

# \* OSCAR WILDE

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**\* ‘We are all in the gutter,  
but some of us are looking  
at the stars.’**

# BIOGRAPHY

Oscar Wilde lived in the United Kingdom during the Victorian era; the period where Queen Victoria ruled. This time is often believed to be a period of strictly conservative family values and prudery. Whilst it was certainly true that the traditional nuclear family was celebrated and upheld there were many elements of the Victorian period which were dynamic and progressive.





Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie,  
on October 16, 1854.

Oscar's parents were both prominent figures in Irish society. His father, William Wilde, was an eye specialist who was knighted for his work. He believed that it was important that the city's poor should be able to access medical attention so he funded and opened a free eye and ear hospital.







Oscar's mother, Jane Francesca Elgee, first gained attention in 1846 when she began writing revolutionary poems under the pseudonym "Speranza" for a weekly Irish newspaper, *The Nation*. In 1848 the newspaper offices were raided and had to close.

Before his marriage William Wilde fathered three children who he continued to support after he married Jane Elgee.

Oscar's parents also had another, older, son William and a daughter Isola.

When she was ten Emily died from a sudden fever. Oscar was grief stricken and for the rest of his life he carried a lock of her hair sealed in a decorated envelope.



Oscar was an excellent student who excelled at school and at University.

He attended Trinity College in Dublin and in 1874 won a scholarship to Oxford University in England.



In 1884 Oscar married Constance Lloyd. Constance was also very well educated and outspoken.

Oscar and Constance had two sons: Cyril and Vyvyan. To support his family Oscar took on the role of editing of 'Women's World' for two years.





“The next six years were to become the most creative period of his life. He published two collections of children's stories, “The Happy Prince and Other Tales” (1888), and “The House of Pomegranates” (1892). His first and only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, was published in an American magazine in 1890 to a storm of critical protest. He expanded the story and had it published in book form the following year. Its implied homoerotic theme was considered very immoral by the Victorians and played a considerable part in his later legal trials. Oscar's first play, “*Lady Windermere's Fan*,” opened in February 1892. Its financial and critical success prompted him to continue to write for the theater. His subsequent plays included “*A Woman of No Importance*” (1893), “*An Ideal Husband*” (1895), and “*The Importance of Being Earnest*” (1895). These plays were all highly acclaimed and firmly established Oscar as a playwright.”

<http://www.cmgww.com/historic/wilde/bio3.htm>



“There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written.”

Plate from 'Salome'  
Aubrey Beardsley

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS

OXFORD ENGLISH DRAMA

OSCAR WILDE  
THE IMPORTANCE OF  
BEING EARNEST  
AND OTHER PLAYS







In 1891 Oscar met Lord Alfred Douglas also known as Bosie. Bosie and Oscar began a relationship that lasted for four years.

Bosie's father was the Marquis of Queensbury who took offence at his son's relationship and called Oscar a 'somdomnite' meaning sodomnite.

# THE QUEENSBERRY CASE

## FIGHT BETWEEN FATHER & SON



In 1885 Oscar sued the Marquis for libel as he had accused him of homosexuality. He later withdrew the charge.

However, based on the evidence presented to the court he was charged with gross indecency and found guilty. Oscar was sentenced to two years hard labour.



