**Activity 4: Micro-presentations on theme, symbol, and genre (45 minutes)**

For this activity, the students will be broken up into groups. They will be given 20 minutes to create a short 4 to 5-minute presentation on one of the terms below. It is important that they use specific examples from the text and answer the question as best as they can.

Group 1: Dandyism

The title of your mini-presentation: Dandyism in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Look at the term Dandyism below. What role does Dandyism place in the novel? Which characters are Dandies?

Group 2: The Aesthetic or Decadent Movement

The title of your mini-presentation: *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as part of the Aesthetic or Decadent Movement

Many academics have called *The Picture of Dorian Gray* a quintessential text from the Decadent or Aesthetic movement. Read the term below and present specific examples from the text that prove that this novel is an important part of the Aesthetic movement.

Group 3: Libertines and Sadists

The title of your mini-presentation: Libertines and Sadistic characters in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Many of the characters in the novel can be described as libertines or even sadists. Describe what those terms mean and present which characters are libertines or sadists using specific examples from the book.

Group 4: The Gothic genre

The title of your mini-presentation: *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as a Gothic novel

*The Picture of Dorian Gray* is often seen as part of the gothic genre. Read the term below and prepare a mini-presentation where you explain how this book is part of the Gothic genre. Use as many specific examples from the book.

Group 5: Bourgeois Morality

The title of your mini-presentation: The roll of bourgeois morality in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Many academics argue that *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is a rebuke of bourgeois morality. Read the term below and create a mini-presentation where you explain the role of bourgeois morality in the novel. Use as many specific examples from the text as possible.

Important terminology for the workshop

**Dandyism**: “The term “dandyism” refers to a British cultural movement of the late nineteenth century, within the Victorian era. It was a doctrine of elegance, finesse, and originality which was primarily concerned with language, sophisticated manners, and dress. An aphorism coined by the writer Gabriele D'Annunzio, one of the leading representatives of the Italian movement, perfectly sums up its essence: “living life as a work of art.” For that reason, “being dandy” became an expression not only of sophisticated dress, but of a proper lifestyle that expressed itself in every aspect of existence, such as attitude and personal tastes, and was superior from the point of view of social and cultural capital. This way of life was driven by a determination to stand out from the stereotype of the ordinary bourgeois man, and its aim was to rise above social conventions and the common way of thinking. In this sense, the dandy played a leading role in the society of its time, as an actor on a theater stage, shocking the audience with his eccentric and provocative style.” ([source: Michele Bonazzi](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781118989463.wbeccs090))

**The Aesthetic or Decadent Movement:** “Aestheticism and decadence shocked the Victorian establishment by challenging traditional values, foregrounding sensuality and promoting artistic, sexual and political experimentation.”… “Many Victorians passionately believed that literature and art fulfilled important ethical roles. Literature provided models of correct behavior: it allowed people to identify with situations in which good actions were rewarded, or it provoked tender emotions. At best, the sympathies stirred by art and literature would spur people to action in the real world. The supporters of aestheticism, however, disagreed, arguing that art had nothing to do with morality. Instead, art was primarily about the elevation of taste and the pure pursuit of beauty. More controversially, the aesthetes also saw these qualities as guiding principles for life. They argued that the arts should be judged on the basis of form rather than morality.” ([source: Carolyn Burdett](https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/aestheticism-and-decadence))

**Libertines and sadists:** A libertine is “a person, usually a man, who lives in a way that is not moral, having sexual relationships with many people.” ([source: Cambridge Dictionary](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/libertine)) and a sadist is “a person who gets pleasure, sometimes sexual, by being cruel to or hurting another person.” ([source: Cambridge Dictionary](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sadist))

**Gothic novel**: “The gothic novel is one of the oldest and most studied forms of 'genre' or 'formula fiction'. It got its start around the middle of the 18th century in Great-Britain and encompasses novels and stories that could be described as a mix of horror, mystery, adventure, psychological thriller and historical fiction.” ([source: Douglas Redant](https://owlcation.com/humanities/What-Is-a-Gothic-Novel-Explanation-History-and-Some-Examples))

**Bourgeois morality:** The Bourgeoisie is a term often used to refer to the Middle Class. Bourgeois morality is “marked by a concern for material interests and respectability and a tendency toward mediocrity” ([source: Merriam Webster Dictionary](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bourgeois)). According to Jerrold Seigel, “Few features of classic bourgeois life have been more remarked on and bewailed than its morality, often derided as rigid, puritanical, and hypocritical, especially in regard to sex.” ([source: Jerrold Seigel](https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/modernity-and-bourgeois-life/bourgeois-morals-from-victorianism-to-modern-sexuality/DCA5A48BA9F11D6048C0B273C06E18A7))