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Advanced Placement in
English Literature and Composition

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

The Picture of Dorian Gray

by Oscar Wilde

written by Eva Richardson

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The Picture of Dorian Gray

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. describe and analyze the significance of leading a double life in Victorian England.
2. explore the principles of the Aesthetic movement and its relation to traditional Victorian upper class society.
3. discuss the idea of Hedonism as it pertains to the characters in literary works.
4. analyze the novel as a commentary on social identities and social masks.
5. trace the development of a character's psychological state.
6. relate Wilde's aphorisms to the plot and characters in the novel.
7. trace the connection between art and life with regard to the Aesthetic movement.
8. analyze how the novel complicates nineteenth-century notions of sexuality.
9. analyze the theme of eternal youth and everlasting beauty.
10. explain and analyze the Faustian pact between Dorian and the portrait.
11. respond to writing prompts similar to those on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam.
12. respond to multiple choice questions similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam.
13. offer a close reading of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and support all assertions and interpretations with direct evidence from the text, from authoritative critical knowledge of the genre, or from authoritative criticism of the novel.

The Picture of Dorian Gray

Background Information

England during the Victorian Era:

The Victorian age was a time in British history marked by drastic social and economic changes, conflicts, and contradictions. Named in honor of Queen Victoria (1837-1901), the Victorian age lasted from approximately 1830 through the end of the nineteenth century. Within this span of time, England became the wealthiest country in the world, and British expansion under the system of Colonialism turned England into a mighty and influential world power. The widespread idea of the “White Man’s Burden” determined that it was Britain’s duty to spread western culture and order throughout the world. Victorians witnessed the rapid progress of the Industrial Revolution which changed England from a rural society into a fully industrialized, modern, urban state. The city of London became a multicultural metropolis.

Economic, Cultural, and Social Changes

The Victorian era was marked by a number of significant inventions and innovations that changed the face of England’s social and geographical landscape forever. The expansion of the railroad system enabled Britain to develop an infrastructure that could promote the swift and efficient distribution of goods, services, and ideas. London became the first truly modern urban center. British Colonialism in Africa and the East brought a wealth of commodities and exotic wares into the kingdom, and the Victorian middle—and upper-classes quickly developed an obsession with luxury articles that could be imported.

However, the advancements in industry and modernization came at a high price: urbanization led to overcrowding in cities, and the living conditions of the working poor were often deplorable. Indeed, Victorian society was marked by strict class distinctions. The nineteenth century witnessed the “rise of the middle class,” which quickly became the most influential segment of British society.

Middle—and upper-class society was characterized by a strict and conservative moral code that dictated rigid, formal manners and an unwavering adherence to duty, family, and propriety. Gender roles, too, were firmly defined during the Victorian age. Men dominated the public sphere in politics and industry, while women were designated to the private sphere, where they oversaw the household and supervised the education of children.

Due to these vast economic and social changes, the Victorian age was a time of great uncertainty. The theories of Charles Darwin shattered people's belief in the literal truth of the Bible. At the same time, the harsh working conditions of the lower class posed a threat to British law and order. Karl Marx, who described the Victorians' fascination with exotic goods and luxury items as "commodity fetishism," predicted that an uprising of the working classes was inevitable and imminent. In order to confront some of these innovations and uncertainties that jeopardized the status quo, middle—and upper-class Victorians turned toward philanthropy in order to ease their feelings of guilt about the injustice of the British class system. Consequently, charities for poor children, unwed mothers, and "repentant" prostitutes were created throughout the Empire.

The Birth of Psychoanalysis

The Victorian age also saw the birth of modern psychology. Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, developed his first theories while in Vienna during the 1890s. Freud was interested in treating patients with neurotic symptoms that could not be traced to any biological deficiency or ailment. After intensive study, he concluded that neuroses were caused by latent fears and desires repressed in patients' unconscious, and only through uncovering and revealing repressed anxieties to a patient could a doctor provide a cure or treatment. Several schools of thought developed out of Freud's theories, and many disproved them. However, the ideas Freud developed about the unconscious during the Victorian age remain central to the discipline of psychoanalysis, even into the twenty-first century.

The Shift from Victorianism to Modernism

The closing decade of the Victorian age is frequently referred to as the *Fin de Siècle*, a French term meaning "the end of the age." The term denotes the closing decades of the nineteenth century, when England transitioned from the Victorian age into the twentieth century and the age of modernism. Throughout the 1880s, and particularly in the 1890s, Victorians realized that there was a sharp disconnect between the conservative rules of Victorian culture and the new world marked by post-Darwinism, science, and social injustice. The contradictions of the Victorian age could no longer be denied, and the discrepancy between the conservative social code and the unsettling realities of everyday life resulted in disillusionment and a movement toward escapism. As a result, the closing decades of the nineteenth century saw the creation of new artistic styles, modern attitudes, and shifting gender notions. The *Fin de Siècle* most significantly found its expression in the artistic and literary movements known as **Aestheticism** and **Decadence**.

Aestheticism and Decadence:

As a reaction to the conservatism and restrictive moral and social codes of the Victorian age, the **Aesthetic** and **Decadent movements** championed artistic excess and rejected morality as a way to measure the value of art. The Aesthetes considered art a form of escapism and a means of obtaining unlimited pleasure. Writers and artists of the Aesthetic movement (or Decadent movement, as it was often referred to in France) believed that art should not be judged on moral grounds but, instead, should be valued for its beauty, sophistication, refinement, as well as the pleasure derived from its design and composition.

Throughout *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Lord Henry becomes Dorian Gray's intellectual mentor, instructing him to use Aesthetic principles as a means of evaluating and experiencing the world. As Lord Henry explains, "we are not sent into the world to air our moral prejudices" (Chapter VI), and rather than judge life based upon Victorian principles, Lord Henry adapts the Aesthetic way of judging art into a way of observing and making an impression on the world. Lord Henry echoes the philosophy of the Aesthetes when he explains, "Beauty is a form of Genius—is higher, indeed, than Genius, as it needs no explanation" (Chapter II).

Art and beauty form the premise of Wilde's novel: Dorian becomes the preferred subject of study to Basil Hallward because the artist is entranced by the refinement and appeal of Dorian's physique. Consequently, Hallward turns Dorian's image into his most accomplished piece of art. Hallward explains, "We live in an age when men treat art as if it were meant to be a form of autobiography. We have lost the abstract sense of beauty" (Chapter I). Hallward's statement emphasizes the use of the Aesthetic ideal to elevate art over life, to allow art to stand independently and be judged for its unique beauty rather than its function as a tool for moral education.

The Dandy:

The Aesthetic and Decadent movements and the rebellion against the strict, Victorian discipline facilitated a resurgence of **dandyism**. In a general sense, a **dandy** is a man who places great importance on physical appearance, etiquette, and speech, and who values entertainment and recreation over occupation and industry. For the dandy in the late nineteenth century, fashion was judged, like art, on the grounds of aestheticism and visual appeal instead of morality.

Dandyism had its roots in the eighteenth century. While dandyism was both a fashion and a way of life in the Victorian Period, it initially served as a form of protest against the rigid class system. A man from the middle-class, who had not descended from the landed elite, could easily earn as much, or more, money than members of the aristocracy. The dandy, who established his own fortune or survived on money earned by his middle-class family, dressed extravagantly and acted mannerly in an effort to imitate the lifestyle of the aristocracy and to hide his true status.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Lord Henry Wotton is a dandy, in the general sense, who “had set himself to the serious study of the great aristocratic art of doing absolutely nothing” (Chapter III). Depending financially on his family’s wealth and the occasional, generous “loan” from his Uncle George, Lord Henry has no responsibilities and can focus entirely on fashion and the pursuit of leisure. Lord Henry uses his influence to mold Dorian Gray into a dandy as well and teaches Dorian about the value of art, fashion, and entertainment. Consequently, Dorian becomes more and more obsessed with his appearance, even becoming a fashion icon for the young men within his social circle. He moves from one superficial hobby to the next, collecting perfumes and fragrances for a few weeks, then turning his interest to the collection of embroideries and expensive textiles the next.

The Theme of Hedonism:

Closely related to the defining principles of the Aesthetic movement is the concept of Hedonism. Hedonism is the philosophy proposing that the most important quest in life is the pursuit of pleasure.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Lord Henry’s philosophy illustrates the principles of Hedonism. He affirms, “Nothing remains...but the recollection of a pleasure, or the luxury of a regret. The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it. Resist it, and your soul grows sick with longing for the things it has forbidden to itself” (Chapter II). Lord Henry teaches Dorian the fundamentals of Hedonism, sending Dorian into a downward spiral that eventually leads to a life of sin and depravity.

Once Dorian realizes that his Faustian bargain with the portrait will grant him eternal beauty, Dorian dedicates his life to the pursuit of enjoyment and pleasure without concern for consequence. Dorian seeks “to elaborate some new scheme of life that would have its reasoned philosophy and its ordered principles, and find in the spiritualizing of the sense its highest realization” (Chapter XI). The highest realization for Dorian is pleasure and immediate gratification. Rather than work toward a goal that could have little to no return, Dorian lives for the present, actively seeking fulfillment through recreation and sensuality.

The Theme of Leading a Double Life or Having an Alter Ego:

The Picture of Dorian Gray illustrates that Victorian society was repressive and did not allow human beings to express their ideas, desires, and personal tendencies openly and honestly. Victorian society valued moral righteousness, respectability, and modesty, and it had little room for unconventional sexual appetites or debauchery in any form.

In Chapter II, Lord Henry explains to Dorian the importance of self-realization and personal development, even against the grain of societal standards:

To realize one's nature perfectly—that is what each of us is here for. People are afraid of themselves nowadays. They have forgotten the highest of all duties, the duty that one owes to one's self. Of course they are charitable. They feed the hungry, and clothe the beggar. But their own souls starve, and are naked.

When Basil Hallward meets Dorian Gray, he believes he recognizes a “harmony of soul and body” in Dorian (Chapter I). He explains, “we in our madness have separated the two, and have invented a realism that is vulgar, an ideality that is void” (Chapter I). While Basil does not share Lord Henry's glorification of individualism and the pursuit of pleasure, he acknowledges that people cannot detach themselves from their desires and repress their instincts.

The portrait becomes the vehicle for Dorian to create an alter ego and lead a double life. As he engages in reprehensible and selfish acts, even murder, his physical beauty never deteriorates. Instead of Dorian himself, the picture exhibits the signs of his depravity, eventually becoming the reflection of his corrupted soul, his self-doubts, and the feelings of guilt weighing heavily on his conscience.

Since Dorian is able to hide the picture in his attic, his acquaintances remain oblivious to his corruption. While they see his physical beauty as a sign of innocence, in reality, Dorian is seducing and ruining young men and women, spending his time in opium dens, and even committing murder. Since Dorian lives in an Aesthetic society that is concerned only with superficiality, the people in Dorian's life never suspect that he is committing heinous acts. They trust his beautiful physical features to be an accurate reflection of his soul.

The Faustian Theme:

The Picture of Dorian Gray plays on tradition of the Faustian theme in literature. The story of Faust developed out of an ancient German legend involving a man who was believed to have made a pact with the Devil. The Faust legend was most famously dramatized by Christopher Marlowe in his play *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, first published in 1604, and by Johann Wolfgang Goethe in his two-part play *Faust*, completed in 1806. In both plays, Faust, a studious and wise man, makes a pact with the Devil. He offers his soul to the Devil in exchange for prolonged life and unlimited knowledge and pleasure.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Basil Hallward paints a stunning portrait of Dorian and, in effect, allows Dorian to enter into a Faustian pact. Fascinated by his own image on the canvas, Dorian develops a sense of jealousy toward the painting. He says:

I am jealous of everything whose beauty does not die. I am jealous of the portrait [Basil has] painted of me. Why should it keep what I must lose? Every moment that passes takes something from me, and gives something to it. Oh, if it were only the other way! If the picture could change, and I could be always what I am now!...There is nothing in the world I would not give! I would give my soul for that! (Chapter II)

With time, Dorian begins to realize that his entreaty has been granted. The picture gradually changes to reflect Dorian's aging and the depravity of his soul, while his own physical features remain unchanged. The text says,

He felt that the time had really come for making his choice. Or had his choice already been made? Yes, life had decided that for him—life, and his own infinite curiosity about life. Eternal youth, infinite passion, pleasures subtle and secret, wild joys and wilder sins—he was to have all these things. The portrait was to bear the burden of his shame: that was all. (Chapter VIII)

At first, Dorian is unsure whether or not he wants to enter into this pact, but once he realizes the freedom he gains from never displaying any physical signs of his decadent lifestyle, he readily agrees to the terms: Dorian will retain eternal beauty, but he will live a life of excess and sin; his beautiful portrait, however, will grow more dreadful and ugly over time.

The Theme of Homosexuality:

The Picture of Dorian Gray complicates notions of traditional sexuality by blending ideas of heterosexuality and homosexuality, as well as platonic love and eroticism. Basil Hallward's aesthetic fascination with Dorian Gray, for example, frequently borders on erotic attraction. Basil's admiration for Dorian is founded on Dorian's remarkable beauty. However, Wilde's descriptions of Basil's love for Dorian are often ambiguous, allowing the reader to assume that Basil is attracted to Dorian for both sexual and platonic reasons. Although he is married, Lord Henry's attraction to Dorian also appears to be more than platonic. Like Basil, he is fascinated by Dorian's beauty and jealous of Dorian's relationships with other women and men.

Although Dorian initially falls deeply in love with Sibyl Vane, he pursues a variety of sexual relationships with partners of both sexes. At one point in the novel, Basil Hallward remarks to Dorian,

When you met Lady Gwendolen, not a breath of scandal had ever touched her. Is there a single decent woman in London now who would drive with her in the Park?...There are other stories—stories that you have been seen creeping at dawn out of dreadful houses and slinking in disguise into the foulest dens in London. (Chapter XII)

Stories about Dorian's secret, sexual encounters had begun circulating around London. The text never explicitly names them, but it is full of references to Dorian's attraction to both men and women. Once the portrait begins to exert its negative influence on Dorian, he recklessly enters into a series of relationships, ruining women's reputations and men's relationships with their families.

The novel's poor reception following its original publication in 1890 is often attributed to the more blatant homoerotic overtones beneath the character relationships within the first edition of the text. Wilde, consequently, revised some of the more obvious references to male love, and he re-published the text with amendments and an explanatory introduction in 1891.

Wilde, himself, was involved in homosexual relationships with other men, most notably Lord Alfred Douglas. When Wilde was arrested for sodomy and put on trial in 1895, the conservative backlash against the Aesthetes brought about the end of the Aesthetic movement. Nevertheless, many literary and artistic ideas, as well as the notion of fluid gender identities, carried on into the twentieth century. Rather than focusing entirely on homoeroticism, however, the novel suggests that erotic attraction supersedes sexual orientation or gender. Wilde presents a world where love and eroticism are based on aesthetic principles and pure physical attraction, regardless of sex or gender.

Literary and Narrative Techniques

Aphorisms:

Following the initial publication of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde was subject to an onslaught of censure by critics who deemed his novel immoral, primarily due to its portrayal of a decadent lifestyle. Consequently, Wilde drafted an introduction, in order to place the novel into the context of the Aesthetic movement and defend his preoccupation with beauty, attraction, and extravagance. This introduction later evolved into a series of aphorisms that have since become some of the most frequently quoted sayings in the English language. Some of these aphorisms are as follows:

- “Those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming. This is a fault.”
- “Those who find beautiful meanings in beautiful things are the cultivated. For these there is hope.”
- “There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all.”
- “All art is at once surface and symbol. Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril. Those who read the symbol do so at their peril.”

Elements of Irony:

Irony is a literary device that involves a breach between what a writer, speaker, or narrator says in a text and what is understood by the reader or by other characters. There are three major types of irony used in literature: **situational irony**, **verbal irony**, and **dramatic or tragic irony**.

- **Situational Irony:**
Situational irony occurs when an event that takes place produces a completely unexpected outcome.
- **Verbal Irony:**
Verbal irony occurs when a writer, speaker, or narrator uses words to say one thing when he or she really means the opposite. One popular form of verbal irony is **sarcasm**—harsh, verbal irony used to deride and criticize.
- **Dramatic or Tragic Irony:**
Dramatic irony occurs when the words or actions of a character reveal his ignorance toward a particular situation, while the reader correctly understands what is really happening.

