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## The Picture of Dorain Gray

### Essay topics to be explored

1. 'The important thing in writing is the capacity to astonish. Not shock - shock is a worn-out word - but astonish' (Terry Southern). In what ways may The Picture of Dorian Gray astonish us?
2. 'Writing is nothing more than a guided dream' (Jorge Luis Borges). Explore the dreamlike, or nightmarish, quality of The Picture of Dorian Gray.
3. 'The most important thing in a work of art is that it should have a kind of focus' (Leo Tolstoy). What would you regard as the 'focus' of The Picture of Dorian Gray?
4. '[Good literature is that] in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour, are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language' (Jane Austen). How well does The Picture of Dorian Gray meet the criteria Jane Austen has established above?
5. 'A story must be exceptional enough to justify its telling' (Thomas Hardy). How far does the unusual nature of the story Oscar Wilde tells in The Picture of Dorian Gray explain the work's recognition as a literary classic?
6. 'All literature, however dark, has some light.' Discuss that suggestion, illustrating your argument by reference to two or more works of literary merit.\*\*