**COMMENT ON BASIL’S STUDIO**

Ex. 2

1. The text describes the furniture and objects in Basil’s studio with a lot of details: for example, in the room there are a sofa with Persian cushions (l. 5), silk curtains (l.9) and the portrait of Dorian. The furniture is exotic, beautiful and expensive (the curtains are made of silk) and it’s typical of the Aesthetes who like beautiful, original and expensive objects.
2. The room is connected to the outside by a big window and it’s surrounded by a big garden where are trees, flowers, bees and birds. So even if the studio is in London, the noises of the city are far away (they are compared to a distant organ in l. 15).
3. Basil (the painter) is watching the picture of Dorian that he has just finished. Lord Henry is lying on the sofa and he is smoking.
4. They are speaking about the picture, Lord Henry says that it’s Basil’s best work, but Basil doesn’t want to exhibit it because he says that he has put too much of himself into it (l. 38-39); he probably means that his feelings for Dorian are too strong and the picture would reveal them.

Ex. 3

Lord Henry’s dedicating to his pleasures, smoking and gossiping, comfortably lying on the sofa. He is a Lord, so he belongs to the upper class and he is also a Dandy. **Dandies** are rich and very elegant young people who only live for their pleasures, so they are very different from the respectable Victorian gentlemen because they don’t respect the Victorian values (morality, and so on), they are only interested in pleasure, art and beauty. They also like gossip (l. 19) and they don't care about respectability. In fact, in l. 35-36 Lord Henry uses a paradox to say that it's better when other people speak about you, even if they say bad things, than when nobody speaks about you. Therefore, for Lord Henry celebrity is more important than respectability. The characters of this novel don’t want to help the others or to improve the society, they are only interested in living their life in the best possible way, looking for pleasures, fun and entertainment.

This hedonistic approach is typical of the **AESTHETIC** **MOVEMENT** that starts in this period in England (Wilde is the main representative of Aestheticism). It is based on the idea that beauty and art are the most important values. The Aesthetic artists believe in "Art for Art's sake", so they don’t think that art should have a didactic purpose, they don’t want to teach the readers (differently from Dickens and from the other Victorian novelists). They want to live their lives as if they were works of art and they look for any kind of pleasures and sensations, both good and bad, to live their lives fully, without any moral limits.

Ex. 4

The first 20 lines are dedicated to the **description of the studio**. Wilde uses words related to the different senses, for ex. he uses words referring to:

* The hearing (the murmur of the bees in l. 12-13, the noises from London in l. 15),
* The touch (the light summer wind in l. 2),
* The eyes (the different flowers, the shadows of the birds in l. 9, the pallid jade-faced painters in l. 11)
* The smell (the perfume of the flowers, for ex. roses in l. 1, lilacs in l. 3 and thorns in l. 4).
* The taste (smoking in l. 5, honey-sweet in l. 7)

The atmosphere is sensuous (connected to all senses), fine, sophisticated and elegant. The flowers and the other objects are rare and exotic, there are references to distant countries (Japan in l. 10-11, Persia in l. 5) and precious things (silk in l.9, jade in l. 11).

Ex. 5

The beautiful and elegant setting is typical of Aestheticism; moreover, Lord Henry and Basil only speak about art and about Dorian’s extraordinary beauty, nothing else seems important for them. Lord Henry despises the vulgarity of the common people (l. 25) and he also seems to despise old people (l. 37-38)

**SETTING AND CHARACTERS:** The story takes place in London in the last period of the Victorian age (the novel was written in 1891). The main characters are artists (like Basil) or rich people who belong to the upper class (like Lord Henry and Dorian). They studied at important universities (Basil studied at Oxford, l. 30) and they don’t need to work because they are very rich, so they can dedicate themselves only to pleasures.