



Curriculum Guide 2011-2012

The Importance of Being Earnest



by Oscar Wilde

Sunshine State Standards

Language Arts

- LA.7-12.1.7.2
- LA.7-12.1.7.3
- LA.7-12.2.1.5
- LA.7-12.2.1.9
- LA.7-12.3.1.2
-

- LA.712.3.2.2
- LA.712.3.3.1
- LA.7-12.3.3.4
- LA.712.4.1.2

Theatre

- TH.912.0.1.4
- TH.912.C.1.5
- TH.912.C.2.2
- TH.912.C.2.8
-

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A Letter from the Director of Education

“All the world’s a stage,” William Shakespeare tells us “and all the men and women merely players.” I invite you and your class to join us on the world of **our** stage, where we not only rehearse and perform, but research, learn, teach, compare, contrast, analyze, critique, experiment, solve problems and work as a team to expand our horizons.



We’re “Shakin’ It Up” at Orlando Shakes, with new Lesson Plans designed to assist teachers with curriculum needs while sharing what is unique and magical about the Theater Arts. We’ve designed our Curriculum Guides with Sunshine State Standards in mind. You’ll find a first section which will help you prepare your students for the theatrical experience, a second section suggesting what to watch and listen for during the performance, and lastly, discussion questions and lesson plans to use when you are back in your classroom, to help your students connect what they’ve learned to their lives and your diverse and demanding curriculum.

I believe that as an Educator it is imperative that I continue learning as I teach and teaching as I learn. It is my sincere hope that you will find our Curriculum Guides helpful to you and eye opening for your students. Feel free to contact us at Orlando Shakes should you have any questions or suggestions on how we can better serve you. We are always learning from you.

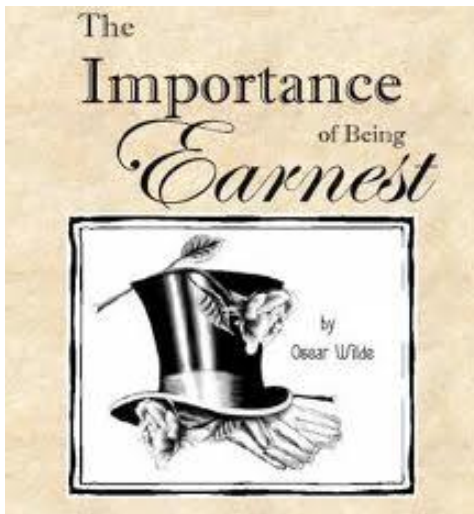
Thank you for the tremendous work you do each and every day in nurturing our audiences of tomorrow.

Curtain Up!!

Anne Hering
Director of Education

Pre-Performance

Read the Plot Summary



A synopsis

www.theatrehistory.com

JACK Worthing, who lives in the country, pretends to have a younger brother, Ernest, whose escapades frequently call Jack to London. Algernon Moncrieff pretends to have an invalid friend, "Bunbury," whose attacks call Algernon into the country whenever there is a distasteful social function in prospect. This activity Algernon refers to as "Bunburying."

Jack has managed to hide from Algernon the location of his country place and the existence of an attractive ward, Cecily Cardew. In Algernon's bachelor flat at the tea hour, Jack confesses he has come to town to propose to Algernon's cousin, Gwendolyn, who knows him as "Ernest." Algernon refuses his help unless Jack explains the inscription on his cigarette case which Algernon has

found. Thus Cecily's existence is revealed, but Jack stubbornly refuses to reveal her whereabouts.

Gwendolyn accepts Jack, confessing she has always felt that a man named "Ernest" was her fate. During a subsequent catechism by Gwendolyn's mother, Lady Bracknell, Jack gives his country address which Algernon takes down with the intention of going "Bunburying" during Jack's absence from home. When Lady Bracknell learns that Jack's identity dates from the discovery of a baby in a large black handbag in Victoria station she refuses to consent for the marriage.