The central irony in Wilde's novel is focused on Dorian Gray's delusion: He believes that his life will be better if he can retain his youthful appearance. This is an example of dramatic irony. The degeneration of Dorian's soul and the confusion of his sense of right and wrong drive him deep into a state of despair and anguish. While he remains handsome on the surface, his interior self disintegrates.

Elements of Melodrama:

A melodrama is a play, novel, or short story characterized by excessive emotions, plot, and action rather than character development. Starting in the early eighteenth-century, the term melodrama was exclusively used for music-driven stage productions, but the definition of melodrama quickly expanded to incorporate novels and films that focus on emotional excess and plot instead of character. Dorian's overindulgence in pure emotion and his extreme obsession with decadence makes Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* one of the finest melodramas of the Victorian Period.

Discussion Topics/Questions

1. What is the significance of youth and beauty for Dorian Gray?
2. What is the connection between identity and social masks within the novel?
3. To what extent does the novel challenge conventional notions of sex and gender, as well as public and private life?
4. How does the novel provide a commentary on the power of influence? What kinds of influence does the novel describe?
5. In what ways does the novel comment on the behaviors of the Victorian upper—and middle—class?
6. What is Wilde's attitude toward the Victorian preoccupation with philanthropy?
7. How are Lord Henry and Dorian Gray's views of hedonism similar and different?
8. How much responsibility does Basil Hallward have for Dorian's excessive lifestyle? What responsibility does Lord Henry have?
9. How does the novel comment on excess and hedonism?
10. In what ways does the novel champion the principles of the Aesthetic movement?

Practice Free-Response Questions

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 1:

Read the following passage from Chapter I of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and write a well-organized essay in which you describe the relationship between art and the artist, as suggested by Basil Hallward and Lord Henry. Be sure to support your argument with examples from the text.

Do not merely summarize the passage.

"It is your best work, Basil, the best thing you have ever done," said Lord Henry languidly. "You must certainly send it next year to the Grosvenor. The Academy is too large and too vulgar. Whenever I have gone there, there have been either so many people that I have not been able to see the pictures, which was dreadful, or so many pictures that I have not been able to see the people, which was worse. The Grosvenor is really the only place."

"I don't think I shall send it anywhere," he answered, tossing his head back in that odd way that used to make his friends laugh at him at Oxford. "No, I won't send it anywhere."

Lord Henry elevated his eyebrows and looked at him in amazement through the thin blue wreaths of smoke that curled up in such fanciful whorls from his heavy, opium-tainted cigarette. "Not send it anywhere? My dear fellow, why? Have you any reason? What odd chaps you painters are! You do anything in the world to gain a reputation. As soon as you have one, you seem to want to throw it away. It is silly of you, for there is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about. A portrait like this would set you far above all the young men in England, and make the old men quite jealous, if old men are ever capable of any emotion."

"I know you will laugh at me," he replied, "but I really can't exhibit it. I have put too much of myself into it."

Lord Henry stretched himself out on the divan and laughed.

"Yes, I knew you would; but it is quite true, all the same."

"Too much of yourself in it! Upon my word, Basil, I didn't know you were so vain; and I really can't see any resemblance between you, with your rugged strong face and your coal-black hair, and this young Adonis, who looks as if he was made out of ivory and rose-leaves. Why, my dear Basil, he is a Narcissus, and you—well, of course you have an intellectual expression and all that. But beauty, real beauty, ends where an intellectual expression begins. Intellect is in itself a mode of exaggeration, and destroys the harmony of any face. The moment one sits down to think, one becomes all nose, or all forehead, or something horrid.

Look at the successful men in any of the learned professions. How perfectly hideous they are! Except, of course, in the Church. But then in the Church they don't think. A bishop keeps on saying at the age of eighty what he was told to say when he was a boy of eighteen, and as a natural consequence he always looks absolutely delightful. Your mysterious young friend, whose name you have never told me, but whose picture really fascinates me, never thinks. I feel quite sure of that. He is some brainless beautiful creature who should be always here in winter when we have no flowers to look at, and always here in summer when we want something to chill our intelligence. Don't flatter yourself, Basil: you are not in the least like him."

"You don't understand me, Harry," answered the artist. "Of course I am not like him. I know that perfectly well. Indeed, I should be sorry to look like him. You shrug your shoulders? I am telling you the truth. There is a fatality about all physical and intellectual distinction, the sort of fatality that seems to dog through history the faltering steps of kings. It is better not to be different from one's fellows. The ugly and the stupid have the best of it in this world. They can sit at their ease and gape at the play. If they know nothing of victory, they are at least spared the knowledge of defeat. They live as we all should live—undisturbed, indifferent, and without disquiet. They neither bring ruin upon others, nor ever receive it from alien hands. Your rank and wealth, Harry; my brains, such as they are—my art, whatever it may be worth; Dorian Gray's good looks—we shall all suffer for what the gods have given us, suffer terribly."

"Dorian Gray? Is that his name?" asked Lord Henry, walking across the studio towards Basil Hallward.

"Yes, that is his name. I didn't intend to tell it to you."

"But why not?"

"Oh, I can't explain. When I like people immensely, I never tell their names to any one. It is like surrendering a part of them. I have grown to love secrecy. It seems to be the one thing that can make modern life mysterious or marvellous to us. The commonest thing is delightful if one only hides it. When I leave town now I never tell my people where I am going. If I did, I would lose all my pleasure. It is a silly habit, I dare say, but somehow it seems to bring a great deal of romance into one's life. I suppose you think me awfully foolish about it?"

"Not at all," answered Lord Henry, "not at all, my dear Basil. You seem to forget that I am married, and the one charm of marriage is that it makes a life of deception absolutely necessary for both parties. I never know where my wife is, and my wife never knows what I am doing. When we meet—we do meet occasionally, when we dine out together, or go down to the Duke's—we tell each other the most absurd stories with the most serious faces. My wife is very good at it—much better, in fact, than I am. She never gets confused over her dates, and I always do. But when she does find me out, she makes no row at all. I sometimes wish she would; but she merely laughs at me.

"I hate the way you talk about your married life, Harry," said Basil Hallward, strolling towards the door that led into the garden. "I believe that you are really a very good husband, but that you are thoroughly ashamed of your own virtues. You are an extraordinary fellow. You never say a moral thing, and you never do a wrong thing. Your cynicism is simply a pose."

"Being natural is simply a pose, and the most irritating pose I know," cried Lord Henry, laughing; and the two young men went out into the garden together and ensconced themselves on a long bamboo seat that stood in the shade of a tall laurel bush. The sunlight slipped over the polished leaves. In the grass, white daisies were tremulous. After a pause, Lord Henry pulled out his watch. "I am afraid I must be going, Basil," he murmured, "and before I go, I insist on your answering a question I put to you some time ago."

"What is that?" said the painter, keeping his eyes fixed on the ground.

"You know quite well."

"I do not, Harry."

"Well, I will tell you what it is. I want you to explain to me why you won't exhibit Dorian Gray's picture. I want the real reason."

"I told you the real reason."

"No, you did not. You said it was because there was too much of yourself in it. Now, that is childish."

"Harry," said Basil Hallward, looking him straight in the face, "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. The reason I will not exhibit this picture is that I am afraid that I have shown in it the secret of my own soul."

Lord Henry laughed.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 2:

Study the following passage from Chapter IV of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and write a coherent, well-organized essay in which you argue whether Lord Henry and his wife, Lady Henry, display and articulate conventional attitudes toward marriage and gender roles. Be sure to establish a clear thesis and support your ideas with references to the passage.

Do not merely summarize the passage.

At last he heard a step outside, and the door opened. "How late you are, Harry!" he murmured.

"I am afraid it is not Harry, Mr. Gray," answered a shrill voice.

He glanced quickly round and rose to his feet. "I beg your pardon. I thought—"

"You thought it was my husband. It is only his wife. You must let me introduce myself. I know you quite well by your photographs. I think my husband has got seventeen of them."

"Not seventeen, Lady Henry?"

"Well, eighteen, then. And I saw you with him the other night at the opera."

She laughed nervously as she spoke, and watched him with her vague forget-me-not eyes.

She was a curious woman, whose dresses always looked as if they had been designed in a rage and put on in a tempest. She was usually in love with somebody, and, as her passion was never returned, she had kept all her illusions. She tried to look picturesque, but only succeeded in being untidy. Her name was Victoria, and she had a perfect mania for going to church.

"That was at Lohengrin, Lady Henry, I think?"

"Yes; it was at dear Lohengrin. I like Wagner's music better than anybody's. It is so loud that one can talk the whole time without other people hearing what one says. That is a great advantage, don't you think so, Mr. Gray?"

The same nervous staccato laugh broke from her thin lips, and her fingers began to play with a long tortoise-shell paper-knife.

Dorian smiled and shook his head: "I am afraid I don't think so, Lady Henry. I never talk during music—at least, during good music. If one hears bad music, it is one's duty to drown it in conversation."

"Ah! that is one of Harry's views, isn't it, Mr. Gray? I always hear Harry's views from his friends. It is the only way I get to know of them. But you must not think I don't like good music. I adore it, but I am afraid of it. It makes me too romantic. I have simply worshipped pianists—two at a time, sometimes, Harry tells me. I don't know what it is about them. Perhaps it is that they are foreigners. They all are, ain't they? Even those that are born in England become foreigners after a time, don't they? It is so clever of them, and such a compliment to art. Makes it quite cosmopolitan, doesn't it? You have never been to any of my parties, have you, Mr. Gray? You must come. I can't afford orchids, but I share no expense in foreigners. They make one's rooms look so picturesque. But here

is Harry! Harry, I came in to look for you, to ask you something—I forget what it was—and I found Mr. Gray here. We have had such a pleasant chat about music. We have quite the same ideas. No; I think our ideas are quite different. But he has been most pleasant. I am so glad I've seen him."

"I am charmed, my love, quite charmed," said Lord Henry, elevating his dark, crescent-shaped eyebrows and looking at them both with an amused smile. "So sorry I am late, Dorian. I went to look after a piece of old brocade in Wardour Street and had to bargain for hours for it. Nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing."

"I am afraid I must be going," exclaimed Lady Henry, breaking an awkward silence with her silly sudden laugh. "I have promised to drive with the duchess. Good-bye, Mr. Gray. Good-bye, Harry. You are dining out, I suppose? So am I. Perhaps I shall see you at Lady Thornbury's."

"I dare say, my dear," said Lord Henry, shutting the door behind her as, looking like a bird of paradise that had been out all night in the rain, she flitted out of the room, leaving a faint odour of frangipanni. Then he lit a cigarette and flung himself down on the sofa.

"Never marry a woman with straw-coloured hair, Dorian," he said after a few puffs.

"Why, Harry?"

"Because they are so sentimental."

"But I like sentimental people."

"Never marry at all, Dorian. Men marry because they are tired; women, because they are curious: both are disappointed."

"I don't think I am likely to marry, Harry. I am too much in love. That is one of your aphorisms. I am putting it into practice, as I do everything that you say."

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 3:

The following passage from Chapter VII of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* describes Basil's disappointing visit to the playhouse, where Sibyl Vane performs in *Romeo and Juliet*. Study the passage carefully, and write a well-organized essay in which you outline the relationship between art, life, and love as experienced by Dorian. Explain how the passage echoes Aesthetic principles.

Do not merely summarize the passage.

"Yes!" answered Dorian Gray. "It was here I found her, and she is divine beyond all living things. When she acts, you will forget everything. These common rough people, with their coarse faces and brutal gestures, become quite different when she is on the stage. They sit silently and watch her. They weep and laugh as she wills them to do. She makes them as responsive as a violin. She spiritualizes them, and one feels that they are of the same flesh and blood as one's self."

"The same flesh and blood as one's self! Oh, I hope not!" exclaimed Lord Henry, who was scanning the occupants of the gallery through his opera-glass.

"Don't pay any attention to him, Dorian," said the painter. "I understand what you mean, and I believe in this girl. Any one you love must be marvellous, and any girl who has the effect you describe must be fine and noble. To spiritualize one's age—that is something worth doing. If this girl can give a soul to those who have lived without one, if she can create the sense of beauty in people whose lives have been sordid and ugly, if she can strip them of their selfishness and lend them tears for sorrows that are not their own, she is worthy of all your adoration, worthy of the adoration of the world. This marriage is quite right. I did not think so at first, but I admit it now. The gods made Sibyl Vane for you. Without her you would have been incomplete."

"Thanks, Basil," answered Dorian Gray, pressing his hand. "I knew that you would understand me. Harry is so cynical, he terrifies me. But here is the orchestra. It is quite dreadful, but it only lasts for about five minutes. Then the curtain rises, and you will see the girl to whom I am going to give all my life, to whom I have given everything that is good in me."

A quarter of an hour afterwards, amidst an extraordinary turmoil of applause, Sibyl Vane stepped on to the stage. Yes, she was certainly lovely to look at—one of the loveliest creatures, Lord Henry thought, that he had ever seen. There was something of the fawn in her shy grace and startled eyes. A faint blush, like the shadow of a rose in a mirror of silver, came to her cheeks as she glanced at the crowded enthusiastic house. She stepped back a few paces and her lips seemed to tremble. Basil Hallward leaped to his feet and began to applaud. Motionless, and as one in a dream, sat Dorian Gray, gazing at her. Lord Henry peered through his glasses, murmuring, "Charming! charming!"

The scene was the hall of Capulet's house, and Romeo in his pilgrim's dress had entered with Mercutio and his other friends. The band, such as it was, struck up a few bars of music, and the dance began. Through the crowd of ungainly, shabbily dressed actors, Sibyl Vane moved like a creature from a finer world. Her body swayed, while she danced, as a plant sways in the water. The curves of her throat were the curves of a white lily. Her hands seemed to be made of cool ivory.

Yet she was curiously listless. She showed no sign of joy when her eyes rested on Romeo. The few words she had to speak—

Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much, Which mannerly devotion shows in this; For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch, And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss—

with the brief dialogue that follows, were spoken in a thoroughly artificial manner. The voice was exquisite, but from the point of view of tone it was absolutely false. It was wrong in colour. It took away all the life from the verse. It made the passion unreal.

Dorian Gray grew pale as he watched her. He was puzzled and anxious. Neither of his friends dared to say anything to him. She seemed to them to be absolutely incompetent. They were horribly disappointed.

Yet they felt that the true test of any Juliet is the balcony scene of the second act. They waited for that. If she failed there, there was nothing in her.

She looked charming as she came out in the moonlight. That could not be denied. But the staginess of her acting was unbearable, and grew worse as she went on. Her gestures became absurdly artificial. She overemphasized everything that she had to say. The beautiful passage—

Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face, Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night—

was declaimed with the painful precision of a schoolgirl who has been taught to recite by some second-rate professor of elocution. When she leaned over the balcony and came to those wonderful lines—

Although I joy in thee, I have no joy of this contract to-night: It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden; Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be Ere one can say, "It lightens." Sweet, good-night! This bud of love by summer's ripening breath May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet—

she spoke the words as though they conveyed no meaning to her. It was not nervousness. Indeed, so far from being nervous, she was absolutely self-contained. It was simply bad art. She was a complete failure.

Even the common uneducated audience of the pit and gallery lost their interest in the play. They got restless, and began to talk loudly and to whistle. The Jew manager, who was standing at the back of the dress-circle, stamped and swore with rage. The only person unmoved was the girl herself.

When the second act was over, there came a storm of hisses, and Lord Henry got up from his chair and put on his coat. "She is quite beautiful, Dorian," he said, "but she can't act. Let us go."

"I am going to see the play through," answered the lad, in a hard bitter voice. "I am awfully sorry that I have made you waste an evening, Harry. I apologize to you both."

"My dear Dorian, I should think Miss Vane was ill," interrupted Hallward. "We will come some other night."

"I wish she were ill," he rejoined. "But she seems to me to be simply callous and cold. She has entirely altered. Last night she was a great artist. This evening she is merely a commonplace mediocre actress."

"Don't talk like that about any one you love, Dorian. Love is a more wonderful thing than art."

