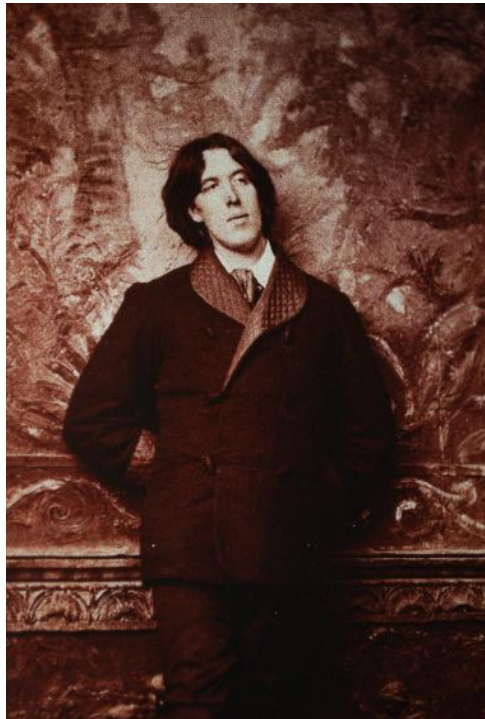


# Oscar Wilde

## a 19th Century Celebrity

**Pre-reading activity:** Oscar Wilde was a 19th century author who caused scandals, just like Michael Jackson and Britney Spears in the 21st century. What do they have in common?



Oscar Wilde

**Oscar Wilde** (1854 – 1900) was an Irish author, poet and playwright. By many he is considered the funniest man that has ever lived. This is maybe why he is one of the most quoted persons in the world. Above all, he worshipped beauty and he surrounded himself with objects that he considered beautiful. In his time he was what we today would term a celebrity.

His way of dressing and his long hair caused public anger, but also admiration, especially among rebellious youths. The moral

code in 19th century Ireland and its mother country, England with Queen Victoria on the throne, was very strict. However, his clothes and hair were not what caused most alarm. In 1895, he was sent to prison because of his sexual orientation and practice. Even though he was married and had two children, Wilde had open relationships with young men. When he was released in 1897, he decided never to go back to Britain again, and he died penniless in a cheap hotel in Paris only three years later. However, for generations to come he left behind a great legacy. If you visit [Oscar Wilde fanpop](#), you will see that he still has fans all over the world. Among his most important work is his only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, his fairy tales *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* and numerous quotations. Below you can enjoy some of the quotations.

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## Comprehension Questions

Answer the multiple choice questions on the right.

## Presentation

Pick at least five quotations that you like and make a digital presentation of them, you may add music and pictures. For inspiration, check out [Oscar Wilde fanpop](#)

### Quotations

1. A little sincerity is a dangerous thing, and a great deal of it is fatal.
2. A man can be happy with any woman as long as he does not love her.
3. Always forgive your enemies; nothing annoys them so much.
4. Fashion is a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months.
5. I am not young enough to know everything

6. I think that God in creating Man somewhat overestimated his ability
7. If you want to tell people the truth, make them laugh, otherwise they'll kill you.
8. Morality, like art, means drawing a line someplace.
9. One should always play fairly when one has the winning cards
10. Patriotism is the virtue of the vicious.
11. The only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about.
12. There are only two kinds of people who are really fascinating: people who know absolutely everything, and people who know absolutely nothing.
13. We teach people how to remember, we never teach them how to grow.
14. Whenever people agree with me I always feel I must be wrong.
15. Only dull people are brilliant at breakfast.
16. I can resist anything but temptation.
17. Life is far too important a thing ever to talk seriously about

## Writing

Creative writing: use your favourite quotation as a point of departure and write a story where the quotation plays a part or is the moral of your story.

## Oral

1. Write down your favourite quotation on a slip of paper. Ask your classmates about their favourites and have them explain why they like this in particular.
2. Which - if any - quotation was most popular? Why, do you think this was most popular?
3. Why are quotations so popular? In which contexts can we use quotations?

4. Are there any present celebrities that remind you of Oscar Wilde? Why do you think he caused so much anger? What would it take to shock people today?



<http://www.fanpop.com/spots/oscar-wilde>