Cecily, alone in the country with her governess, Miss Prism, is agreeably surprised at the appearance of Algernon in the guise of the much-discussed "Ernest." The young couple lose no time in becoming engaged for, Cecily admits, the name "Ernest" has always fascinated her. When Jack returns unexpectedly to announce "Ernest's" sudden death in Paris, he is disagreeably surprised to learn that "Ernest" is at the very moment in the house.

While Jack and Algernon are separately arranging with the rector for a rechristening, Gwendolyn arrives. The discovery of Gwendolyn and Cecily that they both seem to be engaged to "Ernest Worthing" results in a

strained situation. The appearance of both young men clarifies the matter of engagements, but also reveals that neither is named "Ernest." When the girls learn that their fiancés had been about to be rechristened for their sakes, they forgive the deception.

With the arrival of Lady Bracknell the question of consent again comes up. Lady Bracknell is quite willing that Algernon shall marry Cecily and her fortune. Jack, however, as Cecily's guardian, refuses his consent unless Lady Bracknell permits his marriage to Gwendolyn. The appearance of Miss Prism who is recognized by Lady Bracknell, results in the identification of Jack Worthing as Algernon's lost elder brother, Ernest, thus settling matters to everyone's satisfaction.

The Importance of Being Earnest was originally produced at the St. James Theater, London, on February 14, 1895.