"They are both simply forms of imitation," remarked Lord Henry. "But do let us go. Dorian, you must not stay here any longer. It is not good for one's morals to see bad acting. Besides, I don't suppose you will want your wife to act, so what does it matter if she plays Juliet like a wooden doll? She is very lovely, and if she knows as little about life as she does about acting, she will be a delightful experience. There are only two kinds of people who are really fascinating—people who know absolutely everything, and people who know absolutely nothing. Good heavens, my dear boy, don't look so tragic! The secret of remaining young is never to have an emotion that is unbecoming. Come to the club with Basil and myself. We will smoke cigarettes and drink to the beauty of Sibyl Vane. She is beautiful. What more can you want?"

"Go away, Harry," cried the lad. "I want to be alone. Basil, you must go. Ah! can't you see that my heart is breaking?" The hot tears came to his eyes. His lips trembled, and rushing to the back of the box, he leaned up against the wall, hiding his face in his hands.

FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 4:

Carefully study the following passage from Chapter VIII of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and analyze the Faustian pact into which Dorian enters. Be sure to consider the interplay of temptation and fear that ultimately leads Dorian to sealing the pact.

Do not merely summarize the passage.

He felt that the time had really come for making his choice. Or had his choice already been made? Yes, life had decided that for him—life, and his own infinite curiosity about life. Eternal youth, infinite passion, pleasures subtle and secret, wild joys and wilder sins—he was to have all these things. The portrait was to bear the burden of his shame: that was all.

A feeling of pain crept over him as he thought of the desecration that was in store for the fair face on the canvas. Once, in boyish mockery of Narcissus, he had kissed, or feigned to kiss, those painted lips that now smiled so cruelly at him. Morning after morning he had sat before the portrait wondering at its beauty, almost enamoured of it, as it seemed to him at times. Was it to alter now with every mood to which he yielded? Was it to become a monstrous and loathsome thing, to be hidden away in a locked room, to be shut out from the sunlight that had so often touched to brighter gold the waving wonder of its hair? The pity of it! the pity of it!

For a moment, he thought of praying that the horrible sympathy that existed between him and the picture might cease. It had changed in answer to a prayer; perhaps in answer to a prayer it might remain unchanged. And yet, who, that knew anything about life, would surrender the chance of remaining always young, however fantastic that chance might be, or with what fateful consequences it might be fraught? Besides, was it really under his control? Had it indeed been prayer that had produced the substitution? Might there not be some curious scientific reason for it all? If thought could exercise its influence upon a living organism, might not thought exercise an influence upon dead and inorganic things? Nay, without thought or conscious desire, might not things external to ourselves vibrate in unison with our moods and passions, atom calling to atom in secret love or strange affinity? But the reason was of no importance. He would never again tempt by a prayer any terrible power. If the picture was to alter, it was to alter. That was all. Why inquire too closely into it?

For there would be a real pleasure in watching it. He would be able to follow his mind into its secret places. This portrait would be to him the most magical of mirrors. As it had revealed to him his own body, so it would reveal to him his own soul. And when winter came upon it, he would still be standing where spring trembles on the verge of summer. When the blood crept from its face, and left behind a pallid mask of chalk with leaden eyes, he would keep the glamour of boyhood. Not one blossom of his loveliness would ever fade. Not one pulse of his life would ever weaken. Like the gods of the Greeks, he would be strong, and fleet, and joyous. What did it matter what happened to the coloured image on the canvas? He would be safe. That was everything.

He drew the screen back into its former place in front of the picture, smiling as he did so, and passed into his bedroom, where his valet was already waiting for him. An hour later he was at the opera, and Lord Henry was leaning over his chair.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 5:

Study the following passage from Chapter XI of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and outline the development of Dorian's double life. Consider the two dimensions of Dorian's existence—the portrait's changing image and Dorian's lavish, decadent lifestyle. Discuss what effect the double life has on Dorian.

Do not merely summarize the plot.

Often, on returning home from one of those mysterious and prolonged absences that gave rise to such strange conjecture among those who were his friends, or thought that they were so, he himself would creep upstairs to the locked room, open the door with the key that never left him now, and stand, with a mirror, in front of the portrait that Basil Hallward had painted of him, looking now at the evil and aging face on the canvas, and now at the fair young face that laughed back at him from the polished glass. The very sharpness of the contrast used to quicken his sense of pleasure. He grew more and more enamoured of his own beauty, more and more interested in the corruption of his own soul. He would examine with minute care, and sometimes with a monstrous and terrible delight, the hideous lines that seared the wrinkling forehead or crawled around the heavy sensual mouth, wondering sometimes which were the more horrible, the signs of sin or the signs of age. He would place his white hands beside the coarse bloated hands of the picture, and smile. He mocked the misshapen body and the failing limbs.

There were moments, indeed, at night, when, lying sleepless in his own delicately scented chamber, or in the sordid room of the little ill-famed tavern near the docks which, under an assumed name and in disguise, it was his habit to frequent, he would think of the ruin he had brought upon his soul with a pity that was all the more poignant because it was purely selfish. But moments such as these were rare. That curiosity about life which Lord Henry had first stirred in him, as they sat together in the garden of their friend, seemed to increase with gratification. The more he knew, the more he desired to know. He had mad hungers that grew more ravenous as he fed them.

Yet he was not really reckless, at any rate in his relations to society. Once or twice every month during the winter, and on each Wednesday evening while the season lasted, he would throw open to the world his beautiful house and have the most celebrated musicians of the day to charm his guests with the wonders of their art. His little dinners, in the settling of which Lord Henry always assisted him, were noted as much for the careful selection and placing of those invited, as for the exquisite taste shown in the decoration of the table, with its subtle symphonic arrangements of exotic flowers, and embroidered cloths, and antique plate of gold and silver. Indeed, there were many, especially among the very young men, who saw, or fancied that they saw, in Dorian Gray the true realization of a type of which they had often dreamed in Eton or Oxford days, a type that was to combine something of the real culture of the scholar with all the grace and distinction and perfect manner of a citizen of the world. To them he seemed to be of the company of those whom Dante describes as having sought to "make themselves perfect by the worship of beauty." Like Gautier, he was one for whom "the visible world existed."

And, certainly, to him life itself was the first, the greatest, of the arts, and for it all the other arts seemed to be but a preparation. Fashion, by which what is really fantastic becomes for a moment universal, and dandyism, which, in its own way, is an attempt to assert the absolute modernity of beauty, had, of course, their fascination for him. His mode of dressing, and the particular styles that from time to time he affected, had their marked influence on the young exquisites of the Mayfair balls and Pall Mall club windows, who copied him in everything that he did, and tried to reproduce the accidental charm of his graceful, though to him only half-serious, fopperies.

For, while he was but too ready to accept the position that was almost immediately offered to him on his coming of age, and found, indeed, a subtle pleasure in the thought that he might really become to the London of his own day what to imperial Neronian Rome the author of the *Satyricon* once had been, yet in his inmost heart he desired to be something more than a mere arbiter elegantiarum, to be consulted on the wearing of a jewel, or the knotting of a necktie, or the conduct of a cane. He sought to elaborate some new scheme of life that would have its reasoned philosophy and its ordered principles, and find in the spiritualizing of the senses its highest realization.

The worship of the senses has often, and with much justice, been decried, men feeling a natural instinct of terror about passions and sensations that seem stronger than themselves, and that they are conscious of sharing with the less highly organized forms of existence. But it appeared to Dorian Gray that the true nature of the senses had never been understood, and that they had remained savage and animal merely because the world had sought to starve them into submission or to kill them by pain, instead of aiming at making them elements of a new spirituality, of which a fine instinct for beauty was to be the dominant characteristic. As he looked back upon man moving through history, he was haunted by a feeling of loss. So much had been surrendered! and to such little purpose! There had been mad wilful rejections, monstrous forms of self-torture and self-denial, whose origin was fear and whose result was a degradation infinitely more terrible than that fancied degradation from which, in their ignorance, they had sought to escape; Nature, in her wonderful irony, driving out the anchorite to feed with the wild animals of the desert and giving to the hermit the beasts of the field as his companions.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 6:

In the following passage from Chapter XII of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Basil Hallward meets Dorian for the first time in a long while, and he expresses his concern about Dorian's poor reputation within London society. Study the passage carefully, then, write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the connection between identity and appearance, behavior and reputation.

Do not merely summarize the plot.

Dorian sighed and lit a cigarette. "Half an hour!" he murmured.

"It is not much to ask of you, Dorian, and it is entirely for your own sake that I am speaking. I think it right that you should know that the most dreadful things are being said against you in London."

"I don't wish to know anything about them. I love scandals about other people, but scandals about myself don't interest me. They have not got the charm of novelty."

"They must interest you, Dorian. Every gentleman is interested in his good name. You don't want people to talk of you as something vile and degraded. Of course, you have your position, and your wealth, and all that kind of thing. But position and wealth are not everything. Mind you, I don't believe these rumours at all. At least, I can't believe them when I see you. Sin is a thing that writes itself across a man's face. It cannot be concealed. People talk sometimes of secret vices. There are no such things. If a wretched man has a vice, it shows itself in the lines of his mouth, the droop of his eyelids, the moulding of his hands even. Somebody—I won't mention his name, but you know him—came to me last year to have his portrait done. I had never seen him before, and had never heard anything about him at the time, though I have heard a good deal since. He offered an extravagant price. I refused him. There was something in the shape of his fingers that I hated. I know now that I was quite right in what I fancied about him. His life is dreadful. But you, Dorian, with your pure, bright, innocent face, and your marvellous untroubled youth—I can't believe anything against you. And yet I see you very seldom, and you never come down to the studio now, and when I am away from you, and I hear all these hideous things that people are whispering about you, I don't know what to say. Why is it, Dorian, that a man like the Duke of Berwick leaves the room of a club when you enter it? Why is it that so many gentlemen in London will neither go to your house or invite you to theirs? You used to be a friend of Lord Staveley. I met him at dinner last week. Your name happened to come up in conversation, in connection with the miniatures you have lent to the exhibition at the Dudley. Staveley curled his lip and said that you might have the most artistic tastes, but that you were a man whom no pure-minded girl should be allowed to know, and whom no chaste woman should sit in the same room with. I reminded him that I was a friend of yours, and asked him what he meant. He told me. He told me right out before everybody. It was horrible! Why is your friendship so fatal to young men?

There was that wretched boy in the Guards who committed suicide. You were his great friend. There was Sir Henry Ashton, who had to leave England with a tarnished name. You and he were inseparable. What about Adrian Singleton and his dreadful end? What about Lord Kent's only son and his career? I met his father yesterday in St. James's Street. He seemed broken with shame and sorrow. What about the young Duke of Perth? What sort of life has he got now? What gentleman would associate with him?"

"Stop, Basil. You are talking about things of which you know nothing," said Dorian Gray, biting his lip, and with a note of infinite contempt in his voice. "You ask me why Berwick leaves a room when I enter it. It is because I know everything about his life, not because he knows anything about mine. With such blood as he has in his veins, how could his record be clean? You ask me about Henry Ashton and young Perth. Did I teach the one his vices, and the other his debauchery? If Kent's silly son takes his wife from the streets, what is that to me? If Adrian Singleton writes his friend's name across a bill, am I his keeper? I know how people chatter in England. The middle classes air their moral prejudices over their gross dinner-tables, and whisper about what they call the profligacies of their betters in order to try and pretend that they are in smart society and on intimate terms with the people they slander. In this country, it is enough for a man to have distinction and brains for every common tongue to wag against him. And what sort of lives do these people, who pose as being moral, lead themselves? My dear fellow, you forget that we are in the native land of the hypocrite."

"Dorian," cried Hallward, "that is not the question. England is bad enough I know, and English society is all wrong. That is the reason why I want you to be fine. You have not been fine. One has a right to judge of a man by the effect he has over his friends. Yours seem to lose all sense of honour, of goodness, of purity. You have filled them with a madness for pleasure. They have gone down into the depths. You led them there. Yes: you led them there, and yet you can smile, as you are smiling now. And there is worse behind. I know you and Harry are inseparable. Surely for that reason, if for none other, you should not have made his sister's name a by-word."

"Take care, Basil. You go too far."

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 7

Oscar Wilde's references to sexuality and homoeroticism led to a great amount of controversy when *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was first published. Write a well-organized essay in which you compare and contrast Basil Hallward and Lord Henry's attitudes toward Dorian. Consider how sexuality and platonic love play a role in the relationships between Dorian and Basil and Dorian and Lord Henry.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 8:

Authors frequently employ elements of irony in order to reveal their attitude toward the text and to enable readers to evaluate plot developments and characters' actions effectively and critically. Write a well-organized essay in which you explore the central irony of the novel.

Practice Multiple Choice Questions

PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 1-5:

Carefully read the following passage from Chapter I of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* before choosing your answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow:

"Perhaps you will tire sooner than he will. It is a sad thing to think of, but there is no doubt that genius lasts longer than beauty. That accounts for the fact that we all take such pains to over-educate ourselves. In the wild struggle for existence, we want to have something that endures, and so we fill our minds with rubbish and facts, in the silly hope of keeping our place. The thoroughly well-informed man—that is the modern ideal. And the mind of the thoroughly well-informed man is a dreadful thing. It is like a bric-a-brac shop, all monsters and dust, with everything priced above its proper value. I think you will tire first, all the same. Some day you will look at your friend, and he will seem to you to be a little out of drawing, or you won't like his tone of colour, or something. You will bitterly reproach him in your own heart, and seriously think that he has behaved very badly to you. The next time he calls, you will be perfectly cold and indifferent. It will be a great pity, for it will alter you. What you have told me is quite a romance, a romance of art one might call it, and the worst of having a romance of any kind is that it leaves one so unromantic."

"Harry, don't talk like that. As long as I live, the personality of Dorian Gray will dominate me. You can't feel what I feel. You change too often."

"Ah, my dear Basil, that is exactly why I can feel it. Those who are faithful know only the trivial side of love: it is the faithless who know love's tragedies." And Lord Henry struck a light on a dainty silver case and began to smoke a cigarette with a self-conscious and satisfied air, as if he had summed up the world in a phrase. There was a rustle of chirruping sparrows in the green lacquer leaves of the ivy, and the blue cloud-shadows chased themselves across the grass like swallows. How pleasant it was in the garden! And how delightful other people's emotions were!—much more delightful than their ideas, it seemed to him. One's own soul, and the passions of one's friends—those were the fascinating things in life. He pictured to himself with silent amusement the tedious luncheon that he had missed by staying so long with Basil Hallward. Had he gone to his aunt's, he would have been sure to have met Lord Goodbody there, and the whole conversation would have been about the feeding of the poor and the necessity for model lodging-houses. Each class would have preached the importance of those virtues, for whose exercise there was no necessity in their own lives. The rich would have spoken on the value of thrift, and the idle grown eloquent over the dignity of labour. It was charming to have escaped all that! As he thought of his aunt, an idea seemed to strike him. He turned to Hallward and said, "My dear fellow, I have just remembered."

“Remembered what, Harry?”

“Where I heard the name of Dorian Gray.”

“Where was it?” asked Hallward, with a slight frown.

“Don’t look so angry, Basil. It was at my aunt, Lady Agatha’s. She told me she had discovered a wonderful young man who was going to help her in the East End, and that his name was Dorian Gray. I am bound to state that she never told me he was good-looking. Women have no appreciation of good looks; at least, good women have not. She said that he was very earnest and had a beautiful nature. I at once pictured to myself a creature with spectacles and lank hair, horribly freckled, and tramping about on huge feet. I wish I had known it was your friend.”

“I am very glad you didn’t, Harry.”

“Why?”

“I don’t want you to meet him.”

“You don’t want me to meet him?”

“No.”

“Mr. Dorian Gray is in the studio, sir,” said the butler, coming into the garden.

“You must introduce me now,” cried Lord Henry, laughing.

The painter turned to his servant, who stood blinking in the sunlight. “Ask Mr. Gray to wait, Parker: I shall be in in a few moments.” The man bowed and went up the walk.

Then he looked at Lord Henry. “Dorian Gray is my dearest friend,” he said. “He has a simple and a beautiful nature. Your aunt was quite right in what she said of him. Don’t spoil him. Don’t try to influence him. Your influence would be bad. The world is wide, and has many marvellous people in it. Don’t take away from me the one person who gives to my art whatever charm it possesses: my life as an artist depends on him. Mind, Harry, I trust you.” He spoke very slowly, and the words seemed wrung out of him almost against his will.

