

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, as told by you |
| b. short story | 2. A long story which is not true |
| c. play | 3. A collection of words that express an idea and which are chosen for their beauty and/or sound |
| d. novel | 4. The story of another person's life, written by a third person |
| 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. Some books are a collection of these stories. |

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. It is a book that makes the reader question their own values and morals.

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. It was the first time in history that art was synonymous with freedom of expression.



3. Complete the sentences.

1. Oscar Wilde..... a lot of poems.
2. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is about a man who never..... older or uglier.
3. Beautiful things don't a reason to exist.
4. Oscar Wilde flamboyant clothes.
5. Hethe rules.

4. Talk to a partner.

Can you define 'beauty'?

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

Example:

Beauty issubjective. Everyone has their own idea of 'beautiful'. This depends on personal and cultural values.

I think Kandinsky's paintings are beautiful. I like the bold colours.

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 the verb 'to be' on the board and get the students to build sentences around it. For example:

Oscar Wilde **WAS** a writer
 flamboyant

The Picture of Dorian Gray **IS** about a man who never gets older

1. Oscar Wilde **wrote** a lot of poems.
 2. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is about a man who never **gets** older or uglier.
 3. Beautiful things don't **need** a reason to exist.
 4. Oscar Wilde **wore** flamboyant clothes.
 5. He **didn't follow** the rules.
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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