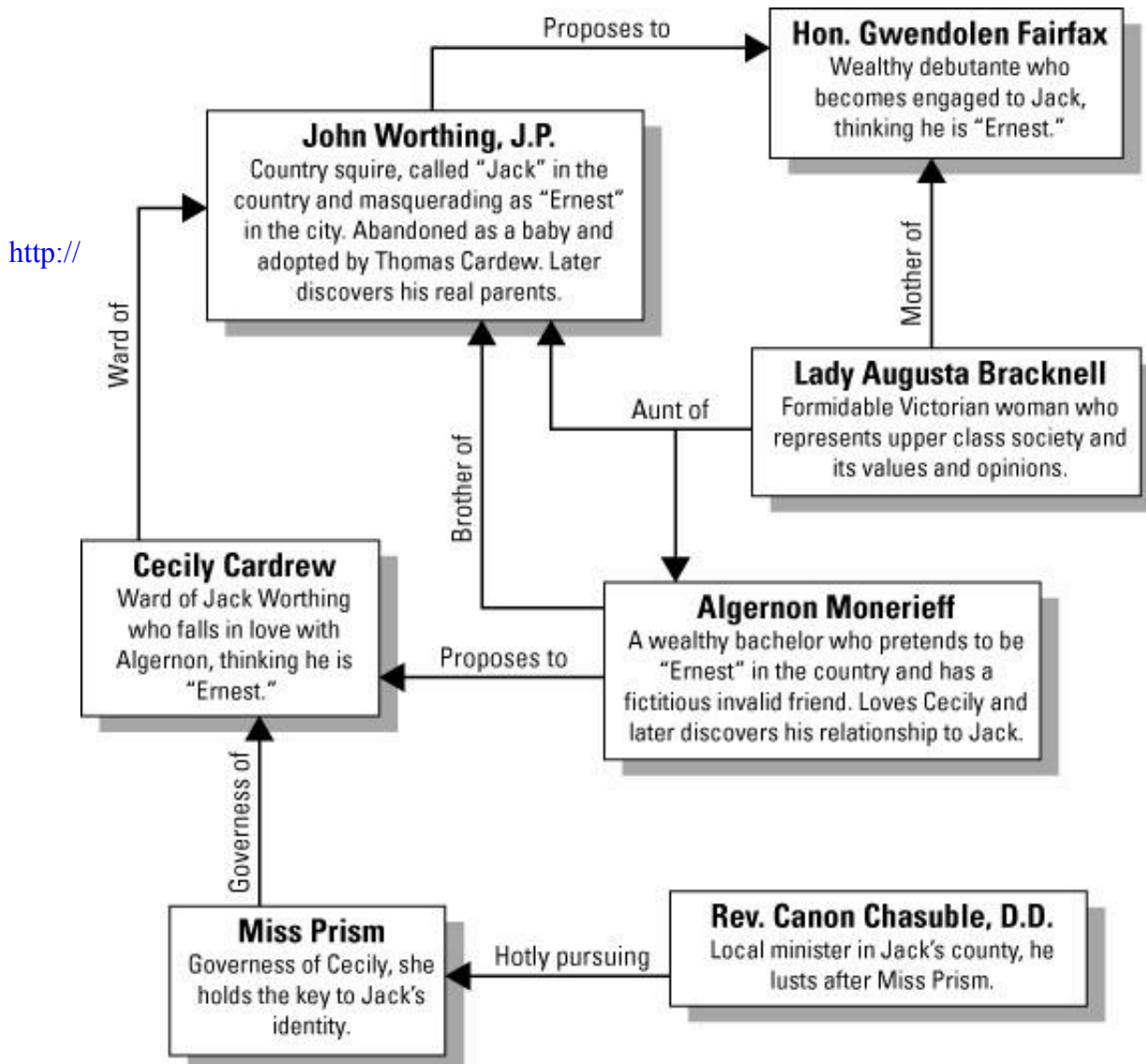


Pre-Performance

Meet the Characters

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

CHARACTER MAP



www.cliffsnotes.com/study_guide/literature/The-Importance-of-Being-Earnest-Character-Map.id-29,pageNum-44.html

Pre-Performance Research the Historical Context Society

For much of this century the term Victorian, which literally describes things and events (roughly) in the reign of Queen Victoria, conveyed connotations of "prudish," "repressed," and "old fashioned." Although such associations have some basis in fact, they do not adequately indicate the nature of this complex, paradoxical age that saw great expansion of wealth, power, and culture.



QUEEN VICTORIA

Queen Victoria was born on 24 May 1819. On 10th June 1837, following the death of her uncle, William IV, she became queen at the age of eighteen. She fell instantly in love with her German cousin, Prince Albert and they were married on 10 February 1840. Between 1841 and 1857 Queen Victoria had nine children - four sons, five daughters. Prince Albert was very interested in art, science and manufacturing and took a keen

interest in the building of the Crystal Palace. He died suddenly of typhoid in 1861. His widow was overcome with grief and wrote in her diary, "My life as a happy person is ended!" She wore black for the rest of her life. For a long time she refused to appear in public, which made her very unpopular.

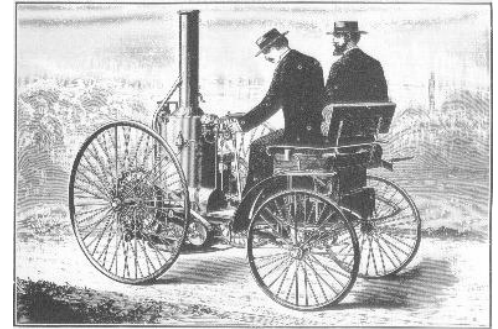
Queen Victoria died aged 80 on 22 January 1901 and a new age -



the Edwardian - began.

In science and technology, the Victorians invented the modern idea of invention -- the notion that one can create solutions to problems, that man can create new means of bettering himself and his environment. In religion, the Victorians experienced a great age of doubt, the first that called into question institutional Christianity on such a large scale. In literature and the other arts, the Victorians attempted to combine Romantic emphases upon self, emotion, and imagination with Neoclassical ones upon the public role of art and a corollary responsibility of the artist.

The Victorian Age was characterized by rapid change and developments in nearly every sphere -



from advances in medical, scientific and technological knowledge to changes in population growth and location. Over time, this rapid transformation deeply affected the country's mood: an age that began with a confidence and optimism leading to economic boom and prosperity eventually gave way to uncertainty and doubt regarding Britain's place in the world.

<http://www.english.uwosh.edu/roth/VictorianEngland.htm>



Pre-Performance

Research the Historical Context

Courtship

COURTSHIP

Courtship was considered more a career move than a romantic interlude for young men, as all of a woman's property reverted to him upon marriage. Therefore courting was taken very seriously--by both sides. Men and women were careful not to lead the other on unnecessarily. From the time she was young, a woman was groomed for this role in life--dutiful wife and mother. Properly trained, she learned to sing, play piano or guitar, dance and be conversant about light literature of the day. She also learned French and the rules of etiquette as well as the art of conversation and the art of silence.