“What nonsense you talk!” said Lord Henry, smiling, and taking Hallward by the arm, he almost led him into the house.

1. According to Lord Henry, the “modern ideal” dictates that human beings must
 - (A) be extremely well-informed.
 - (B) enjoy life without regrets.
 - (C) value art over life.
 - (D) value genius over art.
 - (E) be interested in romance and love.
2. Basil believes that Lord Henry cannot understand his fascination with Dorian because Lord Henry
 - (A) is too involved in his social life to focus on just one person.
 - (B) changes his ideas and convictions too frequently.
 - (C) doesn't allow himself to be dominated by another person.
 - (D) does not have an artist's eye for beauty.
 - (E) is not romantic enough to appreciate Dorian's beauty.
3. Lord Henry's tone when considering Lord Goodbody and the company at his aunt's house can best be described as
 - (A) regretful.
 - (B) sincere.
 - (C) angry.
 - (D) hesitant.
 - (E) sarcastic.
4. According to Lord Henry, philanthropy is
 - (A) a taboo topic in fine society.
 - (B) often talked about, but rarely acted upon in fine society.
 - (C) practiced diligently by most members of upper class society.
 - (D) an exciting new social movement.
 - (E) not really helpful to the poor and disenfranchised.
5. Basil does not want Lord Henry to meet Dorian because he fears
 - (A) Dorian will fall in love with Lord Henry.
 - (B) Dorian will be distracted by Lord Henry's presence.
 - (C) Dorian will not be willing to sit for his picture in Lord Henry's presence.
 - (D) Lord Henry will be a negative influence on Dorian's innocent character.
 - (E) Lord Henry will intimidate Dorian.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 6-10:

Carefully read the following passage from Chapter II of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* before choosing your answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow:

Yes, there would be a day when his face would be wrinkled and wizen, his eyes dim and colourless, the grace of his figure broken and deformed. The scarlet would pass away from his lips and the gold steal from his hair. The life that was to make his soul would mar his body. He would become dreadful, hideous, and uncouth.

As he thought of it, a sharp pang of pain struck through him like a knife and made each delicate fibre of his nature quiver. His eyes deepened into amethyst, and across them came a mist of tears. He felt as if a hand of ice had been laid upon his heart.

"Don't you like it?" cried Hallward at last, stung a little by the lad's silence, not understanding what it meant.

"Of course he likes it," said Lord Henry. "Who wouldn't like it? It is one of the greatest things in modern art. I will give you anything you like to ask for it. I must have it."

"It is not my property, Harry."

"Whose property is it?"

"Dorian's, of course," answered the painter.

"He is a very lucky fellow."

"How sad it is!" murmured Dorian Gray with his eyes still fixed upon his own portrait. "How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June. If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! For that—for that—I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that!"

"You would hardly care for such an arrangement, Basil," cried Lord Henry, laughing. "It would be rather hard lines on your work."

"I should object very strongly, Harry," said Hallward.

Dorian Gray turned and looked at him. "I believe you would, Basil. You like your art better than your friends. I am no more to you than a green bronze figure. Hardly as much, I dare say."

The painter stared in amazement. It was so unlike Dorian to speak like that. What had happened? He seemed quite angry. His face was flushed and his cheeks burning.

"Yes," he continued, "I am less to you than your ivory Hermes or your silver Faun. You will like them always. How long will you like me? Till I have my first wrinkle, I suppose. I know, now, that when one loses one's good looks, whatever they may be, one loses everything. Your picture has taught me that. Lord Henry Wotton is perfectly right. Youth is the only thing worth having. When I find that I am growing old, I shall kill myself."

Hallward turned pale and caught his hand. "Dorian! Dorian!" he cried,

"Don't talk like that. I have never had such a friend as you, and I shall never have such another. You are not jealous of material things, are you?—you who are finer than any of them!"

"I am jealous of everything whose beauty does not die. I am jealous of the portrait you have painted of me. Why should it keep what I must lose? Every moment that passes takes something from me and gives something to it. Oh, if it were only the other way! If the picture could change, and I could be always what I am now! Why did you paint it? It will mock me some day—mock me horribly!" The hot tears welled into his eyes; he tore his hand away and, flinging himself on the divan, he buried his face in the cushions, as though he was praying.

"This is your doing, Harry," said the painter bitterly.

Lord Henry shrugged his shoulders. "It is the real Dorian Gray—that is all."

6. Dorian's fear that "the life that was to make his soul would mar his body" emphasizes Wilde's philosophical notion that
 - (A) the essence of life is detached from the physical body.
 - (B) beauty should not be a central element in a person's life.
 - (C) a person's physical appearance mirrors a human being's life experience.
 - (D) the beauty of the soul exceeds the beauty of the physical body.
 - (E) the value of the physical body transcends the needs of the human soul.
7. The "hand of ice" Dorian feels being laid upon his heart functions as a metaphor for Dorian's
 - (A) anticipation as the painting reaches completion.
 - (B) increasing susceptibility to Lord Henry's influence.
 - (C) growing awareness of the inevitability of aging and death.
 - (D) fear that his life experiences will inevitably be cut short by death.
 - (E) dissatisfaction with a picture that cannot accurately predict or reflect his aging.
8. The main purpose of the passage introducing Dorian's desire to trade places with the picture is to
 - (A) introduce the Faustian bargain.
 - (B) show Dorian's superficial nature.
 - (C) demonstrate how much he has been influenced by Lord Henry.
 - (D) foreshadow the changing relationship between Dorian and Basil.
 - (E) illustrate Wilde's view of Aestheticism.
9. Dorian's tone when he discusses the painting can best be characterized as
 - (A) shy and insecure.
 - (B) careless and indifferent.
 - (C) romantic and idealistic.
 - (D) desperate and frantic.
 - (E) self-assured and confident.
10. When Lord Henry tells Basil that this "is the real Dorian Gray," he implies that Dorian
 - (A) is the most beautiful man he has ever seen.
 - (B) does not accept the fact that he can never be as beautiful as the portrait.
 - (C) has been overwhelmed by the long hours of sitting for Basil.
 - (D) cannot hide his dislike of Basil any longer.
 - (E) is a narcissistic and insecure young man.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 11-15:

Carefully read the following passage from Chapter VI, of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* before you choose your answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow.

"I suppose you have heard the news, Basil?" said Lord Henry that evening as Hallward was shown into a little private room at the Bristol where dinner had been laid for three.

"No, Harry," answered the artist, giving his hat and coat to the bowing waiter.

"What is it? Nothing about politics, I hope! They don't interest me. There is hardly a single person in the House of Commons worth painting, though many of them would be the better for a little whitewashing."

"Dorian Gray is engaged to be married," said Lord Henry, watching him as he spoke.

Hallward started and then frowned. "Dorian engaged to be married!" he cried. "Impossible!"

"It is perfectly true."

"To whom?"

"To some little actress or other."

"I can't believe it. Dorian is far too sensible."

"Dorian is far too wise not to do foolish things now and then, my dear Basil."

"Marriage is hardly a thing that one can do now and then, Harry."

"Except in America," rejoined Lord Henry languidly. "But I didn't say he was married. I said he was engaged to be married. There is a great difference. I have a distinct remembrance of being married, but I have no recollection at all of being engaged. I am inclined to think that I never was engaged."

"But think of Dorian's birth, and position, and wealth. It would be absurd for him to marry so much beneath him."

"If you want to make him marry this girl, tell him that, Basil. He is sure to do it, then. Whenever a man does a thoroughly stupid thing, it is always from the noblest motives."

"I hope the girl is good, Harry. I don't want to see Dorian tied to some vile creature, who might degrade his nature and ruin his intellect."

"Oh, she is better than good—she is beautiful," murmured Lord Henry, sipping a glass of vermouth and orange-bitters.

"Dorian says she is beautiful, and he is not often wrong about things of that kind. Your portrait of him has quickened his appreciation of the personal appearance of other people. It has had that excellent effect, amongst others. We are to see her to-night, if that boy doesn't forget his appointment."

"Are you serious?"

"Quite serious, Basil. I should be miserable if I thought I should ever be more serious than I am at the present moment."

"But do you approve of it, Harry?" asked the painter, walking up and down the room and biting his lip. "You can't approve of it, possibly. It is some silly infatuation."

“I never approve, or disapprove, of anything now. It is an absurd attitude to take towards life. We are not sent into the world to air our moral prejudices. I never take any notice of what common people say, and I never interfere with what charming people do. If a personality fascinates me, whatever mode of expression that personality selects is absolutely delightful to me. Dorian Gray falls in love with a beautiful girl who acts Juliet, and proposes to marry her. Why not? If he wedded Messalina, he would be none the less interesting. You know I am not a champion of marriage. The real drawback to marriage is that it makes one unselfish. And unselfish people are colourless. They lack individuality.”

“Still, there are certain temperaments that marriage makes more complex. They retain their egotism, and add to it many other egos. They are forced to have more than one life. They become more highly organized, and to be highly organized is, I should fancy, the object of man’s existence. Besides, every experience is of value, and whatever one may say against marriage, it is certainly an experience. I hope that Dorian Gray will make this girl his wife, passionately adore her for six months, and then suddenly become fascinated by some one else. He would be a wonderful study.”

“You don’t mean a single word of all that, Harry; you know you don’t. If Dorian Gray’s life were spoiled, no one would be sorrier than yourself. You are much better than you pretend to be.”

Lord Henry laughed. “The reason we all like to think so well of others is that we are all afraid for ourselves. The basis of optimism is sheer terror. We think that we are generous because we credit our neighbour with the possession of those virtues that are likely to be a benefit to us. We praise the banker that we may overdraw our account, and find good qualities in the highwayman in the hope that he may spare our pockets. I mean everything that I have said. I have the greatest contempt for optimism. As for a spoiled life, no life is spoiled but one whose growth is arrested. If you want to mar a nature, you have merely to reform it. As for marriage, of course that would be silly, but there are other and more interesting bonds between men and women. I will certainly encourage them. They have the charm of being fashionable. But here is Dorian himself. He will tell you more than I can.”

“My dear Harry, my dear Basil, you must both congratulate me!” said the lad, throwing off his evening cape with its satin-lined wings and shaking each of his friends by the hand in turn. “I have never been so happy. Of course, it is sudden—all really delightful things are. And yet it seems to me to be the one thing I have been looking for all my life.” He was flushed with excitement and pleasure, and looked extraordinarily handsome.

“I hope you will always be very happy, Dorian,” said Hallward, “but I don’t quite forgive you for not having let me know of your engagement. You let Harry know.”

“And I don’t forgive you for being late for dinner,” broke in Lord Henry, putting his hand on the lad’s shoulder and smiling as he spoke. “Come, let us sit down and try what the new chef here is like, and then you will tell us how it all came about.”

“There is really not much to tell,” cried Dorian, as they took their seats at the small round table.

11. When Lord Henry states that he said Dorian “was engaged to be married” and claims that “there is a great difference” between being married and being engaged, he indicates that
 - (A) couples lose romantic feelings for one another once they are married.
 - (B) Dorian is engaged, but that does not mean he will get married.
 - (C) marriage should be taken more seriously than engagement.
 - (D) a lower-class girl like Sibyl values a romantic engagement more than a marriage.
 - (E) marriage will take the relationship between Sibyl and Dorian to a new level of intimacy.
12. Lord Henry refuses to approve or disapprove of Dorian’s choice because he
 - (A) wants to meet Sibyl before making up his mind.
 - (B) trusts that Dorian made the right decision.
 - (C) wants Dorian to learn from his own mistakes.
 - (D) believes people should not pass moral judgment on others.
 - (E) wants to hear what Basil has to say first.
13. According to Lord Henry, the reason for human beings’ optimism and praise of others is
 - (A) a sincere desire to promote social goodwill.
 - (B) human beings’ optimism of a better future.
 - (C) the upper-class’s acknowledgement of its privilege and its desire to promote the less fortunate.
 - (D) an individual’s fear that his or her own interests will some day suffer.
 - (E) an eager wish to find “good virtues” in other people.
14. Lord Henry’s tone when he discusses Dorian’s engagement can best be characterized as
 - (A) serious and concerned.
 - (B) humorous and lighthearted.
 - (C) fearful and anxious.
 - (D) disgusted and disappointed.
 - (E) supportive and warm.
15. Basil is annoyed with Dorian primarily because Dorian
 - (A) did not inform him of his engagement.
 - (B) is late for dinner.
 - (C) has not yet introduced him to Sybil.
 - (D) is making an unwise decision.
 - (E) does not intend to marry Sibyl.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 16-20:

Carefully read the following passage from Chapter XI of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* before you choose your answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow.

For the wonderful beauty that had so fascinated Basil Hallward, and many others besides him, seemed never to leave him. Even those who had heard the most evil things against him—and from time to time strange rumours about his mode of life crept through London and became the chatter of the clubs—could not believe anything to his dishonour when they saw him. He had always the look of one who had kept himself unspotted from the world. Men who talked grossly became silent when Dorian Gray entered the room. There was something in the purity of his face that rebuked them. His mere presence seemed to recall to them the memory of the innocence that they had tarnished. They wondered how one so charming and graceful as he was could have escaped the stain of an age that was at once sordid and sensual.

Often, on returning home from one of those mysterious and prolonged absences that gave rise to such strange conjecture among those who were his friends, or thought that they were so, he himself would creep upstairs to the locked room, open the door with the key that never left him now, and stand, with a mirror, in front of the portrait that Basil Hallward had painted of him, looking now at the evil and aging face on the canvas, and now at the fair young face that laughed back at him from the polished glass.

The very sharpness of the contrast used to quicken his sense of pleasure. He grew more and more enamoured of his own beauty, more and more interested in the corruption of his own soul. He would examine with minute care, and sometimes with a monstrous and terrible delight, the hideous lines that seared the wrinkling forehead or crawled around the heavy sensual mouth, wondering sometimes which were the more horrible, the signs of sin or the signs of age. He would place his white hands beside the coarse bloated hands of the picture, and smile. He mocked the misshapen body and the failing limbs.

There were moments, indeed, at night, when, lying sleepless in his own delicately scented chamber, or in the sordid room of the little ill-famed tavern near the docks which, under an assumed name and in disguise, it was his habit to frequent, he would think of the ruin he had brought upon his soul with a pity that was all the more poignant because it was purely selfish. But moments such as these were rare. That curiosity about life which Lord Henry had first stirred in him, as they sat together in the garden of their friend, seemed to increase with gratification. The more he knew, the more he desired to know. He had mad hungers that grew more ravenous as he fed them.

Yet he was not really reckless, at any rate in his relations to society. Once or twice every month during the winter, and on each Wednesday evening while the season lasted, he would throw open to the world his beautiful house and have the most celebrated musicians of the day to charm his guests with the wonders of their art.

His little dinners, in the settling of which Lord Henry always assisted him, were noted as much for the careful selection and placing of those invited, as for the exquisite taste shown in the decoration of the table, with its subtle symphonic arrangements of exotic flowers, and embroidered cloths, and antique plate of gold and silver.

Indeed, there were many, especially among the very young men, who saw, or fancied that they saw, in Dorian Gray the true realization of a type of which they had often dreamed in Eton or Oxford days, a type that was to combine something of the real culture of the scholar with all the grace and distinction and perfect manner of a citizen of the world.

To them he seemed to be of the company of those whom Dante describes as having sought to “make themselves perfect by the worship of beauty.” Like Gautier, he was one for whom “the visible world existed.”

And, certainly, to him life itself was the first, the greatest, of the arts, and for it all the other arts seemed to be but a preparation. Fashion, by which what is really fantastic becomes for a moment universal, and dandyism, which, in its own way, is an attempt to assert the absolute modernity of beauty, had, of course, their fascination for him.

His mode of dressing, and the particular styles that from time to time he affected, had their marked influence on the young exquisites of the Mayfair balls and Pall Mall club windows, who copied him in everything that he did, and tried to reproduce the accidental charm of his graceful, though to him only half-serious fopperies.

