Teacher | Lawyer    | Policeman | Doctor   | Traffic Warden |
| i) Sea     | Real      | Still     | Steal    | Steel          |
| j) Paris   | London    | Rome      | New York | Brussels       |

In this exercise, as long as the student has a valid reason for their choice, more than one answer could be right:





- How - doesn't have the o sound as in pot.
- Cow - is not a baby animal. (cat, dog, sheep, lion/bear).
- T-shirt - is not underwear.
- Fly - not a verb related to water.
- Wished - has /t/ sound. (all other verbs have /ɪd/ sound).
- Drum - is not a type of music.
- Peseta - no longer exists as a form of money.
- Policeman - is a job that changes form in the feminine (policewoman).
- Still - has the /l/ sound (all other words have /ɪ:/ sound as in meet).
- New York isn't a capital city (Washington D.C. is the capital of U.S.A.).

## 8. Listening

Listen to track 1 and answer the following questions:

- What is Basil doing?  
He is painting Dorian's portrait.
- What does Henry think about Basil? What does he think the portrait is going to look like before seeing it finished?  
He thinks Basil is the best painter of this generation. He thinks the portrait will be incredible.
- When Dorian sees the portrait, what does he think?  
He thinks he looks beautiful, handsome, and amazing.
- According to Henry, what is going to happen to Dorian in twenty or thirty years?  
He is going to be old and his beauty will be gone.
- What is Dorian's wish?  
He wishes he could look young forever. He wishes the portrait would age instead of him.





## 10. Speaking

Work in pairs. Imagine one of you is Dorian Gray and you see your portrait for the first time. The other one is Basil, the painter. Make up the dialogue.





## AFTER GOING TO THE THEATRE

### 11. Questions about the show

- What did you think of the play?

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- Describe the set and costumes.

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- Who was your favourite character and why? Who was your least favourite character and why?

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## 12. True or False

Look at these sentences about the story and say if they are true or false.

- | T                                   | F                                   |  |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Henry paints Dorian's portrait and Dorian thinks he looks handsome.<br>False: Basil paints Dorian's portrait.  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Dorian likes Sibyl from the moment he sees her on stage.<br>True.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Sibyl thinks Dorian looks more handsome in the portrait than he is.<br>False: Sibyl likes the real Dorian better.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | After twenty years, everybody looks better than Dorian. His lifestyle is not good and he looks terrible. False: After twenty years, Dorian is the one who looks as young and as beautiful as always. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Dorian starts helping others when he realizes the portrait is getting uglier. But his good actions doesn't change anything.<br>True.   |







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