COMING OUT-- THE COURTSHIP RITUAL

Coming out meant a young woman had completed her education and was officially available on the marriage mart. Financial or family circumstances might delay or move up a girl's debut, though typically, she came out when she was seventeen or eighteen. She purchased a new wardrobe for the season, in order to appear her best in public.

A girl was under her mother's wing for the first few years of her social life. She used her mother's visiting cards, or that of another female relative if her mother was dead. This same person usually served as her chaperone, as a single girl was never allowed out of the house by herself, especially in mixed company. Courtship advanced by gradations, with couples first speaking, then walking out together, and finally keeping company after mutual

attraction had been confirmed. But a gentleman had to take care in the early stages of courtship. If he was introduced to a lady at a party for the purpose for dancing, he could not automatically resume their acquaintance on the street. He had to be re-introduced by a mutual friend. And then, only upon permission of the lady.

The lower classes had opportunities to socialize at Sunday Service, Church suppers and holiday balls, while upper classes held their social events throughout the season. The season ran from April to July. Some families arrived in town earlier if Parliament was in session. A typical debutante's day meant she rose at 11 a.m. or 12 noon, ate breakfast in her dressing room, attended a concert or drove in the Park, dined at eight, went to the opera, then to three or four parties until 5 a.m.--all under the watchful eye of her chaperone. Great care had to be taken at these public affairs, so as not to offend a possible suitor or his family. Following are some rules of conduct a proper female must adhere to: She never approached people of higher rank, unless being introduced by a mutual friend.

People of lesser rank were always introduced to people of higher rank, and then only if the higher-ranking person had given his/her permission.

Even after being introduced, the person of higher rank did not have to maintain the acquaintance. They could ignore, or 'cut' the person of lower rank.



- A single woman never addressed a gentleman without an introduction.
- A single woman never walked out alone. Her chaperone had to be older and preferably married.
- If she had progressed to the stage of courtship in which she walked out with a gentleman, they always walked apart. A gentleman could offer his hand over rough spots, the only contact he was allowed with a woman who was not his fiancée.
- Proper women never rode alone in a closed carriage with a man who wasn't a relative.
- She would never call upon an unmarried gentleman at his place of residence.
- She couldn't receive a man at home if she was alone. Another family member had to be present in the room.
- A gentlewoman never looked back after anyone in the street, or turned to stare at others at church, the opera, etc.
- No impure conversations were held in front of single women.
- No sexual contact was allowed before marriage. Innocence was demanded by men from girls in his class, and most especially from his future wife.
- Intelligence was not encouraged, nor was any interest in politics.

Pre-Performance

Research the Historical Context

Courtship

NEGOTIATIONS

By the end of the season, many relationships had been cemented, with an eye to the future. Thus began the serious chase, with marriage the ultimate goal.

There was a camaraderie among upper class women. They advised, gossiped, told secrets and wrote passionate letters to each other. They were the chief arrangers of social affairs, but woe to anyone who made an enemy of them, as they could be ostracized forever from society. When a young girl was on good terms with these social select, she could expect help in making an advantageous match.

There were rules to follow even here, however. Until 1823, the legal age in England for marriage was 21 years--for men and women. After 1823, a male could marry as young as fourteen without parental consent, and a girl at 12. Most girls, however, married between the ages of 18 and 23, especially in the upper classes. It was also illegal to marry a deceased wife's sister. But you could marry first cousins. The attitude toward first-cousin marriages changed by the end of the century, however.

Marriage was encouraged only within one's class. To aspire higher, one was considered an upstart. To marry someone of lesser social standing was considered marrying beneath oneself.