16. Dorian is able to maintain a good reputation despite rumors about his transgressive lifestyle because
- (A) he continues to be flawlessly beautiful.
 - (B) people have no evidence to prove that Dorian is living a life of shame.
 - (C) Dorian is protected by his wealth.
 - (D) Lord Henry and Basil defend his reputation.
 - (E) Dorian does many public good deeds.
17. Dorian's reaction to seeing the changes in his portrait can be characterized as
- (A) content and joyful.
 - (B) solemn and reserved.
 - (C) shocked and disgusted.
 - (D) curious and intrigued.
 - (E) sad and frustrated.
18. References to Dorian's stay at the tavern near the docks relate to the novel's motif of
- (A) interacting with the poor.
 - (B) the high value of youth and beauty.
 - (C) art for art's sake.
 - (D) gender relations.
 - (E) leading a double life.
19. Dorian uses _____ as a metaphor to describe his curiosity about life.
- (A) hunger
 - (B) sex
 - (C) drugs
 - (D) being in a garden with Lord Henry
 - (E) throwing a party for the upper classes
20. Young men attending Dorian's parties consider him to be
- (A) an arrogant show-off.
 - (B) an idol and fashion icon.
 - (C) a dangerous man.
 - (D) a well-behaved gentleman.
 - (E) a protégé of Lord Henry.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 21-25:

Carefully read the following passage from Chapter XIII of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* before you choose your answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow.

He held the light up again to the canvas and examined it. The surface seemed to be quite undisturbed and as he had left it. It was from within, apparently, that the foulness and horror had come. Through some strange quickening of inner life the leprosies of sin were slowly eating the thing away. The rotting of a corpse in a watery grave was not so fearful.

His hand shook, and the candle fell from its socket on the floor and lay there sputtering. He placed his foot on it and put it out. Then he flung himself into the rickety chair that was standing by the table and buried his face in his hands.

"Good God, Dorian, what a lesson! What an awful lesson!" There was no answer, but he could hear the young man sobbing at the window. "Pray, Dorian, pray," he murmured. "What is it that one was taught to say in one's boyhood? 'Lead us not into temptation. Forgive us our sins. Wash away our iniquities.' Let us say that together. The prayer of your pride has been answered. The prayer of your repentance will be answered also. I worshipped you too much. I am punished for it. You worshipped yourself too much. We are both punished."

Dorian Gray turned slowly around and looked at him with tear-dimmed eyes. "It is too late, Basil," he faltered.

"It is never too late, Dorian. Let us kneel down and try if we cannot remember a prayer. Isn't there a verse somewhere, 'Though your sins be as scarlet, yet I will make them as white as snow'?"

"Those words mean nothing to me now."

"Hush! Don't say that. You have done enough evil in your life. My God! Don't you see that accursed thing leering at us?"

Dorian Gray glanced at the picture, and suddenly an uncontrollable feeling of hatred for Basil Hallward came over him, as though it had been suggested to him by the image on the canvas, whispered into his ear by those grinning lips. The mad passions of a hunted animal stirred within him, and he loathed the man who was seated at the table, more than in his whole life he had ever loathed anything. He glanced wildly around. Something glimmered on the top of the painted chest that faced him. His eye fell on it. He knew what it was. It was a knife that he had brought up, some days before, to cut a piece of cord, and had forgotten to take away with him. He moved slowly towards it, passing Hallward as he did so. As soon as he got behind him, he seized it and turned round. Hallward stirred in his chair as if he was going to rise. He rushed at him and dug the knife into the great vein that is behind the ear, crushing the man's head down on the table and stabbing again and again.

There was a stifled groan and the horrible sound of some one choking with blood. Three times the outstretched arms shot up convulsively, waving grotesque, stiff-fingered hands in the air. He stabbed him twice more, but the man did not move. Something began to trickle on the floor. He waited for a moment, still pressing the head down. Then he threw the knife on the table, and listened.

He could hear nothing, but the drip, drip on the threadbare carpet. He opened the door and went out on the landing. The house was absolutely quiet. No one was about. For a few seconds he stood bending over the balustrade and peering down into the black seething well of darkness. Then he took out the key and returned to the room, locking himself in as he did so.

The thing was still seated in the chair, straining over the table with bowed head, and humped back, and long fantastic arms. Had it not been for the red jagged tear in the neck and the clotted black pool that was slowly widening on the table, one would have said that the man was simply asleep.

How quickly it had all been done! He felt strangely calm, and walking over to the window, opened it and stepped out on the balcony. The wind had blown the fog away, and the sky was like a monstrous peacock's tail, starred with myriads of golden eyes.

He looked down and saw the policeman going his rounds and flashing the long beam of his lantern on the doors of the silent houses. The crimson spot of a prowling hansom gleamed at the corner and then vanished. A woman in a fluttering shawl was creeping slowly by the railings, staggering as she went. Now and then she stopped and peered back. Once, she began to sing in a hoarse voice. The policeman strolled over and said something to her. She stumbled away, laughing. A bitter blast swept across the square. The gas-lamps flickered and became blue, and the leafless trees shook their black iron branches to and fro. He shivered and went back, closing the window behind him.

Having reached the door, he turned the key and opened it. He did not even glance at the murdered man. He felt that the secret of the whole thing was not to realize the situation. The friend who had painted the fatal portrait to which all his misery had been due had gone out of his life. That was enough.

Then he remembered the lamp. It was a rather curious one of Moorish workmanship, made of dull silver inlaid with arabesques of burnished steel, and studded with coarse turquoises. Perhaps it might be missed by his servant, and questions would be asked. He hesitated for a moment, then he turned back and took it from the table. He could not help seeing the dead thing. How still it was! How horribly white the long hands looked! It was like a dreadful wax image.

Having locked the door behind him, he crept quietly downstairs. The woodwork creaked and seemed to cry out as if in pain. He stopped several times and waited. No: everything was still. It was merely the sound of his own footsteps.

When he reached the library, he saw the bag and coat in the corner. They must be hidden away somewhere. He unlocked a secret press that was in the wainscoting, a press in which he kept his own curious disguises, and put them into it. He could easily burn them afterwards. Then he pulled out his watch. It was twenty minutes to two.

21. Basil believes that the transformation of the portrait
- (A) is the result of excessive worship.
 - (B) is caused by mysterious powers.
 - (C) was manipulated by Dorian.
 - (D) cannot be undone by repentance.
 - (E) requires the consultation of a close friend.
22. When he invites Dorian to kneel next to him, Basil's tone can best be described as
- (A) obedient and submissive.
 - (B) insulted and irritated.
 - (C) proud and boastful.
 - (D) hopeful and confident.
 - (E) repenting and pious.
23. The narrator suggests that Dorian's "uncontrollable hatred for Basil Hallward"
- (A) stems from his secret frustration with his portrait.
 - (B) is somehow generated and encouraged by the portrait.
 - (C) is the reason for the portrait's transformation.
 - (D) has been suppressed since the moment Dorian met Basil.
 - (E) leaves Dorian sad and confused.
24. Wilde's use of the word "thing" when describing Basil's body indicates that
- (A) Dorian has dehumanized Basil in his thoughts.
 - (B) Dorian cannot face his own actions.
 - (C) Basil was never a real friend to Dorian.
 - (D) death has completely changed Basil's features.
 - (E) Dorian is shocked and ashamed.
25. Dorian's actions following the murder of Basil can be described as
- (A) frantic and desperate.
 - (B) calm and composed.
 - (C) confused and irritated.
 - (D) ashamed and regretful.
 - (E) exhilarated and happy.

MULTIPLE CHOICE ANSWERS**With Explanations**

1. According to Lord Henry, the “modern ideal” dictates that human beings must
 - (A) **be extremely well-informed.**
Lord Henry laments the fact that the modern ideal requires young men to be well-informed about everything. Lord Henry, himself, values pleasure and beauty and does not care about anything else.
 - (B) enjoy life without regrets.
That is, indeed, Lord Henry’s personal ideal, but society in general does not share his sentiments.
 - (C) value art over life.
Lord Henry values art as a high form of life, but society at large does not share his views.
 - (D) value genius over art.
Lord Henry believes that art is greater than genius because genius is only knowledge of trivial facts.
 - (E) be interested in romance and love.
Lord Henry does not take love and romance seriously.
2. Basil believes that Lord Henry cannot understand his fascination with Dorian because Lord Henry
 - (A) is too involved in his social life to focus on just one person.
Although Lord Henry is very involved in social life, this is not relevant to whether Basil believes he can understand his fascination with Dorian.
 - (B) **changes his ideas and convictions too frequently.**
Basil believes that Lord Henry has no principles, and, thus, cannot understand what it means to adore a person or idea entirely and consistently.
 - (C) doesn’t allow himself to be dominated by another person.
Basil says that the personality of Dorian Gray will dominate him forever. Even though the reader may infer from Lord Henry’s speeches that he has never been dominated by another person, there is nothing in the text that implies that is what Basil believes.
 - (D) does not have an artist’s eye for beauty.
Lord Henry does have a keen eye for beauty. He recognizes the perfection of the portrait.
 - (E) is not romantic enough to appreciate Dorian’s beauty.
Lord Henry does appreciate Dorian’s beauty. In addition, although Lord Henry criticizes romantic relationships, he is never accused of being unromantic, nor does he say that he is unromantic.

3. Lord Henry's tone when thinking about the luncheon he missed can be best considered
- (A) regretful.
Although the text says that Lord Henry feels regret about missing the luncheon, his regret is not sincere. The only regret Lord Henry has is missing an opportunity to ridicule the company's conversation on philanthropy.
 - (B) sincere.
Lord Henry's thoughts are not sincere. In fact, verbal irony is being used to discretely show that Lord Henry does not think Lord Goodbody and his acquaintances are virtuous and good. Even though they say that, in theory, it is good to feed and house the poor, in practice, they don't do anything for charity.
 - (C) angry.
Lord Henry doesn't dislike what the company says about philanthropy. On the contrary, the party's conversations amuse him.
 - (D) hesitant.
There is no hesitancy in what Lord Henry thinks.
 - (E) **sarcastic.**
Lord Henry does not take the philanthropic endeavors displayed by Lord Goodbody or anybody else in fine society seriously. He mocks the attempts by others to appear charitable.
4. According to Lord Henry, philanthropy is
- (A) a taboo topic in fine society.
Quite the contrary—Lord Henry believes that philanthropy is talked about too much, especially by Lord Goodbody and his acquaintances.
 - (B) **often talked about, but rarely acted upon in fine society.**
Lord Henry considers the philanthropic spirit to be fashionable. Members of high society pretend to be charitable in order to impress others, but real philanthropy has "no necessity in their lives."
 - (C) practiced diligently by most members of upper class society.
Philanthropy is often discussed, but rarely practiced.
 - (D) an exciting new social movement.
Lord Henry does not comment on real philanthropy, only the conversations at his aunt's house. It cannot be discerned if he sees philanthropy as a new social movement and, if he does, if it is exciting or dull.
 - (E) not really helpful to the poor and disenfranchised.
There is no indication that real philanthropy does not help the poor. However, few members of the higher classes actually practice real philanthropy.

5. Basil does not want Lord Henry to meet Dorian because he fears
- (A) Dorian will fall in love with Lord Henry.
This may be true, but it cannot be inferred from this passage.
 - (B) Dorian will be distracted by Lord Henry's presence.
While this may be one of Basil's fears, it is insignificant in comparison with the greater one. This statement is also vague, and it does not say what Dorian will be distracted by.
 - (C) Dorian will not be willing to sit for his picture in Lord Henry's presence.
Although this might be the case, Basil knows that Lord Henry can do more damage beyond merely distracting Dorian.
 - (D) **Lord Henry will be a negative influence on Dorian's innocent character.**
Basil knows Lord Henry well. He knows the powerful influence Lord Henry can assert over other human beings. Basil fears that an impressionable, innocent young man like Dorian will be susceptible to Lord Henry's negative influence.
 - (E) Lord Henry will intimidate Dorian.
Basil is more worried about Lord Henry taking Dorian away than frightening him away.
6. Dorian's fear that "the life that was to make his soul would mar his body" emphasizes Wilde's philosophical notion that
- (A) the essence of life is detached from the physical body.
Quite the opposite is true in Wilde's opinion: an individual's life can always be traced in his or her appearance.
 - (B) beauty should not be a central element in a person's life.
Wilde clearly believes that both life experience and beauty are important, and he—along with Dorian—laments the fact that one will inevitably have a negative effect on the other.
 - (C) **a person's physical appearance mirrors a human being's life experience.**
Dorian's fear clearly indicates that his physical appearance will not be able to escape the consequences of his personal experiences. Wilde depicts the body as a mirror of the human soul.
 - (D) the beauty of the soul exceeds the beauty of the physical body.
Wilde's suggestion does not place superiority on the soul over the body.
 - (E) the value of the physical body transcends the needs of the human soul.
Wilde's suggestion does not place superiority on the body over the soul.

7. The “hand of ice” Dorian feels being laid upon his heart functions as a metaphor for Dorian’s
- (A) anticipation as the painting reaches completion.
Basil’s painting is nearly complete, but the “hand of ice” is connected to a more somber, negative anticipation of aging and death, not a joyful anticipation of seeing the artwork completed.
 - (B) increasing susceptibility to Lord Henry’s influence.
Although Lord Henry’s influence is beginning to take over Dorian’s mind, the metaphor in this passage clearly relates to Dorian’s fear of physical degeneration.
 - (C) **growing awareness of the inevitability of aging and death.**
The “hand of ice” takes hold of Dorian, reminding him of the fact that his body will inevitably become “dreadful, hideous, and uncouth.”
 - (D) fear that his life experiences will inevitably be cut short by death.
Dorian is more concerned with his gradual physical deterioration than with his life experiences.
 - (E) dissatisfaction with a picture that cannot accurately predict or reflect his aging.
At this point, Dorian is not concerned with the fact that the picture cannot accurately reflect his physical body through the coming years. In fact, he laments that he cannot remain unchanged like the picture.
8. The main purpose of the passage introducing Dorian’s desire to trade places with the picture is to
- (A) **introduce the Faustian bargain.**
Dorian’s initial reaction to the painting and his exclamation that he would like to trade his fate with the portrait’s foreshadow the Faustian bargain Dorian enters into. Soon afterward, he offers to exchange his soul for eternal youth, thus, the portrait begins to reflect his corruption and aging instead of his body.
 - (B) show Dorian’s superficial nature.
Although Dorian is a superficial young man, the passage, more importantly, foreshadows his pact with the portrait, in which he gives away his soul.
 - (C) demonstrate how much he has been influenced by Lord Henry.
Although Dorian is becoming gradually more influenced by Lord Henry and Aestheticism, the passage primarily serves to introduce the upcoming Faustian bargain.
 - (D) foreshadow the changing relationship between Dorian and Basil.
Although the relationship between Dorian and Basil begins to change once the painting has been completed, the friendship between the two men does not disintegrate until later in the novel. The passage establishes a preview of Dorian’s Faustian pact and relates only marginally to his relationship with Basil.
 - (E) illustrate Wilde’s view of Aestheticism.
While this passage does demonstrate Wilde’s view of Aestheticism and the appreciation of art for its beauty, the author’s opinion has no bearing on what is occurring in the plot.

