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Simon & Schuster Classroom Activities
for the Enriched Classic edition of
The Picture of Dorian Gray and Other Writings by Oscar Wilde
1-4165-0027-8 • \$4.95 / \$6.95 Can.

Activities created by Katie Gideon

Each of the three activities includes:

- NCTE standards covered
- An estimate of the time needed
- A complete list of materials needed
- Step-by-step instructions
- Questions to help you evaluate the results

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Lesson Plan #1

“The Worship of the Senses”

(A Lesson in Diction, Theme, and Allusion)

As stated in the notes in your Enriched Classic edition of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, "Chapter XI bridges the first and second halves of the novel by showing how Dorian fills the interim eighteen years, and demonstrates Dorian's growing dissolution...The overall effect of the overwhelming allusions is of a testament to Dorian's full commitment to a decadent life." (pg.395)

Unless they understand Wilde's allusions, students will be unable to understand or appreciate this chapter. This activity gives them concrete tools to help them analyze the long, descriptive passages of this chapter.

This activity begins with a fifteen or twenty-minute setup for a night of homework. The following activity will then take two fifty-minute class periods, and an additional night of homework.

NCTE Standards Covered:

3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

What To Do:

1. Have the students create three word association webs on your board. Create one word association web for "pleasure," another for "beauty/wealth" and another for "corruption."

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Students may use a thesaurus as they create the word association webs. Discuss the themes: what are the common threads? What words are unique to each web?

2. Have the students divide a sheet of notebook paper into three columns. One column should be titled "pleasure," another "beauty/wealth," and the final column "corruption." Assign Chapter XI for homework. Have them keep track of words in each column as they read. They should put a tally-mark next to the word every time it (or a form of it) appears in the text.

Example: a student reads, "It was with an almost cruel joy--and perhaps in nearly every joy, as certainly in every pleasure, cruelty has its place..." (pg.137) He/she would write "cruel" down in their "corruption" column and put a tally mark next to it.

Students should highlight the commonly used words on their notebook paper. They should tally up how many times those words are actually used.

3. The next day in class, share the definition of "diction" with students.

Diction: word choice, used by an author to share meaning and mood with the reader

Discuss diction with your students. How does Wilde consciously manipulate language? What effect is caused by his repetition of certain words? What kind of a man has Dorian become, and how do we know? How might Wilde's word choice be different if Dorian had spent his time studying religious texts, or lobbying for social reform?

4. Once students have agreed that consciously selected words and phrases have the power to create meaning and mood, introduce the definition of "theme."

Theme: the central message of a literary work. It is not the same as a subject or main idea, which can be expressed in a word or two: courage, survival, war, pride, etc. The theme is the idea the author wishes to convey about that subject. It is expressed as a sentence or general statement about life or human nature. A literary work can have more than one theme, and most themes are not directly stated but are implied.

What is Wilde saying about Dorian's decadence? Remind them that good readers don't just read for plot—they read for the underlying meaning. Yes, they should be able to comprehend the actual descriptions of Dorian's acquisitions. But they should also consider that this chapter is more than just a laundry list of lavish possessions. With that in mind, students should complete the following theme statement:

"The _____ (ADJECTIVE) _____ diction in Chapter XI suggests that Dorian has become ..."

5. Now, ask students to make a list of all of the names they encountered in the chapter (Sigismondo Malatesta, Grifonetto Baglioni, etc). Which names were familiar to them? Which were unknown? What questions did the names raise?

6. Share with students the definition of "allusion".

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Allusion: passing reference, indirect mention, or implied reference to something. Often assumes prior knowledge on the part of the reader, and can therefore be culturally biased. Allusions commonly reference historical events and figures, nursery rhymes, myths, fairy tales, religious texts, and famous characters/events/lines from major works of prose and poetry.

7. For homework, students will explore Wilde's allusions to historical figures. Pass out Handout #1. Review with your students what web sources will be acceptable and unacceptable for this assignment. (e.g., do they need to restrict their research to university websites only?) Explain that each student will be assigned one topic for investigation. Their findings will create the in-depth historical context necessary for building understanding of this novel.

8. Assign two or three students to each one of the potential names listed in the class brainstorm. Students should work individually, but doubling up on names ensures that the class receives quality information.

9. Start your next class with a brief meeting between students who completed research on the same topic. These students will decide the best way to present their findings to the whole class. Have students take notes on each topic as the other groups present.

10. Now that students have a greater understanding of the chapter, have them add to their theme statement. The original statement read: "The _____ (ADJECTIVE) _____ diction in Chapter XI suggests that Dorian has become ..." Students should add "The allusions to historical figures further suggest that Dorian..."

11. Post all theme statements on the wall, and congratulate students on their analysis of a difficult chapter!

What You Need:

A copy of the Enriched Classic edition of *The Picture of Dorian Gray and Other Writings* (1416500278) for each student

Copies of Handout #1

How Did It Go?

