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The Picture of Dorian Gray

BY OSCAR WILDE



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Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading

Researching the Aesthetic Movement

Objective: Learning about the Aesthetic movement

Activity

Good literature has the ability to endure the test of time and appeal to audiences many years after its initial publication; however, sometimes fiction, plays, and poems lose some of their significance when taken out of their historical and literary context.

The Picture of Dorian Gray was first published in 1890, at the end of the Victorian Era and at the height of the Aesthetic movement. Art and literature that were part of this movement emphasized certain ideas that are not as prevalent today as they were in the past. What is Aestheticism, and what did the Aesthetes value?

In small groups, use the Internet or library resources to research the Aesthetic movement. Then, make a list of some of the key features of this movement.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters I – II**Studying Imagery****Objective:** Finding examples of imagery in the chapter**Activity**

Artists, such as Basil Hallward, have the ability to create realistic scenes in their pictures through the use of shape, color, and texture. Writers, on the other hand, must create setting through the use of imagery—words that appeal to a form of sensation (visual, auditory, olfactory, kinesthetic, or gustatory) in order to convey a deeper meaning or evoke a particular feeling.

In the first chapter of the novel, the reader is brought into Basil's studio to witness the interaction between him and Lord Henry Wotton. Oscar Wilde uses vivid imagery to not only help the reader accurately visualize the setting, but also to make the reader experience a particular emotional response or to discern a hidden message being conveyed.

In the following chart, find five examples of imagery in Chapters I and II—two that are visual (appealing to vision), two that are auditory (appealing to hearing), and one that is olfactory (appealing to smell). Record the example in the second column, and in the third column, write what deeper meaning is presented through the image or what feeling it evokes.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter V

Writing a Journal Entry

Objectives: Creating a journal for a character
Summarizing events in the chapter

Activity

A journal or diary has been a popular method of recording thoughts, observations, and fears about events in one's life. Chapter V covers the reactions of Sibyl Vane's family members to her relationship with Dorian. Create a journal entry for one of the characters featured in Chapter V (Sibyl, Mrs. Vane, or Jim), focusing on this subject. Imagine that you are the character, and write the entry in his or her unique voice. Comment on the major plot events in this chapter, in addition to your personal opinion about the engagement. Use formal writing without any modern slang.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter VII

Plot Analysis

Objectives: Writing a comprehensive essay in alternate formats
Analyzing an important plot twist

Activity

In Chapter VII, Dorian dissolves his engagement to Sibyl. His decision may be surprising, especially since he professed a great love for her to all of his friends. Dorian's decision is an important part of the story, showing not only the first big change in his character, but causing an alteration in his beautiful portrait.

Using one of the following formats, write a short about why Dorian changed his mind about marrying Sibyl and how you think this will affect the rest of the story:

- a blog entry from Dorian's point of view
- an entry in Sibyl's diary or journal
- a letter from Oscar Wilde to his publisher about why he chose not to have Dorian marry Sibyl

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter X

Television Episode

Objectives: Reviewing events in the chapter
 Creating an outline for an episode of a television show

Activity

Imagine that *The Picture of Dorian Gray* has been turned into a television show, with each episode based on a chapter in the novel. You have been tasked to help write the untitled Episode 10, which corresponds to Chapter X. The producer has asked you to determine the following:

- What should the episode be titled?
- Which characters will be featured?
- Which events or scenes in the chapter will be portrayed? Why is each one relevant?
- How can you end the episode with a cliffhanger that makes the viewer want to watch the next episode?
- What kind of advertisements should be shown during the commercial break? How would they be relevant to either the episode itself or to the viewers?

Respond to the producer in a question/answer format.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter XIV

Writing an Obituary

Objectives: Inferring information about a character
Writing creatively

Activity

When Dorian awakes in the morning, he feels no remorse or regret for murdering Basil. Instead, he feels hatred toward his old friend and annoyance that the body is still upstairs and needs to be destroyed. Dorian calls upon an acquaintance, Alan Campbell, to help him dispose of Basil's body, and as he waits for the man to arrive, Dorian becomes engrossed in a copy of Gautier's "Émaux et Camées."

Although Dorian does not regret murdering his former friend, doubtlessly many people will miss Basil Hallward. Although little about his background is provided in the story, Basil was probably well known in the art world and had family.

Inferring information about Basil and creating facts of your own, write an obituary for him that would be printed in a newspaper. Make sure you include the following:

- his date of birth and where he grew up
- the cause of his death
- his age when he died
- the city in which he died
- noteworthy accomplishments and things for which he will be remembered
- his family members and friends
- funeral or memorial information

The following is an example of a fictional obituary for Oscar Wilde:

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde, age 46, died in Paris, France, on November 30, 1900, of cerebral meningitis. He was born in Dublin, Ireland, on October 16, 1854. Wilde was a journalist, poet, novelist, essayist, and short story writer, as well as a playwright. He was also known for his wit, scandalous writings, and decadent lifestyle. He is survived by his two sons, Cyril and Vyvyan. The family has requested that the memorial services be kept private.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter XIX

Allusions

Objective: Analyzing allusions in the novel

Activity

An allusion is a reference to an event, person, place, myth, or artistic work that the writer thinks the reader will recognize. It conveys information quickly and helps the reader make a connection to the story. An allusion can convey a hidden meaning, emphasize a certain characteristic or event, or evoke a particular feeling in the reader.

Oscar Wilde makes use of several allusions in Chapter XIX of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, some of which will be unfamiliar to the modern reader. Using library resources or the Internet, research the following allusions. Then, identify what they reference, and explain why they are relevant to the story.

Perdita and Florizel – _____

Ophelia – _____

“like the painting of a sorrow, / A face without a heart.” – _____

