

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

Upper Secondary School
Teacher's Guide





BEFORE GOING TO THE THEATRE

1. The Story

The aristocrat Dorian Gray is a handsome young man living in nineteenth-century England. He greatly enjoys life and wants to experience everything it has to offer. However, his soul is not as beautiful as his appearance, and he does whatever he wants without thinking about the consequences of his actions. He often hurts people's feelings, even causing one of his lovers to take her own life. One of his best friends, Basil, paints a portrait of him.

Dorian is amazed by how magnificent he looks in the painting and wishes that he could remain young and beautiful forever. His wish comes true, and as the years pass, it is the portrait—not Dorian himself—that grows old. However, the portrait does more than show the effects of ageing: it also reflects the growing evil in Dorian's soul.

In the end, Dorian can no longer bear to look at the terrible portrait. He tries to destroy it, but in doing so, he kills himself. When his servants find him, they discover an old, ugly man lying dead on the floor, while the portrait has returned to its original image of a young and beautiful Dorian.

Answer the following questions related to the text:

a) Who is Dorian Gray? Where does he live? When?

He is a young and handsome aristocrat. He lives in England in the 19th century.

b) 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 actions.

c) What does his friend Basil do for him?

He paints his portrait.

d) What's Basil's profession?

He is a painter.

e) Why is the present special?

Because the painting itself gets older and not Dorian.

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

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



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

h) Is there any symbology in doing this?

Student's ideas.

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



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.

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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

Change the following sentences from the Present Simple to the Past Simple.

- a) Dorian Gray lives in London.
Dorian lived in London.
- b) Basil paints a portrait of Dorian.
Basil painted a portrait of Dorian.
- c) Henry influences Dorian's ideas about life.
Henry influenced Dorian's ideas about life.
- d) Dorian looks at his beautiful portrait.
Dorian looked at his beautiful portrait.
- e) Dorian wishes that the portrait grows old instead of him.
Dorian wished that the portrait grew old instead of him.
- f) Dorian returns home and sees a change in the portrait.
Dorian returned home and saw a change in the portrait.
- g) Dorian treats Sibyl cruelly.
Dorian treated Sibyl cruelly.



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

Student's ideas

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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 his youth and parties a lot. 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?

1.
.....
2.
.....
3.
.....



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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.

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

The Happy Prince and Other Tales

i) "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

j) "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"





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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)

Dorian Gray's portrait was painted by Basil.

b) Dorian killed Basil. (was)

Basil was killed by Dorian.

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

Dorian wished that the portrait would get old instead of him.

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

If Basil had not painted Dorian's portrait, there would not have been so many problems.

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

Lord Henry is keen on Dorian's portrait.

5. Vocabulary

Look at the vocabulary from the play and learn it.

PAINTING
SPOTLIGHT
AWFUL
REVENGE
TO GO OUT

TO WASTE
PERFORMANCE
TO BOTHER
HEARTBROKEN
SNOB

PORTRAIT
PROTECTIVE
BLIND
PARANOID
TO OWE

SHOULDER
TO CHARM
MERMAID
PERSISTENT

WEAK
MARRIAGE
TO DROWN
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!

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

Answers:

1 - b / 2 - c / 3 - h / 4 - f / 5 - d / 6 - g / 7 - a / 8 - e

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

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• 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 **pink**.
2. To be **black** and **blue**.
3. To be in the **red**.
4. To have a **green** thumb.
5. To be the **black** sheep.
6. To be **blue**.
7. To go as **white** as a ghost.
8. To be **purple** with rage.

- A. To be skillful in the garden.
- B. To be sad.
- C. To be in debt.
- D. To be the odd or bad member of a group.
- E. To be extremely angry.
- F. To be very shocked.
- G. To be extremely pleased.
- 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 /Id/ 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 /I/ sound (all other words have /I:/ sound as in meet).
- New York isn't a capital city (Washington D.C. is the capital of U.S.A.).

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

- Side-walk = pavement
- Cell-phone = mobile phone
- Movie theater = cinema
- Gas = petrol
- Gas station = petrol station
- Candy = sweets
- Trunk = boot
- Movie = Film



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9. Listening

Listen to Scene 1, 2 and 3 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 in England. He thinks the portrait will be amazing.
- When Dorian sees the portrait, what does he think?
He thinks he looks handsome, beautiful and perfect.
- 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 to never grow old. He wishes he could keep looking like this forever. He wishes the portrait would grow old instead of him.
- Why does Henry think they should enjoy the night?
He says they won't be young forever and they can't waste their time.



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- What happens when Dorian sees Sibyl for the first time?
She captivates Dorian's heart.
- Why can't Sibyl be sure that she can have dinner with Dorian?
She thinks that her brother probably won't like the idea. He's very protective of her.
- Why does Sibyl finally agree to have dinner with Dorian?
She thinks that someone like Dorian could never hurt her.
- How long have Dorian and Sibyl been together?
They have been together for three months.
- Why does Dorian bring Sibyl to the portrait room?
He wants to show her the portrait and ask her to marry him.
- What does Sibyl imagine about their future together?
They'll live together in a beautiful house, and they'll have lots of children.
- Why does Dorian wonder if marrying Sibyl is a mistake?
Because Henry always says marriage is a prison and that a man is only truly free as long as he belongs to no one.