Were students able to identify connotative words for "pleasure," "beauty/wealth," and "corruption"? Were they able to use their diction analysis to write accurate theme statements? Could they locate their historical figure on a reputable website? Did their analysis of Wilde's allusions aid in their understanding of the chapter? Most importantly, did they come away from the activity with a better understanding of Chapter XI?

Lesson Plan #2

“The Portrait Had Altered”
(Visual Interpretations of Theme and Tone)

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde treats his readers to an enthralling discussion of aestheticism, decadence, and art. His description of Dorian's portrait is both chilling and compelling--and students' appreciation for (and comprehension of) the novel will be increased if they, too, create engaging portraits. In order to develop their understanding of theme and tone, your students will create a "soul portrait" for one of the three main characters of the novel. The visual activity may be especially powerful for students developing English language proficiency.

This activity will initially take one full fifty-minute class period, plus part of the next day. Students will need to prepare with a homework assignment.

NCTE Standards Covered:

3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

What To Do:

1. This lesson builds upon the assumption that students have already completed reading a significant portion of the book. Remind them that beauty and art are central themes for the novel. Hopefully, students will need no reminding that Dorian's portrait plays a central role--both thematically, and in the plot!

2. Review the definitions for "theme" and "tone" with your students.

theme – a broad idea in a story; the underlying message or truth. Something fundamental, universal, and bigger than plot. It must be a sentence--not just "ambition versus corruption" but "Ambition is acceptable, so long as we pursue our goals through admirable means."

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tone – indicates author’s feelings about his or her subject. The attitude toward story *and* reader; the cumulative effect of the writer’s words. An author’s style (including diction!) conveys tone.

Ask students how a portrait might convey theme or tone. What colors might be used? What images? How might the composition of the picture affect what we see?

3. Assign students one of the three major characters from the book: Basil, Henry, or Dorian. Ask them to brainstorm what they know about their character. Now discuss: what is the character's general attitude? What are his strengths? What are his weaknesses? Does the character make good choices? Bad choices? Any choices at all? What fundamental truth does this character's growth (or stagnation) convey? What seems to be Wilde's attitude towards this character?

4. Give students time in class to begin creating their portrait. Emphasize that this should be a portrait of the character's soul, not of his physical visage. For example: if their character is weak, something about the portrait should convey that trait. The portrait should convey all of the character interpretation revealed in the discussion (see previous step). Let them know that their portrait will be graded based on how well they used color, composition, and details to invoke a tone and/or theme of the novel. You may wish to give them time at home, as well, to complete the art piece.

7. The day after students turn in the portraits, their artwork should be posted around the room. Group all of the Dorian portraits together, and do the same with the Basil and Henry portraits. Allow enough time for students to walk around, viewing and processing one another’s work. Ask students to analyze similarities between the illustrations; have them identify and explain why they found certain portraits compelling. What do these visual depictions tell us about the characters?

8. Last but not least, read Basil's line from the very beginning of the book: "...every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter. The sitter is merely the accident, the occasion. It is not he who is revealed by the painter; it is rather the painter who, on the coloured canvas, reveals himself." (pg.9) Allow the students to reflect on this line. Then, lead a discussion regarding what the portraits reveal about the students. What evidence do the portraits present? What are their attitudes towards the novel? The class? The school? Themselves? What do they value? What do they feel?

What You Need:

A copy of the Enriched Classic edition of *The Picture of Dorian Gray and Other Writings* (1416500278) for each student

Drawing and coloring materials (paper, pencils, pens, crayons, markers, colored pencils, etc.)

How Did It Go?

Were the students' portraits rendered thoughtfully? Did their portraits use colors, details, and composition to convey theme and tone? Could they identify how the portraits convey Wilde's

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characterization of Basil, Henry, and Dorian? Could they have a thoughtful discussion about what the portraits reveal about the artist (as opposed to the character "sitter")?

Lesson Plan #3

"The Story of His Own Life"
(A Lesson in Literary Analysis)

Rich in literary elements and thematic repetition, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* offers an excellent opportunity to develop students' literary analysis skills. The following assessment activity is designed to develop students' confidence and effectiveness as they write under pressure. In this lesson, students will use close-reading, critical thinking, and pre-writing skills to discuss major themes from Oscar Wilde's novel. They begin with a practice prompt; the activity culminates in a timed assessment.

This activity takes two fifty-minute class periods to complete (plus one homework assignment).

NCTE Standards Covered:

3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

What To Do:

1. Lead a brief discussion regarding some of the high-stakes tests that students will encounter in compliance with state standards and/or as preparation for college admissions. Explain that the ability to write well under pressure is a skill valued in both the academic and business community, and that it's your obligation as an educator to help them acquire and hone this skill. To that end, tomorrow's class will involve a timed writing exam.
2. Pass out copies of Handout #2. Explain that successful writers carefully read all of the information provided in a prompt. Encourage students to underline key words and phrases as you read the poverty essay prompt out loud. Pause to clarify any unfamiliar vocabulary.
3. Then, lead students through the prompt analysis. The whole class can work together on identifying "task" and "information." Have students formulate their positions individually, and then call on several volunteers to share. Students can vote on the position they'd like to use as a class.