9. Dorian's tone when he discusses the painting can best be characterized as
- (A) shy and insecure.
The passage indicates that Dorian knows exactly what he wants: he is willing to do anything to escape the fate of aging. Dorian's exclamations further indicate that Dorian is not shy or insecure when speaking about the painting.
 - (B) careless and indifferent.
The opposite is true: Dorian has an immediate and passionate reaction to the painting. He is deeply affected by the beauty of the painting and the dark fate it forebodes.
 - (C) romantic and idealistic.
Dorian's reaction to the painting is marked by a stark sense of realism: he acknowledges the limitations of human life and earthly beauty. When he sees the painting and ponders the consequences of aging, he loses all sense of idealism and romanticism.
 - (D) **desperate and frantic.**
The painting leads Dorian to desire eternal youth and beauty. When Dorian realizes that he will inevitably age while the painting will stay the same, he becomes desperate.
 - (E) self-assured and confident.
Dorian is confident and sure that is willing to do anything to prevent aging. However, at this point in the novel, he believes that nothing can stop his body's deterioration. Consequently, Dorian loses his confidence, since his beauty, the source of his personal pride, is being threatened.
10. When Lord Henry tells Basil that this "is the real Dorian Gray," he implies that Dorian
- (A) is the most beautiful man he has ever seen.
Lord Henry's statement, "It is the real Dorian Gray," implies that something has been revealed about Dorian that destroys a false impression about his character. Dorian has always been perceived as beautiful, and this perception doesn't change.
 - (B) does not accept the fact that he can never be as beautiful as the portrait.
Dorian is as beautiful as the portrait. The portrait is almost a mirror image of him.
 - (C) has been overwhelmed by the long hours of sitting for Basil.
Nothing in this passage suggests that Dorian is overwhelmed.
 - (D) cannot hide his dislike of Basil any longer.
Dorian is hurt because he thinks Basil used him as inspiration for his art. However, it appears that this is an idea that comes to him when looking at his portrait. Dorian has not been hiding any resentment toward Basil.
 - (E) **is a narcissistic and insecure young man.**
Dorian is obsessed with his physical appearance, and he thinks his beauty is the only important quality he has. Once he begins aging and losing his beauty, he feels that he will be insignificant and worthless.

11. When Lord Henry states that he said Dorian “was engaged to be married” and claims that “there is a great difference” between being married and being engaged, he indicates that
- (A) couples lose romantic feelings for one another once they are married.
While that is what happened to Lord and Lady Henry, Lord Henry insinuates that Dorian might never actually get married. He believes Dorian wishes to merely revel in the joy of a passionate engagement and will break it once he loses interest.
 - (B) **Dorian is engaged, but that does not mean he will get married.**
Lord Henry believes Dorian might use his engagement to experience romance and infatuation. He is not convinced that Dorian will inevitably get married: he believes that a man of Dorian’s high social status has absolutely no obligation to honor his engagement to a lower class girl like Sibyl Vane.
 - (C) marriage should be taken more seriously than engagement.
Lord Henry takes neither engagement nor marriage seriously.
 - (D) a lower-class girl like Sibyl values a romantic engagement more than a marriage.
Lord Henry does not know whether or not Sibyl Vane is interested in a romantic engagement more than marriage itself. However, it is likely that he assumes that Sibyl is naïve and that she believes Dorian will honor his marriage promise. He indicates, however, that Dorian is likely to back out of the engagement once he grows tired of Sibyl.
 - (E) marriage will take the relationship between Sibyl and Dorian to a new level of intimacy.
Lord Henry does not know whether Dorian and Sibyl have already been intimate. He also does not view sexual intimacy as something that exists solely within the confines of marriage. Thus, he is not concerned with their intimacy and, instead, believes that the relationship will never actually result in marriage.
12. Lord Henry refuses to approve or disapprove of Dorian’s choice because he
- (A) wants to meet Sibyl before making up his mind.
He is not interested in meeting Sibyl as long as he knows that she is beautiful.
 - (B) trusts that Dorian made the right decision.
To “trust that Dorian made the right decision” would be an act of approval, so this answer cannot logically be correct.
 - (C) wants Dorian to learn from his own mistakes.
Lord Henry is not interested in learning from mistakes. He views Dorian’s engagement as an interesting study.
 - (D) **believes that people should not pass moral judgment on others.**
In the spirit of Aestheticism, Lord Henry does not believe that any human being should pass judgment on another.
 - (E) wants to hear what Basil has to say first.
Lord Henry does not care about Basil’s opinion in the least.

13. According to Lord Henry, the reason for human beings' optimism and praise of others is driven by
- (A) a sincere desire to promote social goodwill.
Lord Henry does not believe in genuine goodwill. It is his opinion that all good deeds, including the praising of others, are driven by selfish motives.
 - (B) human beings' optimism of a better future.
Lord Henry does not suggest that people are inherently optimistic or pessimistic. They act according to their own selfish needs and desires.
 - (C) the upper-class's acknowledgement of its privilege and its desire to promote the less fortunate.
Lord Henry believes that all acts are driven by self-interest; therefore, he would believe that the upper-class praises others, not to grant the less fortunate the opportunity to rise in status or society's opinion, but to delude itself into thinking that the lower-classes have no ill-will toward the aristocracy.
 - (D) **an individual's fear that his or her own interests will some day suffer.**
Lord Henry believes that "sheer terror" motivates human beings to praise others. People delude themselves into thinking that other people have good intentions, and they hope that the less fortunate will not rise against them. They also praise others to conceal their own dishonest and immoral acts.
 - (E) an eager wish to find "good virtues" in other people.
Lord Henry cynically argues that human beings only want to see virtues in others because they selfishly hope that others' good will eventually benefit themselves.
14. Lord Henry's tone when he discusses Dorian's engagement can be characterized as
- (A) serious and concerned.
Lord Henry's tone always appears serious, but it contains sarcastic undertones. He shows no honest concern for Dorian's future.
 - (B) **humorous and lighthearted.**
Lord Henry does not take the matter of marriage seriously. He uses humor and sarcasm to comment on Dorian's plans.
 - (C) fearful and anxious.
Lord Henry is never truly anxious or fearful, and, even so, he would have no reason to be fearful or anxious about Dorian's marriage. His remarks about Dorian's marriage plans are lighthearted and carefree.
 - (D) disgusted and disappointed.
Lord Henry is not disappointed to hear about Dorian's plans. In fact, he considers Dorian's engagement as a new opportunity to observe him as if he were a human experiment.
 - (E) supportive and warm.
While he supports Dorian's decision, Lord Henry's tone is always detached and never warm. He wants to observe Dorian for his own amusement.

15. Basil is annoyed with Dorian primarily because Dorian
- (A) did not inform him of his engagement.
Basil does feel left out when he realizes that Dorian told Lord Henry about his engagement, but did not inform him; however, this is not the best answer.
 - (B) is late for dinner.
It is Lord Henry who chastises Dorian for being late for dinner.
 - (C) has not yet introduced him to Sybil.
Basil is upset primarily because Dorian did not trust him enough to confide in him and share the news about his engagement before dinner. Nothing in the text hints that he is disappointed that he has not been introduced to Sybil.
 - (D) **is making an unwise decision.**
Basil comments that he thinks Dorian's engagement to Sybil isn't sensible. Not only is Dorian's decision rash, but Dorian is marrying someone inferior to him in social status.
 - (E) does not intend to marry Sibyl.
Basil does believe that Dorian intends to marry Sibyl; Lord Henry has his doubts.
16. Dorian is able to maintain a good reputation despite rumors about his transgressive lifestyle because
- (A) **he continues to be flawlessly beautiful.**
People simply refuse to believe that a man with a beautiful face can commit evil deeds.
 - (B) people have no evidence to prove that Dorian is living a life of shame.
There are a number of rumors, and evidence could probably be found. Nobody looks for evidence, because everybody trusts Dorian due to his beautiful face.
 - (C) Dorian is protected by his wealth.
Dorian is rich, but it is his beautiful face that saves his reputation.
 - (D) Lord Henry and Basil defend his reputation.
Neither Lord Henry nor Basil gets involved in Dorian's affairs.
 - (E) Dorian does many public good deeds.
Dorian does not do good deeds beyond throwing lavish parties for the rich.
17. Dorian's reaction to seeing the changes in his portrait can be characterized as
- (A) content and joyful.
Dorian does experience a sense of excitement when he sees the portrait, but it is not a joyful, peaceful contentment that overcomes him.
 - (B) solemn and reserved.
Dorian is too excited and intrigued to be solemn. He senses the possibility of boundless life within the portrait, not the possibility of serenity and calmness.
 - (C) shocked and disgusted.
The shock Dorian initially experienced when viewing the portrait has been replaced by curiosity and anticipation.
 - (D) **curious and intrigued.**
Dorian is curious about the secret of the portrait. He becomes fascinated with the changes and obsessed with comparing his own beautiful face to the image on the canvas.
 - (E) sad and frustrated.
The portrait actually alleviates Dorian's frustration because it holds the promise of a rich life and allows him to retain his physical beauty.

18. References to Dorian's stay at the tavern near the docks relate to the novel's motif of
- (A) interacting with the poor.
Dorian is not involved in charity.
 - (B) the high value of youth and beauty.
This passage does not relate to the value of youth and beauty.
 - (C) art for art's sake.
This passage does not relate to the value of art.
 - (D) gender relations.
This passage does not comment on gender relations.
 - (E) **leading a double life.**
Dorian often rents an apartment near the docks under a different name. He engages in illicit and shameful activities under the mantle of secrecy.
19. Dorian uses _____ as a metaphor to describe his curiosity about life.
- (A) **hunger**
Just like hunger grows stronger and stronger, Dorian's curiosity about life increases the more he learns about the vast possibilities of life.
 - (B) sex
The passage does not establish sex as an explicit metaphor.
 - (C) drugs
Although it is clear that Dorian uses drugs, the passage does not develop drugs as a metaphor for Dorian's curiosity and desires.
 - (D) being in a garden with Lord Henry
Dorian experiences his "hunger" for life whenever he meets with Lord Henry. Dorian's meetings with Lord Henry, however, do not serve as textual metaphors within the context of this passage.
 - (E) throwing a party for the upper classes
Throwing lavish parties is just one way for Dorian to explore his "hunger" for life, his curiosity.
20. Young men attending Dorian's parties consider him to be
- (A) an arrogant show-off.
Dorian is certainly arrogant, but the young men attending his parties do not view him that way.
 - (B) **an idol and fashion icon.**
Dorian becomes an icon of fashion within his circle of acquaintances. Young men model their outfits after Dorian's example and strive to be more like him.
 - (C) a dangerous man.
Dorian is certainly dangerous, but the young men attending his parties do not view him that way.
 - (D) a well-behaved gentleman.
Dorian is not a well-behaved gentleman.
 - (E) a protégé of Lord Henry.
Dorian can certainly be considered to be very similar in his tastes and habits to Lord Henry. The passage, however, clearly indicates that the young men at his parties idolize him and strive to emulate him.

21. Basil believes that the transformation of the portrait
- (A) **is the result of excessive worship.**
Basil believes that the transformation is the result of his worshipping Dorian too much, as well as the result of Dorian's own self-worship and vanity.
 - (B) is caused by mysterious powers.
Although the transformation of the portrait is mysterious, Basil immediately associates the changes with Dorian's narcissism and his own worship of Dorian.
 - (C) was manipulated by Dorian.
The thought that Dorian may have manipulated the portrait does not cross Basil's mind. The transformation of the portrait is very convincing.
 - (D) cannot be undone by repentance.
On the contrary, Basil proposes that Dorian repent and pray for the salvation of his soul.
 - (E) requires the consultation of a close friend.
Basil does not suggest that the secret needs to be shared with anyone. He simply wants Dorian to atone for his sins.
22. When he invites Dorian to kneel next to him, Basil's tone can best be characterized as
- (A) obedient and submissive.
Basil speaks to Dorian as an equal; he does not act obediently or submissively toward him. In order to convince Dorian to atone and repent, he needs to appeal to Dorian's reason, not to Dorian's mercy.
 - (B) insulted and irritated.
Basil's tone is neither insulted nor irritated. He is in shock and feels subdued by the awful transformation of the portrait. All he wants to do now is pray.
 - (C) proud and boastful.
On the contrary, Basil fears that his own pride and boastfulness have contributed to the transformation. He now sees that there is a power greater than he, and he must appeal to it to set things right again.
 - (D) hopeful and confident.
While Basil is hopeful that he and Dorian will be forgiven, he is not confident that prayer and atonement will help them.
 - (E) **repenting and pious.**
Basil believes that he and Dorian have committed a terrible sin, and he wants to kneel down and repent to gain forgiveness.

23. The narrator suggests that Dorian's "uncontrollable hatred for Basil Hallward"
- (A) stems from his secret frustration with his portrait.
At this point, Dorian is still fascinated with the changes in the portrait. He does not yet admit to his anxieties related to the transformation.
 - (B) **is somehow generated and encouraged by the portrait.**
The passage clearly indicates the influence the portrait is exerting over Dorian. It is controlling him and forcing him to hate Basil.
 - (C) is the reason for the portrait's transformation.
Dorian's debauchery and sins are what cause the portrait to transform. Dorian's hatred for Basil has nothing to do with the changes in the portrait.
 - (D) has been suppressed since the moment Dorian met Basil.
Dorian's hatred toward Basil developed over time.
 - (E) leaves Dorian sad and confused.
Dorian is not sad, nor confused. He is angry toward Basil and refuses to repent.
24. Wilde's use of the word "thing" when describing Basil's body indicates that
- (A) **Dorian has dehumanized Basil in his thoughts.**
Dorian is dehumanizing Basil in order to justify murder and avoid feelings of guilt.
 - (B) Dorian cannot face his own actions.
Dorian is dehumanizing Basil in order to justify murder and avoid feelings of guilt. He feels no conscious guilt about his crime.
 - (C) Basil was never a real friend to Dorian.
Basil has been a very good friend to Dorian.
 - (D) death has completely changed Basil's features.
Dorian is dehumanizing Basil in order to justify murder and avoid feelings of guilt.
 - (E) Dorian is shocked and ashamed.
Dorian does not feel shame, nor is he shocked. He is dehumanizing Basil in order to justify murder and avoid feelings of guilt.
25. Dorian's actions following the murder of Basil can be described as
- (A) frantic and desperate.
Surprisingly, Dorian feels "strangely calm" after killing Basil.
 - (B) **calm and composed.**
Dorian calmly considers the best way to hide Basil's belongings and create an alibi for himself.
 - (C) confused and irritated.
Dorian seems completely alert and aware of the crime he has committed.
 - (D) ashamed and regretful.
Dorian does not experience any sense of remorse.
 - (E) exhilarated and happy.
Dorian seems almost emotionless and composed after killing Basil; he does not feel exhilarated.

The Picture of Dorian Gray

Chapter I

1. Why does Lord Henry insist that Basil Hallward should exhibit his painting of Dorian Gray?

Lord Henry considers the portrait to be Basil's best work. He believes that the picture could set Basil above his contemporary painters and generate a great amount of publicity. According to Lord Henry, "there is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about" (Chapter I).

2. Why does Basil Hallward not want to put the portrait in an exhibition?

Basil believes that he has "put too much of [himself] into" the portrait. He feels as if his heart and soul have become part of the work, and people would learn too much about him by looking at the portrait.

3. How do Lord Henry's comments on marriage support the novel's motif of leading a double life?

Lord Henry explains that marriage makes a "life of deception absolutely necessary for both parties." He firmly believes that married couples are rarely in love, and one person usually stands in the other's way of seeking pleasure. In order to continue a life of pleasure after being married, the husband and wife must lead double lives and hide details about their secret interests, whereabouts, and activities from one another.

4. To what extent has Dorian Gray influenced Basil's art?

Dorian has not only enabled Basil to create his most perfect piece of artwork, but he has also helped Basil redefine his artistic style. Basil explains that Dorian has "suggested an entirely new manner in art, an entirely new mode and style." Dorian has helped Basil discover a way to portray the "harmony of soul and body" on the canvas.

5. What is Lord Henry's assessment of upper class involvement in philanthropy?

Lord Henry believes that the upper-class is very eager to talk about the importance of philanthropy and the necessity of helping the poor; however, the rich rarely engage in any charitable causes. They merely discuss the necessity of charity in order to make themselves look good among other people in fine society.

6. What does Basil's hesitation to introduce Lord Henry and Dorian to each other reveal about both Basil and Lord Henry?

Basil believes that Dorian is an innocent and impressionable young man. Basil has seen Lord Henry exert his influence over many people, and he fears that Lord Henry would be a negative influence on Dorian and ruin his innocent character. Basil's hesitation shows that he is an upright man who earnestly wants to shelter Dorian from the corruption of the fashionable world.

Chapter II

1. What is Lord Henry's opinion on the nature of influence?

Lord Henry believes that "there is no such thing as a good influence" because influencing a person means giving him or her a part of one's own soul. In effect, a person is no longer an individual, but is merely "an echo" of somebody else's ideas. Lord Henry explains that the ideal is for every person to create a unique, pure identity that has not been influenced by others.

