

Oscar Wilde

Beauty in Literature

a cura di Sarah Gudgeon

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1. Before you read

Match each word (a-f) to the correct definition (1-6).

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| a. poem | 1. The story of your life |
| b. short story | 2. A long story which is not true |
| c. play | 3. A collection of words that express an idea |
| d. novel | 4. The story of another person's life |
| e. autobiography | 5. A story that is written for the theatre |
| f. biography | 6. A story that is not true lasts only a few pages |

2. Read

Do you like beautiful things? Do you like having a good time? Do your friends think you are funny? Yes, yes, yes? Then you have a lot in common with Oscar Wilde. Oscar Wilde was a famous Irish writer. He was born in 1854, in Dublin. His father was a doctor. His mother was a poet. Oscar was very clever and very funny. He lived an exciting life; he wore bright flamboyant clothes and did not follow the rules. He wrote a lot of poems and plays but it was his novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, that made Oscar Wilde very famous. The book is about a man who never gets older and never loses his good looks; he has a 'magic' painting of himself that gets older and uglier every year.

Oscar Wilde was a pioneer of the idea that beautiful things can exist just to be beautiful, they don't need a purpose.

Oscar and some of his contemporaries believed that art is a form of expression, it doesn't need to send a message or to teach people anything. This was a new way of considering art.

3. Circle the correct sentence, A or B.

1. (A) Oscar Wilde did write poems.
(B) Oscar Wilde didn't write poems.

2. (A) The Picture of Dorian Gray is about a man who gets older and uglier.
(B) The Picture of Dorian Gray is about a man who doesn't get older and uglier.
3. (A) Beautiful things need a reason to exist.
(B) Beautiful things don't need a reason to exist.
4. (A) Oscar Wilde was a boring man.
(B) Oscar Wilde was not a boring man.
5. (A) He followed the rules.
(B) He did not follow the rules.

4. Talk to a partner.

What is 'beautiful' for you? Think of a painting, a statue, a place or an object.

I think....the Eiffel Tower in Paris is beautiful.

Teacher's Notes

1. Before this activity ask the students what kind of stuff they like to read. Accept answers in L1 and then provide the right words with this exercise.

a3 b6 c5 d2 e1 f4

3. Before this activity write a couple of sentences on the board and ask the students to transform them into the negative i.e.:

Oscar Wilde was a famous writer.

Oscar Wilde wrote 'The Picture of Dorian Gray'.

Beautiful objects need a purpose.

1A 2B 3B 4B 5B

4. Put the students into pairs for this activity. If possible take in some art history books to help the discussion.

* Sarah Gudgeon

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