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4. In small groups, students should brainstorm potential passages to use as supporting evidence. A representative from each group can report on one or two of their best pieces of evidence. Invite students to ask each other clarifying questions.
5. Select the three strongest or most interesting pieces of textual evidence. Use them as you guide your students through the creation of an essay outline. Students should be taking notes throughout the process, and should have a completed essay preparation sheet at this point (i.e. side 1 of Handout #2).
6. Break students into partners and hand each pair a puzzle strip (Handout #3). Tell the students that you want them to practice turning a piece of evidence from their outline into a seamless piece of analysis. They should imagine their context, evidence, and analysis as interlocking puzzle pieces. As this is somewhat difficult to explain, it may be best to give the students an example and ask them to discuss how the "puzzle pieces" are connected.

<p>Context: In Dorian's life, art is quite useful--and ultimately damaging. He makes a wish that his portrait will age, while he retains his youth and beauty. Only after his cruel treatment of Sybil Vane does he realize that the wish actually came true.</p>	<p>Evidence: He notices that the portrait has "lines of cruelty round the mouth," while his own face remains unblemished. (pg.98)</p>
	<p>Analysis: Dorian continues to compare the two-dimensional painting with his own unchanged looks; his focus on appearances suggests a lack of concern for the state of his soul.</p>

7. Direct students' attention to the second essay prompt, on side 2 of Handout #2. This is the prompt that will be used during tomorrow's timed write. Read the prompt aloud and ask if there are any questions concerning vocabulary.
8. Clarify that students must now work individually in order to preserve academic integrity. They may use the rest of the class period to start on their homework, which is to complete the essay preparation sheet for the test prompt.
9. The next day of class, proctor the exam. If this is the first time your students are completing a timed essay write, you may wish to spend five minutes at the beginning of class answering questions and alleviating anxiety. (Note: if you would like to give students more practice before administering the timed write, you can also spend another class period on preparation. They can use the poverty essay preparation to complete a practice essay.)

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A copy of the Enriched Classic edition of *The Picture of Dorian Gray and Other Writings* (1416500278) for each student

Copies of Handout #2 (enough to give one puzzle strip to each pair of students)

Double-sided class copies of Handout #3

Notebook paper for essay test

How Did It Go?

Were students able to identify themes within the text? Did they make connections between different passages? Could they use literary analysis to formulate and support a coherent argument? Could they synthesize what they learned into an organized essay? Did their essays fully address the prompt? Were they able to use their essay preparation sheets in order to successfully manage their time during the exam?



Handout #1

The Picture of Dorian Gray Webquest
Annotation Form

Your name: _____

Your Historical Figure: _____

Title of Website: _____

Author/Publisher of Website: _____

Date accessed: _____

You know the source is reputable because... _____

Key information about your topic: _____

Inferences: what does the inclusion of this topic in Chapter XI suggest about Dorian's development? _____

Handout #2

“Defend, Challenge, or Qualify”

In his preface, Oscar Wilde writes: "We can forgive a man for making a useful thing as long as he does not admire it. The only excuse for making a useless thing is that one admires it intensely. All art is quite useless." (pg.4)

Consider this quote in relation to the discussion of art, aestheticism, and decadence in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Using your literary analysis, write an essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies Wilde’s assertions that "all art is quite useless".

<i>TIP Prompt Analysis</i>
T (Task): What is this prompt asking me to do?
I (Information): What <u>specific</u> information should I analyze?
P (Position): What is my stance on the topic? (Yes, this is your rough-draft thesis!)

Final Draft Thesis Statement: _____

Textual Evidence that Supports My Thesis: _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

(6) _____

(7) _____

(8) _____

“Defend, Challenge, or Qualify”

For homework, complete the following prompt analysis, textual evidence, and outline organizer. During tomorrow’s timed essay write, you will be able to use the single page for notes. You will NOT be able to use your book. Be sure to plan accordingly.

In the first stanza of *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, Oscar Wilde writes:

Yet each man kills the thing he loves,
By each let this be heard,
Some do it with a bitter look,
Some with a flattering word.
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword! (pg.368)

Consider this quote in relation to the characters in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Who is the victim? Who is the enemy? Using your character analysis, write an essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies Wilde’s assertions that "each man kills the thing he loves".

<i>TIP Prompt Analysis</i>
T (Task): What is this prompt asking me to do?
I (Information): What <u>specific</u> information should I analyze?
P (Position): What is my stance on the topic? (Yes, this is your thesis!)

- Textual Evidence that Supports My Thesis: _____
- (2) _____
 - (3) _____
 - (4) _____
 - (5) _____
 - (6) _____
 - (7) _____
 - (8) _____

Practicing Analysis

Context:	Evidence: Analysis:
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Context:	Evidence: Analysis:
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Context:	Evidence: Analysis:
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