2. To what extent does Lord Henry's discussion of society reflect Wilde's criticism of Victorian culture?

Lord Henry expresses his concern about the way Victorian culture forces human beings to suppress their impulses and desires. His opinions illustrate Wilde's belief that Victorian society places too much emphasis on superficial adherence to the social code. Proper behavior and the observance of social etiquette are expected at all times. Wilde believes that the oppressive, Victorian society ultimately harms human beings and forces them to lead double lives.

3. How does Lord Henry's assessment of the relationship between beauty and genius exemplify the principles of the Aesthetic movement?

Lord Henry praises beauty and youth above all other human qualities. Lord Henry even believes that beauty is the highest form of genius. It "needs no explanation" and can be recognized immediately. The Aesthetes, too, praised beauty as the highest virtue. They wanted to evaluate art based on its appeal instead of a moral lesson that might be conveyed.

4. Why is Dorian upset when Basil finally finishes the portrait?

Dorian is upset because the portrait reminds him that youth and beauty are only transient qualities, and they will gradually fade. The portrait will always depict Dorian's flawless beauty and youthful innocence, but Dorian, himself, will inevitably age and change. Dorian is shocked to face his own mortality, especially since Lord Henry has just taught him that there is nothing more important than youth.

5. How does Dorian enter into a Faustian Pact with the portrait?

When Dorian sees the flawless image of himself, he becomes distressed by the idea that he will grow old and ugly, while the portrait will remain unchanged. He expresses his desire to change places with the portrait: He wants to remain physically unaltered, while the portrait will reflect any changes caused by his age and experience. Dorian even offers to give his soul in exchange for eternal youth and, thus, unknowingly enters into a Faustian bargain with his portrait.

Chapter III

1. To what extent does Lord Henry exemplify the late-eighteenth-century image of the dandy?

Lord Henry is obsessed with fashion and actively seeks out luxury and leisure; however, he does not work, and he relies on the money of his elder relatives. He sleeps late almost every day, then, spends his evenings pursuing some sort of entertainment. Moreover, he dresses extravagantly and is dedicated to the pursuit of pleasure in every way.

2. What is ironic about Lord Henry's assertion that "Philanthropic people lose all sense of humanity"?

By definition, philanthropic works should be driven by a desire to be selfless and care for the rest of humanity. In Lord Henry's assessment, charitable people in Victorian England become so obsessed with the idea of charity that they forget about the well-being of their friends and family members. Lord Henry's statements indicate his belief that philanthropy is a fashion popular among people in upper-class Victorian England. People merely pretend to care about others because they want to bolster their good reputations.

3. What type of relationship with Dorian does Lord Henry want to create after learning of Dorian's heritage and past?

Lord Henry seeks to dominate Dorian. He understands the power of influence, and he knows that he can manipulate Dorian. Lord Henry understands that Dorian admires and idolizes him, so it will be easy for him to control Dorian and turn him into the person he wants him to be.

4. To what extent does Lord Henry's statement that he wants to write a novel "as lovely as a Persian carpet" symbolize the Aesthetic fascination with "art for art's sake"?

Aesthetes appreciated art for its beauty, without regard to the conventional laws of composition. Lord Henry wants to write a novel that is aesthetically beautiful. Plot and conventional laws of composition are not his major concerns.

Chapter IV

1. When Dorian talks to Lady Henry, what does Dorian learn about Lord Henry's marriage?

When Dorian meets Lord Henry's wife, he learns that the two rarely spend any time together, nor do they discuss the details of their lives with one another. In fact, they never attend the theater together, even if they want to see the same play. When she states that she learns all Lord Henry's views from his friends rather than from him, Lady Henry indicates that she does not know her husband well.

2. How do Lord Henry's comments about Sibyl Vane exemplify traditional late eighteenth-century notions about gender?

Lord Henry does not consider women to be equal to men. He believes that women are the "decorative sex" and designed only to be beautiful. He also argues that women do not have the same intellectual capacity as men. Lord Henry's prejudicial attitude toward women exemplifies traditional late-eighteenth century notions about gender.

3. In his expressed opinion of women, what comment does Lord Henry unintentionally make about Dorian's masculinity?

Lord Henry believes that women are the "decorative sex" and, like works of art, valued for only their beauty. Similarly, Dorian Gray is extremely beautiful, and not only is Dorian vain and superficial, but his acquaintances—Lord Henry included—admire his attractive appearance rather than his character. According to Lord Henry and the Victorian notions of gender, Dorian Gray is more effeminate than masculine.

4. Where did Dorian meet Sibyl Vane, and what does their meeting reveal about her social class?

Sibyl Vane is an actress. Dorian first saw her when she was performing in the role of Juliet. Like many actresses in the eighteenth-century, Sibyl comes from a poor, lower-class family.

5. What is Lord Henry's assessment of Dorian's infatuation with Sibyl Vane?

Lord Henry believes that it will be fascinating to watch Dorian go through the stages of infatuation. Lord Henry wants to study Dorian and how he responds to different situations he encounters. Furthermore, Lord Henry is amused that Dorian has already fallen under his influence and is now acting and making decisions based on what he has learned from Lord Henry. Lord Henry views Dorian not as a friend or acquaintance, but as a human experiment.

Chapter V

1. How does the setting of the novel change at the onset of Chapter V?

At the onset of Chapter V, the setting of the novel shifts from the homes of the affluent members of middle-class London society to the humble home of Sibyl Vane, her mother, and her brother. Chapter V is the only chapter that takes place entirely outside of the homes of privileged society.

2. What figurative language does Wilde employ in the sentence “the joy of a caged bird was in her voice,” and how does this use of figurative language help characterize Sibyl?

The sentence employs a metaphor to reveal crucial information about Sibyl Vane: she is a young woman trapped in a low-class lifestyle. Her voice is her best attribute, and she uses it to express her feelings of entrapment. Still, Sibyl is young and has not lost all hope for a better future. Her encounter with “Prince Charming” revives her hopes of one day moving up in society.

3. Why does James Vane plan to go to Australia?

James is going to Australia for economic reasons. He hopes he will be able to gain wealth in Australia and share it with his family in England. In the eighteenth century, many poor English families sent family members to the British Colonies in the hope of finding greater economic opportunities and a better life.

4. What are Sibyl's mother's hopes in regard to “Prince Charming”?

Sibyl's mother hopes that Dorian—known to Sibyl only as “Prince Charming”—is a member of the Aristocracy and will enter into an alliance with her daughter. She hopes that Sibyl will benefit from associating with a rich man.

5. What do the hopes of Sibyl's mother reveal about her character?

Sibyl's mother is a woman who clearly loves her daughter and wants only the best for her; yet, Mrs. Vane is naïve in thinking that a rich, upper-class man like Dorian Gray has honorable intentions with regard to her daughter. It would be more realistic for Mrs. Vane to assume that Dorian is merely interested in seducing her daughter but has no plans of marrying her or providing for her.

6. What effect is achieved by the personification employed in the sentence “he could hear the droning voice devouring each minute that was left to him”?

The personification dramatizes the short time James Vane has left before he must embark to Australia. James fears that his sister is in danger and will fall victim to “Prince Charming.” The personification shows his helplessness in the situation.

7. What is James Vane's prophetic promise in regard to "Prince Charming"?

James Vane does not trust Prince Charming. He is afraid that Prince Charming will ruin and abuse his sister Sibyl. James believes that Sibyl is naïve and should not associate with Dorian, and he vows to kill Dorian should he ever do anything to hurt his sister.

8. What does James find out about his father, and how does his discovery affect his assessment of Sibyl's relationship with "Prince Charming"?

On the day before his departure for Australia, James pressures his mother to tell him the truth about his father, and he asks her whether they were, in fact, married. James learns that his parents were never married and that his father was married to another woman. James's mother claims that she was aware that his father had another family, but they loved each other anyway. James fears that Sibyl will make the same mistake her mother made. He is afraid that his sister will be deceived by Prince Charming and that he will ruin her.

Chapter VI

1. What does Lord Henry mean when he states that being married and being engaged are two entirely different things?

Lord Henry believes that Dorian is infatuated with Sibyl Vane, but will not marry her. He firmly believes that Dorian's obsession with the girl is fleeting and that his passions will cool. In addition, Lord Henry does not take engagements and promises of marriage very seriously. He believes that a rich man is free to make all kinds of promises to a young, lower-class girl, but is not obligated to keep them.

2. Why is Basil concerned when he first hears about Dorian's engagement?

Basil fears that an engagement and subsequent marriage to a girl from a low social class will jeopardize Dorian's reputation. He believes that Dorian will not be able to interact with high society any longer if he breaks the rules of social decorum and marries a girl from the working classes.

3. What does Lord Henry reveal about his attitude toward women when he discusses Dorian's engagement with Dorian and Basil?

Lord Henry believes that Dorian expressed his love to Sibyl and was subsequently forced into believing that he proposed to her. Lord Henry believes that women manipulate men into marrying them by assuming that marriage has been discussed and agreed upon when a man has merely declared his love.

Chapter VII

1. How does Sibyl's performance affect Dorian, Lord Henry, and Basil?

When Sibyl first walks onto the stage, all three men agree that she looks beautiful. However, they soon discover that she is a terrible actress. Sibyl speaks her lines without real emotion and does not have any genuine talent. Lord Henry tells Dorian that it doesn't matter whether she can act as long as she is beautiful, but Dorian is entirely distraught. He does not understand how Sibyl's acting changed so drastically from one day to the next. He apologizes to Lord Henry and Basil, asks them to leave him alone, and begins to cry.

2. What is Sibyl's explanation for acting so badly?

Sibyl explains that meeting Dorian has changed her entire outlook on life and acting. Before she knew Dorian, acting and art were central to her life. Now, it is trivial because her personal life is much more important. Instead of "mimicking" the passions of love on stage, she wants to experience them in her own life.

3. What is Dorian's reaction to Sibyl's explanation for her bad acting?

Dorian immediately loses his interest in Sibyl. He tells her that he loved her for her brilliant acting, her beauty, and intellect, but she now is only a "third-rate actress with a pretty face" to him. Dorian cannot bear to look at her, and he tells her that he will never see her again.

4. What change does Dorian notice about his portrait when he returns home?

Dorian notices that the features of his portrait have changed slightly. He believes that his features in the portrait display a sense of cruelty.

5. How does the word choice Wilde uses to describe Dorian's reaction to the portrait exemplify the themes of the novel?

Wilde employs contrasts in phrases such as "beautiful marred face" and "fleck and wreck its fairness" to illustrate the duality of Dorian's psyche, the struggle between Dorian's passion and his reason: On one hand, he wants to live life to the fullest and never miss out on a moment's pleasure, but, on the other, he wants to act morally and in a way Victorian society would approve. Ultimately, Dorian gives in to the tempting potential associated with the portrait and no longer considers the "cruel smile" to be a negative thing.

6. How does the change Dorian perceives in the portrait affect his attitude toward Lord Henry?

Dorian fears that the “pact” he entered into with the portrait has, in fact, become a reality. He will stay physically unchanged, while the portrait will display his flaws, his age, and his sins. At first, Dorian is concerned about the consequences of the pact, but he soon resolves to lead a more virtuous life and prevent the portrait from changing further. He vows to distance himself from Lord Henry, knowing that Lord Henry has had a powerful influence on him and has driven him into a life marked only by pleasure. Dorian decides to make amends to Sibyl Vane and marry her.

Chapter VIII

1. Why is it psychologically necessary for Dorian to write a long letter of apology to Sibyl Vane?

Dorian has made up his mind to ask for Sibyl's forgiveness and marry her. He writes a long letter, telling her how sorry he is for his unkind behavior on the previous night. For Dorian, writing the letter is a therapeutic activity. It offers him the opportunity to confess all his sins to himself and make atonement. To Dorian, Sibyl's answer is only secondary. After writing the letter, “he felt that he had been forgiven.”

2. What news does Lord Henry reveal when he visits Dorian?

Dorian learns from Lord Henry that Sibyl has died. She was so distraught over Dorian's rejection of her that she poisoned herself and committed suicide.

3. Why does Dorian call Sibyl's suicide “selfish”?

Dorian calls Sibyl's suicide selfish in order to blame Sibyl for her death rather than himself. While he knows that he drove Sibyl to suicide, he refuses to accept responsibility and, instead, convinces himself that Sibyl's suicide was driven by selfish motives. Dorian shuts himself off emotionally from Sibyl's death in order to avoid taking responsibility for his actions.

4. How does Lord Henry help Dorian come to terms with Sibyl's death?

Lord Henry explains to Dorian that he only loved Sibyl as an actress on stage, as a woman portraying various tragic roles. He convinces Dorian to view Sibyl's death as just another tragic scene from a play. Dorian is able to make peace with Sibyl's death once he understands that she was merely a character to him, not an actual person.

5. What is the intended effect of the rhetorical questions toward the end of the chapter?

The rhetorical questions serve to show the reader how Dorian is justifying his behavior and his lack of remorse. When Dorian asks if his choice had already been made, he denies responsibility for his actions and allows himself to submit to the temptation of the portrait and the lifestyle it can offer him.

Chapter IX

1. What prevents Basil from believing that Dorian attended the opera, and what does his disbelief reveal about Basil's character?

Basil believes that Dorian must have been too shocked and distraught following Sibyl's death to go to the theater. Instead, he believes that Dorian rushed to Sibyl's mother to comfort her following her daughter's death. In fact, however, Dorian forgot all about Sibyl and her family and attended the opera. Basil's disbelief shows that he wants to believe people have the best intentions. Basil knows that Dorian has fallen under the negative influence of Lord Henry, but he believes that Dorian is still a good person. He is shocked to find out that Dorian has completely come under Lord Henry's influence and has become heartless.

2. Why does Dorian demand to know Basil's reason for being reluctant to exhibit his portrait?

Dorian wants to learn the secret behind the changing features of the portrait. He still has lingering doubts that the portrait displays the sins and flaws within his soul. Dorian also hopes to discover whether Basil is aware of the picture's strange nature.

3. What was Basil's true reason for not wanting to display the picture?

As Basil explained to Lord Henry earlier in the novel, when Basil completed the portrait, he felt that too much of himself was invested in the picture. He felt as if his own soul had been portrayed in the portrait. Basil feared that everyone seeing the portrait would immediately know how much he adores Dorian, and he did not want his feelings about Dorian to be publicly known.

Chapter X

1. What does Dorian's decision not to "allow" Basil to save him help characterize Dorian?

Dorian is a rational and perceptive person. He knows that Basil truly cares about him, and he understands that talking to Basil and confessing the secret of the portrait to him might be the only way to save his soul and redeem himself. More specifically, Dorian knows that Basil is a kind, good-hearted person, who could help him avoid the negative influence of Lord Henry. Despite this, Dorian also knows himself very well: he knows that his passion for life and for beauty is too great to be restrained by Victorian morals. He ultimately comes to understand that he will never be able to resist his impulses, and he does not truly want to resist his desires. He is too curious about life and does not want to become a better person.

2. What does Dorian resolve to do with the painting?

Dorian decides to hide the painting from public view. He asks an art dealer to help him move the painting to an unused room in his attic. Dorian knows that the picture will inevitably age and show the consequences of his shameful behavior, and he vows never to allow anybody to see the portrait again.

Chapter XI

1. How is Dorian able to retain a good reputation even though rumors about his deplorable lifestyle are beginning to emerge in fine society?

Dorian's unaltered, flawlessly beautiful features allow him to preserve his good reputation. Whenever people hear rumors about Dorian's immoral lifestyle, they dismiss these rumors immediately when they see him face to face. Anyone who sees Dorian's innocent, pure face refuses to believe that he can act in any way that is not respectable.

2. How does Dorian's relationship with his portrait evolve over time?

While Dorian was initially disgusted by the portrait, he gradually becomes fascinated with the changes taking place within it. He visits the attic frequently and compares his unchanged, beautiful features with the degenerating image on the canvas. Dorian mocks "the misshapen body and the failing limbs" he sees in the picture and becomes more and more obsessed with his beauty and physical perfection.

3. What effect does Dorian's presence in society have on young men and women?

In public, Dorian becomes the quintessential dandy: he gives parties, decorates his home extravagantly, and dresses with great attention to detail. The young men just entering fine society view him as an idol and copy his style. In secrecy, Dorian is ruining the lives of many young men and women by seducing them and tempting them into an immoral lifestyle.