In upper class marriages, the wife often brought with a generous dowry--an enticement for marriage. The financial aspects of a marriage were openly discussed, much like the

pre-nuptial agreements of today. Both parties disclosed their fortunes. A man had to prove his worth in keeping his wife in the level of life she was accustomed. A woman, often looking to improve her social standing, used a dowry as a lure. To protect an heiress, her family could set up an estate trust for her, which would be controlled by Chancery Court. The woman would have access to this property if she applied, but her husband could not touch it.

An unmarried woman of 21 could inherit and administer her own property. Even her father had no power over it. Once she married, however, all possessions reverted to her husband. She couldn't even make a will for her personal property, while a husband could will his wife's property to his illegitimate children. Therefore, marriage, although her aim in life, had to be very carefully contemplated.

Because many marriages were considered a business deal, few started with love. Although as the years passed, many couples grew tolerably fond of each other, often resulting in a bond almost as deep as love.

THE ENGAGEMENT

The bank accounts have been studied, the ancestral lineages inspected, and political connections explored. If both parties passed muster, the next step toward marriage was the engagement.

If it had not already been done, the man was introduced to girl's parents and her peer group. Permission for asking for the

daughter's hand in marriage had to be granted by bride's father, although the gentleman could wait until he had his bride's consent before asking.

A proposal was best made in person, with clear, distinct language, so the girl might not misunderstand the gentleman's intent. If he could not bring himself to propose in person, he could do so in writing. A girl did not have to accept her first proposal. She could play coy.

A short time was allowed to elapse before an engagement was announced, except to the most intimate friends/family of both parties. This was a precaution, lest the engagement be ended by either party. The mother hosted a dinner party once the engagement was announced. The purpose of this dinner was to introduce the fiancé to his bride's family. A more formal evening party may have followed. Once the groom had been introduced to bride's family, the bride was then introduced to his. This could be a very trying time for a young girl, as a mother-in-law's eye was often critical.

After the engagement was announced to the family, the bride wrote to the rest of her friends with the news. At the same time, her mother wrote to the elders of these families. Engagements lasted from six months to two years depending upon ages and circumstances.

The engagement was finalized with a ring. The size and stone depended upon the groom's finances. They could be in the form of a love knot, a simple band, or a band embedded with different stones whose

Pre-Performance

Research the Historical Context

Courtship

initials spelled out a name or word of love. For example, the Prince of Wales, Albert Edward, gave Princess Alexandra of Denmark a 'gypsy ring' with the stones Beryl, Emerald, Ruby, Turquoise, Iacynth and Emerald, to spell out his nickname, "Bertie." A woman could, in turn, give her fiancé a ring, although it was not required.

The couple could become a bit more intimate once they were engaged. They could stroll out alone, hold hands in public, and take unchaperoned rides. A hand around the waist, a chaste kiss, a pressing of the hand, were allowed. They could also visit alone behind closed doors. But they had to be dutifully separated by nightfall, or overnight at country parties. Thus, if the engagement was

broken, the girl suffered the consequences of a ruined reputation because of her previous behavior. An honorable man never broke an engagement, so as not to cause the girl discomfiture.

Unfortunately, some engagements did end, with resulting embarrassment and possibly even legal action should it be terminated by one party over the protest of the other. A "breach of promise" suit might result in one party paying for the other's damages, such as cost of a wedding gown and trousseau. This was one reason news of the betrothal was often kept from family and friends. It wasn't considered official, and therefore would not hold up in court. Women were even cautioned as

to what they wrote in letters and journals, should the case go that far. As callous as all this sounds, there was true romance and love during the Victorian era. Why else did samples of heart-rending verses and flowery cards last through the ages for us to ponder and dream over? Perhaps it was these very constraints and rules that made true love all the more special to those who found it. For lucky were the ones who found love within their class, and within the approval of their families. Yet even those marriages that did not begin with love, often ended in a deep, endearing attachment that would be envied by many.