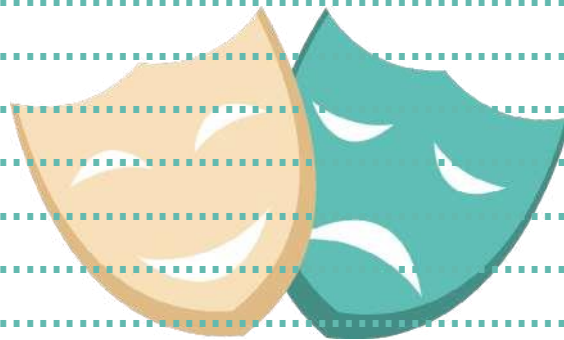


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10. Writing

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. True or False

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

T

F

☐☒

Henry paints Dorian's portrait and Dorian thinks he looks handsome.
False: Basil paints Dorian's portrait.

☒☐

Dorian likes Sibyl from the moment he sees her on stage. True.

☐☒

Sibyl thinks Dorian looks more handsome in the portrait than he is.
False: Sibyl likes the real Dorian better.

☐☒

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.

☒☐

Dorian starts helping others when he realizes the portrait is getting uglier. But his good actions don't change anything. True.





14. The plot

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

- 3 James, Sibyl's brother, comes to pick her up and threatens Dorian.
- 5 Henry explains Sibyl has killed herself and Dorian decides that no one will ever see the portrait again.
- 6 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.
- 1 Basil paints Dorian Gray. Dorian wishes his portrait would age instead of him.
- 9 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.
- 2 Dorian goes to the theatre and meets Sibyl. They like each other and go to Dorian's house, where he proposes marriage to her.
- 4 At the theatre, 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.
- 7 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.
- 8 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.
- 10 Dorian finally takes the knife and stabs the picture.

15. Speaking

The original story of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is set in London in the 19th century. Dorian remains young and beautiful, while his portrait grows old and reflects the consequences of his actions.

Now imagine the story happens in a different time or place. Describe your new version of the story. How does the new setting change the characters and the story?

Example: Dorian Gray in the future

Imagine Dorian is a famous influencer. His photos on social media always look perfect, but a secret AI avatar shows his real face and all the bad things he does.

- What happens in your story?
- Who are the main characters?
- What is different from the original story?
- How does the story end?

[illegible]



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16. Who said that?

Match the phrase to the character who says it: Dorian, Henry or Sibyl. And to whom it is said.

PHRASE	WHO SAYS IT?	TO WHOM?
But you'd better enjoy that beauty, because in twenty or thirty years, you'll be old... and your beauty... will be gone.	HENRY	
What does he have to protect you from? You're a free woman.	DORIAN	
Is this the famous portrait you never stop talking about? You were right, it's amazing.	SIBYL	
She's a wonderful woman. She makes me happy. And, as you always say... she makes me feel young.	DORIAN	
Life is full of tragedies, Dorian. But your life isn't over.	HENRY	
This is the perfect time to fall in love. Once, twice, three times... even fifty times if necessary.	HENRY	
The first time I saw you, I thought you were extraordinary. Today, I only saw... an ordinary actress.	DORIAN	
For the first time, you're finally seeing what you've been running away from for so many years. You've grown old inside...but you've learned nothing.	SIBYL	



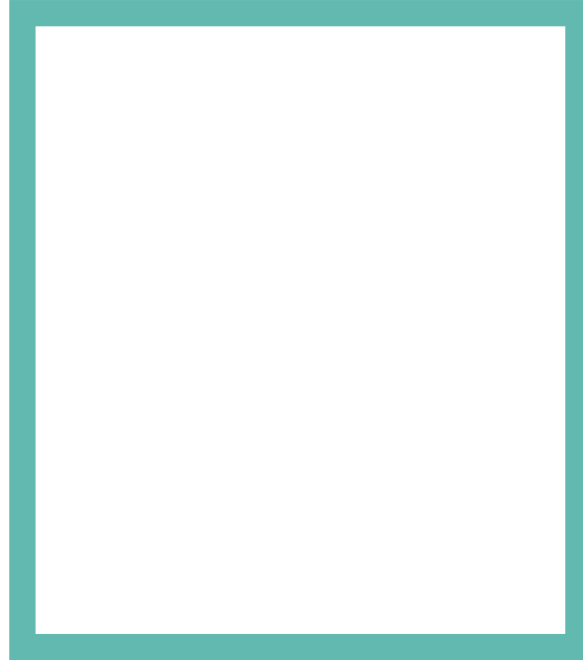
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Finally, write a review of the play describing the story, the performances, the set, the music, the costumes and saying if you liked it or not and why.

[illegible]



18. Draw your own portrait in the frame below.



a) Now imagine your portrait changes every time you do something good or bad. Write 5 things that happened this week and explain how they would change your portrait.

Example:

I helped my friend. → My portrait would have a big smile.

I argued with my brother. → My portrait would look angry.

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b) Would your portrait look better or worse? Why?

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