4. How do Dorian's lifestyle and his ideals reflect the principles of Hedonism?

Dorian is committed to the Hedonistic lifestyle and deliberately pursues a life of pleasure. He vows "never to accept any theory or system that would involve the sacrifice of any mode of passionate experience." Immediate gratification and pleasure are, to Dorian, the goal of all his pursuits.

5. How does Dorian's paranoia in regard to the portrait first emerge?

Although Dorian has been living a life of pleasure and luxury for years, the portrait in his attic still haunts him. He slowly develops a sense of paranoia, fearing that somebody might enter the attic and see the changed portrait. Dorian secures the door to the attic with bars, but he still fears that somebody might gain access to the painting. Even when he is away from home, he returns frequently to check on the portrait and ensure that nobody broke into the attic.

Chapter XII

1. Why does Basil hesitate to believe the worst rumors he has been hearing about Dorian? How does this show that Basil is an Aesthete?

Basil believes that “Sin is a thing that writes itself across a man’s face. It cannot be concealed.” Since Dorian’s face has not changed for many years, and he still retains the beauty of his youth, Basil is convinced that the worst rumors cannot be true.

Since Basil is an Aesthete—and also an artist—he believes that art is created for art’s sake, and a work of art can be judged for only its beauty instead of its morality. Therefore, as long as a work of art is beautiful, it is good. Since Dorian is still as attractive and seemingly pure as he was when the portrait was first created, Basil believes that Dorian is still innocent and could not have committed the deeds others accuse him of.

2. What is Dorian referring to when he tells Basil about the “diary of his life”?

Unbeknownst to Basil, Dorian is referring to his portrait. Since the portrait displays any flaw and any error in behavior, it functions as a record of all of Dorian’s deeds.

Chapter XIII

1. What does Dorian promise to show Basil as he takes him to his attic?

Dorian promises to show Basil his soul.

2. What is Basil’s reaction to seeing the portrait of Dorian?

Basil is shocked when he sees the altered portrait. He immediately assumes that the alteration is a result of idol worship. He believes that he, as an artist, worshipped Dorian too much, and, in addition to that, Dorian was too proud of his own appearance. Basil invites Dorian to join him in repenting his sins and asking for forgiveness.

3. What metaphor does Wilde use to describe the hatred Dorian feels toward Basil? Why?

Wilde uses the metaphor of a hunted animal to describe the way Dorian feels when pressured by Basil to repent and ask for forgiveness. The metaphor conveys Dorian’s emotional state and his desire to get revenge on Basil.

4. How does Wilde's diction and style convey Dorian's emotional state and his attitude toward Basil following the murder of the painter?

Wilde objectifies Basil, referring to him as a "thing" instead of a human being. By speaking of Basil as if he were an object, Wilde reveals what is going on in Dorian's psyche: By dehumanizing Basil, Dorian is able to dismiss any feelings of guilt connected with the murder. In addition, the steps Dorian takes to hide evidence of the murder are calculated. Wilde describes Dorian's actions using simple sentences and uncomplicated diction, evoking no pathos and suggesting to the reader that Dorian had no remorse for killing his friend.

Chapter XIV

1. How does Dorian's reaction when he awakens on the morning after the murder help characterize him?

When Dorian wakes up on the morning after the murder, he shudders when he remembers the events of the preceding night. However, Dorian does not feel regret or guilt after the recollection. Instead, he pities himself for having had to go through such a terrible ordeal. He thinks of the inconvenience and the suffering the murder has caused him and will cause him; he never feels guilty about what he had done. Dorian becomes a cold and unfeeling man. He is extremely self-centered, considering only his own well-being and neglecting to think beyond his own comfort.

2. How is Dorian able to persuade Alan Campbell to help him dispose of Basil's body?

Dorian has apparently known Alan Campbell for many years, and the two men were very close until they had an unfortunate falling out. Even though Alan was reluctant to help, Dorian eventually persuades him through blackmail.

3. To what extent does the relationship between Dorian and Alan Campbell highlight the theme of homosexuality?

The novel never explicitly reveals how Dorian plans to blackmail Campbell, but Dorian threatens to send a letter revealing some secret if Campbell refuses to help him get rid of Basil's body. Furthermore, earlier in the text, Dorian's reputation is tarnished by rumors of homosexual relationships with other men. Wilde does not directly state that Campbell is one of the young men who was seduced by Dorian, but the reader can assume that the Dorian and Campbell were once involved in a homosexual relationship. The threat of revealing his homosexual encounters with Campbell gives Dorian the power to blackmail his former friend.

Chapter XV

1. Why is Dorian not at ease during the evening at Lady Narborough's?

While Dorian is initially able to act normally and greet everyone at the party calmly, when Lord Henry begins questioning him about his whereabouts on the previous evening, he becomes uneasy. Dorian is afraid that Lord Henry suspects that something is wrong or that Dorian has committed a crime. Dorian's paranoia intensifies when he remembers that he never disposed of Basil's bag and clothes.

2. What is the significance of the Florentine cabinet? What does the diction in the description of the cabinet reveal about its contents?

When Dorian's eyes fall on a Florentine cabinet in his room, he looks at it "as though it held something that he longed for and yet almost loathed." The diction used to describe the cabinet suggests craving, longing, and addiction. When Dorian inspects his cabinet, he finds a box containing an odorous, green, waxy paste. The description of cabinet and the contents of the box offer the first indication that Dorian is an opium addict. It is likely that, at the end of the chapter, Dorian is hiring a carriage to take him to an opium den in a distant part of town.

Chapter XVI

1. To what extent does Basil's death drive Dorian deeper into the world of illicit drugs?

Following Basil's death, Dorian is having difficulty ridding himself of his feelings of guilt and remorse. He knows that he cannot be forgiven for the murder, but he hopes to forget about his crime by seeking refuge in the world of drugs. Following Basil's death, it becomes harder and harder for Dorian to deny that he has been leading a dreadful and sinful life. He is not able to face his actions, and, therefore, is "determined to forget, to stamp the thing out" through the use of opium.

2. How do the similes in the chapter illustrate the changes taking place in Dorian's life?

Phrases such as "they moved like monstrous marionettes" and "the moon hung low in the sky like a yellow skull" help illustrate the dark and gloomy world Dorian now inhabits. Instead of taking pleasure in entertainment and leisure, as he once did, Dorian is now overcome by suffering and addiction.

3. How is James Vane alerted to Dorian's presence at the Opium Den?

A woman in the Opium Den calls Dorian "Prince Charming." James Vane, sitting at a nearby table, immediately remembers that this was the name Dorian gave himself when he was romancing Sibyl Vane.

4. How is Dorian able to convince James Vane that he is not the man responsible for Sibyl Vane's death?

When James Vane threatens to kill Dorian, Dorian asks him how long ago his sister died. When James Vane tells him that his sister died eighteen years ago, Dorian calls attention to his youthfulness and is able to convince James that he is barely older than eighteen and could not have been involved in Sibyl's death.

Chapter XVII

1. How has Dorian's character changed in regard to the pursuit of pleasure?

In his younger years, Dorian was a faithful disciple of Lord Henry's hedonistic philosophy. He wanted only to get pleasure out of life, regardless of the cost. After ruining the lives of many young men and women, and eventually killing Basil Hallward, Dorian begins to feel that his actions are not entirely without consequences. He claims to have found pleasure "too often." Dorian is no longer able to escape his bad conscience. He begins to have doubts and questions whether his reckless pursuit of pleasure was worthwhile.

2. Why does Dorian faint in the garden during his party at Selby Royal?

While Dorian's guests believe that he fainted from exhaustion, in reality, Dorian fainted because he saw the face of James Vane outside the window.

Chapter XVIII

1. What are some factors that could have caused Dorian to change his attitude toward Hedonism?

Even though Wilde is ambiguous when it comes to explaining why Dorian, after all these years, is beginning to doubt the value of a Hedonistic lifestyle, there are several potential reasons why Dorian has changed his perspective. Dorian's sins are becoming so numerous that he is having trouble hiding them. He is constantly running into men and women whose lives he has ruined. Moreover, the murder of Basil Hallward weighs heavily on his conscience. Dorian's paranoia and the fear for his life also contribute to his change of heart. When Dorian encounters James Vane outside of the Opium Den, he barely escapes, but after spotting James in the garden of Selby Royal, Dorian becomes conscious of the fact that James is hunting him. The fear for his life is a significant factor contributing to Dorian's change of heart when it comes to the reckless pursuit of pleasure.

2. What effect is achieved by the personification in the phrase “horror seemed once more to lay its hand upon his heart”?

The personification reveals how horror is taking a hold of Dorian. He feels as if he is trapped and physically restrained by fear. The personification exemplifies Dorian's helplessness and the power fear and horror can have on a human being.

3. Why is Dorian able to cry with “joy” when he learns the identity of the victim of the hunting accident?

Dorian realizes that James Vane has accidentally been shot during a short hunting excursion. He cries with joy because he knows that he is safe once again. There is no more need for him to fear for his life, because the one person who could connect him to Sibyl Vane's death is gone.

Chapter XIX

1. What does Dorian do to prove to himself that he is a “reformed man”?

Dorian tells Lord Henry that he spent the day in a country inn where he met a beautiful, innocent girl. Instead of seducing her and robbing her of her virtue, Dorian left her untouched. He feels that this deed is his first step toward his reformation and redemption.

2. What sets Dorian apart from his “mentor,” Lord Henry, when they discuss the death of Basil Hallward? How does Wilde show the reader that Dorian is quite different from Lord Henry, even though both men seem to share the same interests and sentiments?

When Dorian and Lord Henry discuss the possibility of Basil Hallward having been murdered, Lord Henry very clearly indicates that he believes murder to be a despicable and evil act. Unlike Dorian, Lord Henry, although he, too, pursues pleasure and enjoys the good things in life, has not lost his sense of morality. He despises murder and declares that it is unforgiveable. Dorian, on the other hand, has completely eliminated the boundary between good and evil in his pursuit of pleasure. He does not recognize murder as an unacceptable act.

Chapter XX

1. What does Dorian hope to see when he looks at his portrait once again?

Dorian has vowed to change his ways and to become a good human being. He now understands that retaining his physical beauty is not worth the deterioration of his soul. Dorian hopes that his act of sparing the young peasant girl was his first step toward a new, improved life. When Dorian steps in front of his portrait once again, he hopes to see an improvement of his features in the picture. He hopes that his good deed will have had a positive impact on his image on the canvas. However, instead of seeing a less ugly image of himself, Dorian merely detects a sense of hypocrisy when he looks at the painting. He realizes that his attempts at bettering himself were driven by selfishness and vanity.

2. Does Dorian Gray intend to kill himself?

Dorian does not intend to kill himself. He wants to destroy the portrait in order to kill his bad conscience and destroy the visible reminder of his bad deeds. However, since the painting contains his soul, Dorian dies when he stabs the image.

The Picture of Dorian Gray

Chapter I

1. Why does Lord Henry insist that Basil Hallward should exhibit his painting of Dorian Gray?

2. Why does Basil Hallward not want to put the portrait in an exhibition?

3. How do Lord Henry's comments on marriage support the novel's motif of leading a double life?

4. To what extent has Dorian Gray influenced Basil's art?

5. What is Lord Henry's assessment of upper class involvement in philanthropy?

6. What does Basil's hesitation to introduce Lord Henry and Dorian to each other reveal about both Basil and Lord Henry?

Chapter II

1. What is Lord Henry's opinion on the nature of influence?

2. To what extent does Lord Henry's discussion of society reflect Wilde's criticism of Victorian culture?

3. How does Lord Henry's assessment of the relationship between beauty and genius exemplify the principles of the Aesthetic movement?

4. Why is Dorian upset when Basil finally finishes the portrait?

5. How does Dorian enter into a Faustian Pact with the portrait?

Chapter III

1. To what extent does Lord Henry exemplify the late-eighteenth-century image of the dandy?

2. What is ironic about Lord Henry's assertion that "Philanthropic people lose all sense of humanity"?

3. What type of relationship with Dorian does Lord Henry want to create after learning of Dorian's heritage and past?

4. To what extent does Lord Henry's statement that he wants to write a novel "as lovely as a Persian carpet" symbolize the Aesthetic fascination with "art for art's sake"?

Chapter IV

1. When Dorian talks to Lady Henry, what does Dorian learn about Lord Henry's marriage?

2. How do Lord Henry's comments about Sibyl Vane exemplify traditional late eighteenth-century notions about gender?

3. In his expressed opinion of women, what comment does Lord Henry unintentionally make about Dorian's masculinity?

4. Where did Dorian meet Sibyl Vane, and what does their meeting reveal about her social class?

5. What is Lord Henry's assessment of Dorian's infatuation with Sibyl Vane?

Chapter V

1. How does the setting of the novel change at the onset of Chapter V?

2. What figurative language does Wilde employ in the sentence “the joy of a caged bird was in her voice,” and how does this use of figurative language help characterize Sibyl?

3. Why does James Vane plan to go to Australia?

4. What are Sibyl's mother's hopes in regard to “Prince Charming”?

5. What do the hopes of Sibyl's mother reveal about her character?

6. What effect is achieved by the personification employed in the sentence "he could hear the droning voice devouring each minute that was left to him"?

7. What is James Vane's prophetic promise in regard to "Prince Charming"?

8. What does James find out about his father, and how does his discovery affect his assessment of Sibyl's relationship with "Prince Charming"?

Chapter VI

1. What does Lord Henry mean when he states that being married and being engaged are two entirely different things?

2. Why is Basil concerned when he first hears about Dorian's engagement?

3. What does Lord Henry reveal about his attitude toward women when he discusses Dorian's engagement with Dorian and Basil?

Chapter VII

1. How does Sibyl's performance affect Dorian, Lord Henry, and Basil?

2. What is Sibyl's explanation for acting so badly?

3. What is Dorian's reaction to Sibyl's explanation for her bad acting?

4. What change does Dorian notice about his portrait when he returns home?

5. How does the word choice Wilde uses to describe Dorian's reaction to the portrait exemplify the themes of the novel?

6. How does the change Dorian perceives in the portrait affect his attitude toward Lord Henry?

Chapter VIII

1. Why is it psychologically necessary for Dorian to write a long letter of apology to Sibyl Vane?

2. What news does Lord Henry reveal when he visits Dorian?

3. Why does Dorian call Sibyl's suicide "selfish"?

4. How does Lord Henry help Dorian come to terms with Sibyl's death?

5. What is the intended effect of the rhetorical questions toward the end of the chapter?

Chapter IX

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2. Does Dorian Gray intend to kill himself?

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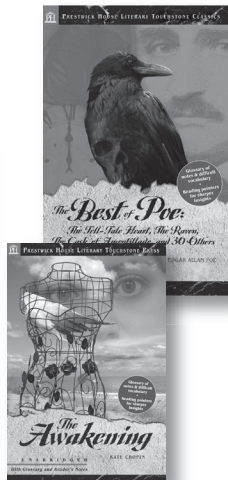
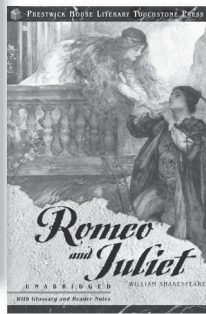
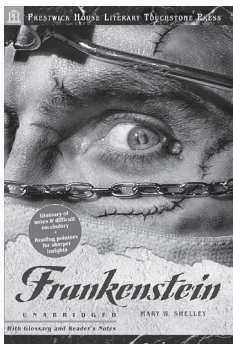
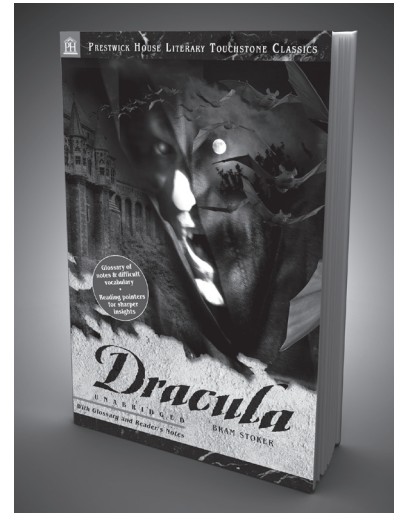
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