<http://www.literary-liaisons.com/article009.html>

Glossary to *The Importance of Being Earnest*

("Words to the Wise" reprinted with permission from The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis Study Guide)

cucumber sandwich—This is one of many popular sandwiches intended to be served with tea. Recipes vary, but this will get you close: 8 oz. cream cheese, 1/2 cup mayo, 1 pkg. dry Italian salad dressing, 3 - 4 medium size cucumbers, 1 loaf of bread, any type. Mash mayo and cheese together. Mix in salad dressing. Peel and dice cucumber and add to mixture. Leaving the bread crust is optional. Spread mixture on bread and cut in fourths diagonally.



Shropshire—Shropshire is a county west of London known for its sheep. Turnbridge Wells—This is a city in Kent in southeast England.

Bunburyist—Although not a real word, Bunburyist became often-used throughout English speaking countries because of the popularity of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. It refers to Algernon's made-up friend Bunbury, whom he uses as an excuse to get out of social responsibilities.



Wagnerian manner—This phrase implies a loud, demonstrative nature, like the music of German composer Richard Wagner.

crumpet—Also called an English muffin, a crumpet is flat, round, piece of bread, baked on a griddle and usually served toasted.

expurgation—This term refers to the act of removing erroneous or vulgar material from something (such as a book) before it is exposed to the public.

purple of commerce—This is another phrase coined by Wilde. It implies money that comes through work or trade rather than from a privileged birth.

trivet—A trivet is a small, three legged table. Jack uses the term to imply that Gwendolyn is stable and agreeable.

Gorgon—In Greek mythology, the three sisters Stheno, Euryale and Medusa were known as the Gorgons. Each had snakes for hair, and anyone looking into their eyes turned to stone.



profligate—Profligate describes something or someone that is shamefully immoral.

vacillate—To vacillate is to swing from one side to the other. When describing a person, it means he or she cannot decide on a course of action and jumps from one activity to another without completing anything.

Egeria—Egeria is a female advisor or counselor. The word derives from the name of a goddess who served as advisor to a mythic Roman king.

Evensong—Evensong is another word for a daily evening service in the Anglican Church.

rupee—The rupee is the basic monetary unit of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Mauritius. comes from the novel Don Quixote by Miguel De Cervantes, Thomas Shelton (translator).

buttonhole—Men in Victorian England often placed a flower through the buttonhole of their coat.

Marechal Niel— A Marechal Niel is a variety of rose, fragrant and soft yellow in color.

misanthrope—Someone who hates and mistrusts mankind is called a misanthrope.

womanthrope—Although not a real word, Miss Prism's meaning is clear: a womanthrope is one who does not trust women.

neologistic—This refers to a new word or a new meaning for a word.



interment—Interment is the act or ritual of interring or burying.

portmanteau—This is a large trunk that opens into two hinged compartments.

dog cart—A dog cart is a light, two-wheeled, horse-drawn vehicle.

equanimity—Equanimity is the quality of being calm and even-tempered.

philanthropic work—This refers to the practice of donating money, property or time to persons or groups in need.

terminus—A terminus is the end point of a transportation line. **Oxonian**—An Oxonian is a graduate of Oxford University.

Anabaptists—The Anabaptists were a religious group that sprang from the 16th century Reformation. They did not ascribe to baptism.

perambulator—Perambulator is a British word for baby carriage.



Pre-Performance The Works of Oscar Wilde

1878 *Ravenna*

1881 *Poems*

1888 *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*

1889 *The Decay of Lying*

1891 *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

1891 *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime and Other Stories*

