

Oscar Wilde

Epigrams

a cura di Sarah Gudgeon

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1. Read

Oscar Wilde was a famous writer. He was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1854. He wrote plays, books and poems. He is still popular because the things he wrote were very (1) witty. He was very good at writing epigrams. Oscar Wilde's epigrams are examples of literary brilliance; with a few (2) clever words he could say something very true yet funny. His epigrams were so good that people all over the world still use them today.

(1) witty - arguto

(2) clever - perspicace

2. Before you do exercise 3.

What is an epigram? Tick A or B.

(A) A short sentence that expresses an idea in a clever or funny way.

(B) A long sentence that expresses an idea in a boring or stupid way.

3. Read the epigrams and match each one to the correct translation.

- a. I can resist everything except temptation.
- b. To love oneself is the beginning of a lifelong romance.
- c. Nothing that is worth knowing can be taught.
- d. To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all.
- e. The truth is rarely pure, and never simple.
- f. There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.

- 1. Amare se stessi è l'inizio di una storia d'amore per tutta la vita.
- 2. La verità è raramente pura e mai semplice.
- 3. So resistere a tutto tranne alla tentazione.
- 4. Non si può insegnare nulla che valga la pena conoscere.
- 5. C'è una sola cosa al mondo peggiore del far parlare di sè: non far parlare di sè.
- 6. Vivere è la cosa più rara del mondo: i più, esistono solamente.

4. Complete the conversations with an epigram.

- 1. A: I have to eat this chocolate cake!
B: Me too!.....
- 2. A: That's horrible!
B: Well,.....
- 3. A: I hate people at school gossiping about me.
B: Don't worry.....
- 4. A: I'm so stupid!
B: Don't say that.....
- 5. A: My grandparents have such an exciting life, travelling the world.
B: That's great!.....
- 6. A: I hate studying!
B: Me too!.....
A: Hmmm... we still need to learn these maths equations for tomorrow!

5. Talk to a partner. Do you agree with Oscar Wilde's epigrams?

Example:

Yes, I agree with ... (a). No, I don't agree with... (c).

Teacher's Notes

1. Read

2. A

3. a3 b1 c4 d6 e2 f5

4.

1. I can resist everything except temptation.
2. The truth is rarely pure, and never simple.
3. There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.
4. To love oneself is the beginning of a lifelong romance.
5. To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all.
6. Nothing that is worth knowing can be taught.

* Sarah Gudgeon

Sarah Gudgeon is a trained journalist and EFL teacher from Manchester, England. She has written numerous books for Pearson over the years and is a regular contributor to the Pearson Portal on pearson.it.