# CLOSING SCENE AT THE OLD BAILEY.

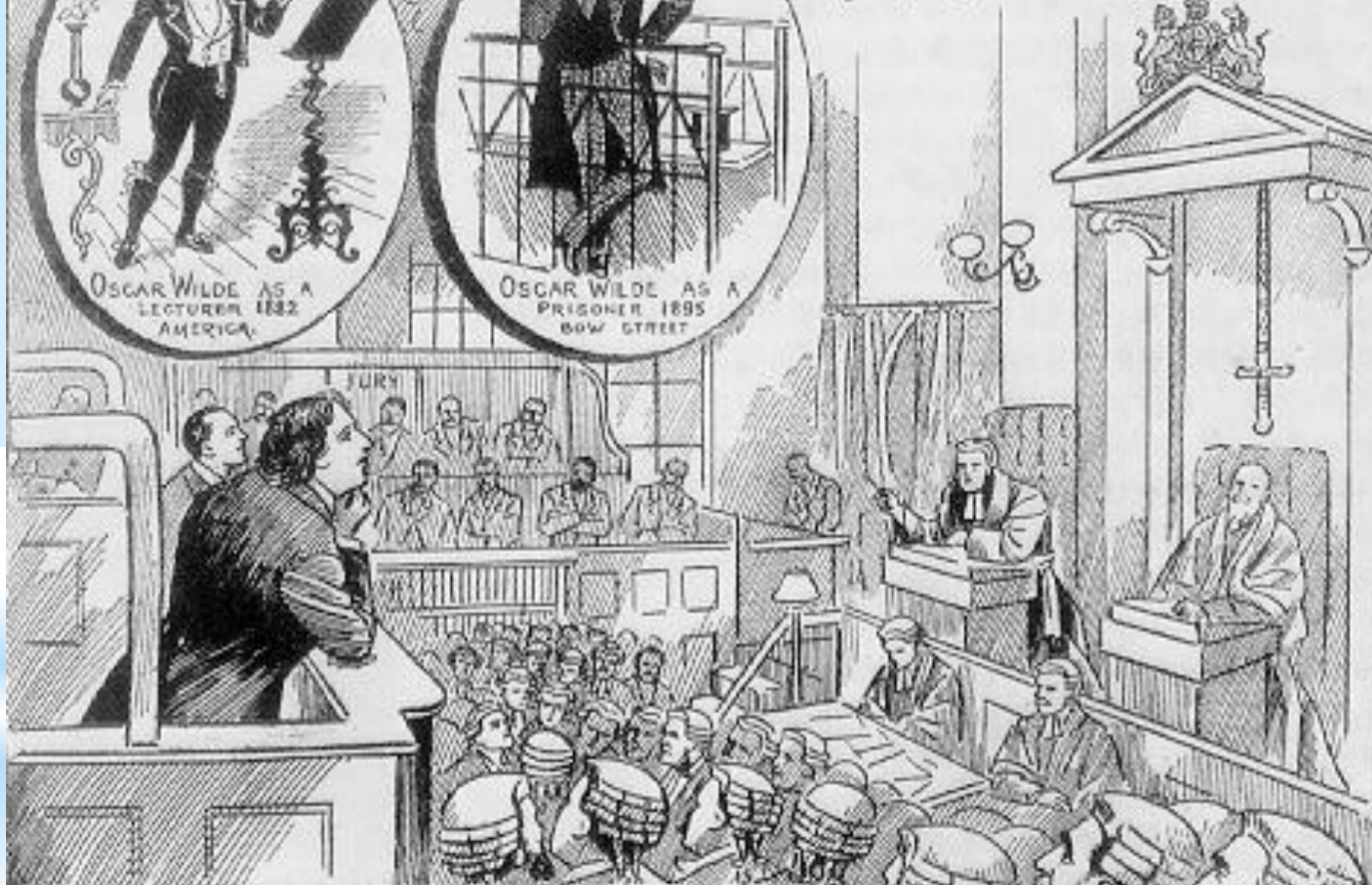
## TRIAL OF OSCAR WILDE



OSCAR WILDE AS A  
LECTURER 1882  
AMERICA



OSCAR WILDE AS A  
PRISONER 1895  
BOW STREET



## Poems

1. **Ravenna (1878)**, winner of the Newdigate Prize
2. **Poems (1881)**, Wilde's collection of poetry and first publication
3. **The Sphinx (1894)**
4. Poems in Prose (1894)
5. The Ballad of Reading Gaol (1898)

## Plays

1. Vera; or, The Nihilists (1880)
2. The Duchess of Padua (1883)
3. Lady Windermere's Fan (1892)
4. A Woman of No Importance (1893)
5. Salomé (French version) (1893, first performed in Paris 1896)
6. Salomé: A Tragedy in One Act: Translated from the French of Oscar Wilde by Lord Alfred Douglas, illustrated by Aubrey Beardsley (1894)
7. An Ideal Husband (1895) (text)
8. The Importance of Being Earnest (1895) (text)
9. La Sainte Courtisane and A Florentine Tragedy Fragmentary.  
First published 1908 in Methuen's Collected Works



# OSCAR



\* “One of the many lessons that one learns in prison is, that things are what they are and will be what they will be.”

The time that Oscar spent in jail was psychologically and physically demanding and his health was ruined.

Constance moved to Switzerland with the children after the trial and changed her name. She died in 1898.

In 1900 Wilde died of meningitis.



