

DBE EXAMINATION: NSC / SCE ENGLISH HL PAPER 2
NOVEL: THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY - Oscar Wilde
English Home Language/P2
DBE/November 2018 NSC

QUESTION 7: THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY - CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT A

'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. We are both punished.' 5

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?" ' 10

'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?' 15

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.

[Chapter 13]

7.1 Place this extract in context. (3)

7.2 Refer to line 5: 'The prayer of your pride has been answered.'
Explain the meaning of Basil's statement in context. (3)

- 7.3 Refer to lines 2–4: 'Pray, Dorian, pray ... not into temptation.'
Using these lines as a starting point, discuss how they reflect the differences between Basil Hallward's and Lord Henry's attitude toward life. (3)
- 7.4 Refer to lines 9: 'It is too late, Basil'.
Comment on Dorian's assertion that it is 'too late' for him to repent. (3)
- 7.5 Refer to lines 15–16: 'suddenly an uncontrollable feeling of hatred for Basil Hallward came over him'.
In your view, is Dorian's 'hatred for Basil' justified? Motivate your response. (3)

AND

EXTRACT B

It was a lovely night, so warm that he threw his coat over his arm, and did not even put his silk scarf round his throat. As he strolled home, smoking his cigarette, two young men in evening dress passed him. He heard one of them whisper to the other, 'That is Dorian Gray.' He remembered how pleased he used to be when he was pointed out, or stared at, or talked about. He was tired of hearing his own name now. Half the charm of the little village where he had been so often lately was that no one knew who he was. He had often told the girl whom he had lured to love him that he was poor, and she had believed him. He had told her once that he was wicked, and she had laughed at him, and answered that wicked people were always very old and very ugly. What a laugh she had! – just like a thrush singing. And how pretty she had been in her cotton dresses and her large hats! She knew nothing, but she had everything that he had lost.

...

[He] began to think over some of the things that Lord Henry had said to him.

Was it really true that one could never change? He felt a wild longing for the unstained purity of his boyhood – his rose-white boyhood, as Lord Henry had once called it. He knew that he had tarnished himself, filled his mind with corruption, and given horror to his fancy; that he had been an evil influence to others, and had experienced a terrible joy in being so; and that, of the lives that had crossed his own, it had been the fairest and the most full of promise that he had brought to shame. But was it all irretrievable? Was there no hope for him?

[Chapter 20]

- 7.6 Refer to line 12: 'She knew nothing, but she had everything that he had lost.'
Explain how this line reflects Dorian's mood at this point in the novel. (3)
- 7.7 Refer to lines 8 -- 10: 'He had told ... and very ugly.'
Comment on whether Hetty's assertion in these lines reflects the general attitude of people in Victorian society. (3)
- 7.8 Refer to lines 14 -- 20: 'Was it really ... hope for him?'
Dorian's eventual ruin offers a warning about the dangers of following hedonistic lifestyle.
Using your knowledge of the novel as a whole, discuss the extent to which you agree with the above statement. (4)

[25]