

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

Upper Secondary
School





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?

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b) Where does he live? When?

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

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d) What does his friend Basil do for him?

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e) What's Basil's profession?

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f) Why is the present special?

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

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THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

Upper Secondary School

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

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i) Is there any symbology in doing this?

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Discuss about the situation of some people who don't want to accept the passing of time and want to remain young forever.



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

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THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

Upper Secondary School

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

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Do you think the play will be a comedy or a tragedy? Which do you prefer and why?

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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?

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- 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 [...]".

.....

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".

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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.

"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"



THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

Upper Secondary School

Did you know that Oscar Wilde was sentenced to two years hard labor? 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 together in class.

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4. Grammar

Rewrite the following sentences keeping their meaning and using the words in brackets:

a) Basil painted Dorian Gray's portrait. **(by)**

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b) Dorian killed Basil. **(was)**

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c) Dorian wished that the portrait would get old in his place. **(instead)**

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d) Basil painted Dorian's portrait. There were a lot of problems. **(if not/not)**

.....

e) Lord Henry is fond of Dorian's portrait. **(keen)**

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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. Phrasal verbs

In the play various phrasal verbs are used with away. For example run away and get away. Match the phrasal verb to the correct meaning. Then put the correct phrasal verb in each sentence. Make sure to use the correct tense!

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| 1. take away | a) to tidy something to the correct place |
| 2. fade away | b) to transport something to another place |
| 3. blow away | c) to gradually disappear |
| 4. run away | d) to dispose of |
| 5. throw away | e) to leave |
| 6. stay away | f) to leave home secretly |
| 7. put away | g) not to go near |
| 8. go away | h) to be taken away by wind or breath |

1. all your clothes, please. Your bedroom is a mess! put away
2. She has.....on holiday for 3 weeks.
3. Her daughterfrom home when she was 16.
4. Let's get the food to There's a good film on the television tonight.
5. The oven is very hot. from it.
6. You can hardly see the stain. It has
7. Hold that balloon tightly or it will
8. Yesterday I cleared out my wardrobe and all my old clothes.



7. Odd one out

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

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|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------------|
| 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 |





8. American / British English

Oscar Wilde included characters with American English or British English words in his different works and plays. Rewrite this passage and see if you can match the American English words to their British English equivalent.

The other day I was walking along the sidewalk, when my cell phone rang. It was my sister inviting me to go to the movie theater with her. When I arrived at my car, I realized I was out of gas. I drove to the nearest gas station and filled the tank. While paying, I decided to buy some candy to eat at the movie. I was just paying when I heard an enormous crash. The car behind me had crashed into the trunk of my car. I spent the next 3 hours sorting everything out and completely missed the movie!

British English words: **Sweets, boot, cinema, petrol, mobile, petrol station, pavement, film.**

For example: **side-walk = pavement**

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9. Listening

Listen to track 1 and answer the following questions:

- What is Basil doing?

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- What does Henry think about Basil? What does he think the portrait is going to look like before seeing it finished?

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- When Dorian sees the portrait, what does he think?

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- According to Henry, what is going to happen to Dorian in twenty or thirty years?

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- What is Dorian's wish?

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10. Writing

Hedonism is one of the main themes in *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*. According to the *Cambridge Dictionary*, hedonism is *“living and behaving in ways that mean you get as much pleasure out of life as possible, according to the belief that the most important thing in life is to enjoy yourself”*. Think and write an essay about this topic (about 300 words).

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11. 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

12. 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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13. The plot

Put the following scenes in order. Then share your answer in groups of four or five.

- James, Sibyl's brother, comes to pick her up and threatens Dorian.
- Henry explains Sibyl has killed herself and Dorian decides that no one will ever see the portrait again.
- After twenty years, Dorian looks the same. But when Basil sees the portrait, he is horrified. Dorian notices Basil is judging him and stabs him to death.
- Basil paints Dorian Gray. Dorian wishes his portrait would age instead of him.
- Dorian goes to check his portrait, but it is as horrifying as always. The reasons for his sudden change of heart weren't genuine. Sybil appears as a ghost, telling Dorian that he may be older, but he's not wiser. Sybil grabs the knife that killed Basil and hands it to Dorian.
- Dorian goes to the theatre and meets Sibyl. They like each other and go to Dorian's house, where he proposes marriage to her.
- At the theater, Henry tells Dorian that Sibyl is poor and not very talented. After the performance, Dorian decides not to marry her. Dorian gets home and notices that the portrait has changed. He understands the painting is a representation of his soul and decides to ask for Sibyl's forgiveness.
- Dorian goes with Henry to a dark tavern, where they drink and talk about Basil's mysterious disappearance. Suddenly, Dorian notices that James is among the crowd. Dorian gets nervous, but Henry tells him not to worry. Since Dorian looks so young even after 20 years, James can't possibly recognize him.
- Dorian walks the streets, nervous, telling himself that he's just being paranoid. He decides to start behaving like a good person again. After some time, he is considerably bored and unhappy, but satisfied.
- Dorian finally takes the knife and stabs the picture.



THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

Upper Secondary School

14. Your review

Finally, write a review of the play describing the story, the performances, the set, the music, the costumes and saying if you liked it or not and why.

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