1891 *Intentions*

1891 *Salome*

1892 *The House of Pomegranates*

1892 *Lady Windermere's Fan*

1893 *A Woman of No Importance*

1893 *The Duchess of Padua*

1894 *The Sphinx*

1895 *An Ideal Husband*

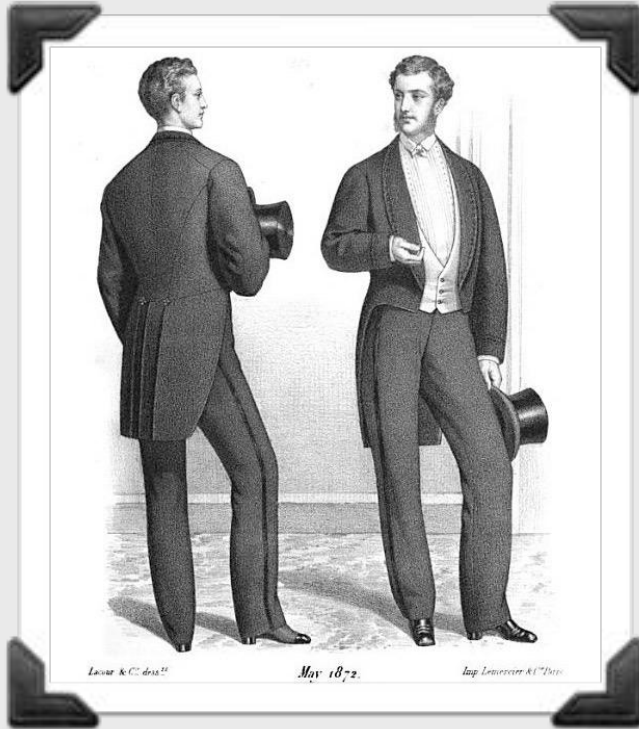
1895 *The Importance of Being Earnest*

1898 *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*

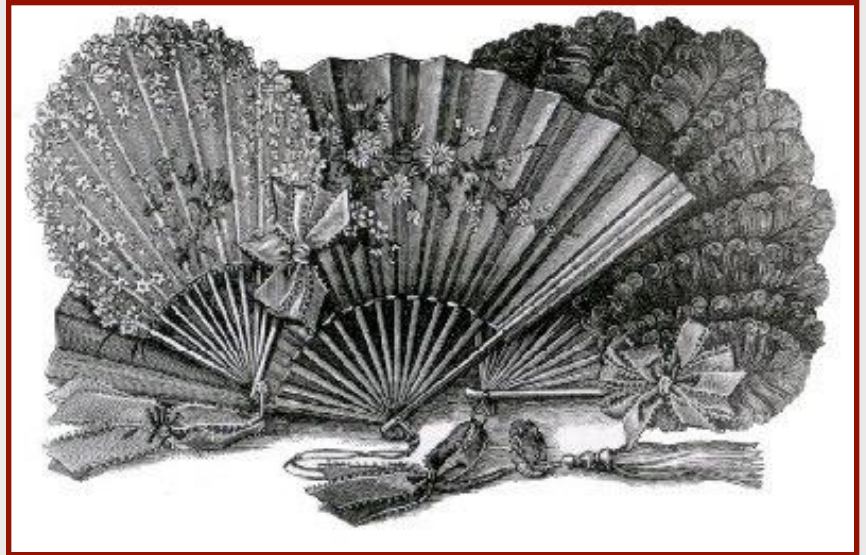
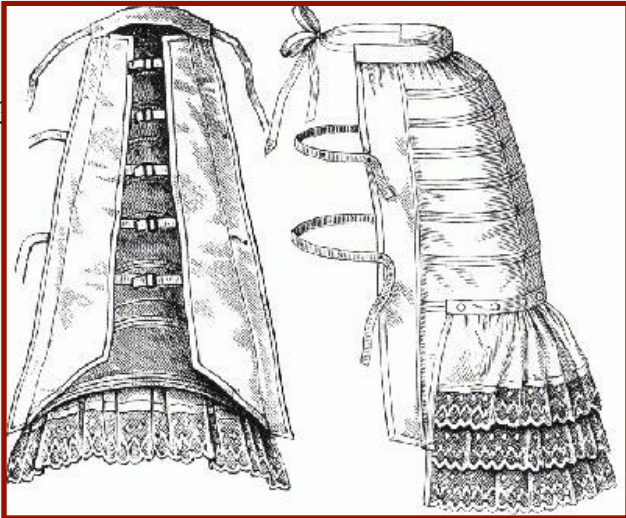
[http://www.cmgww.com/historic/wilde/
lit_works.htm](http://www.cmgww.com/historic/wilde/lit_works.htm)



Pre-Performance Fashions of Victorian England



Pre-Performance Undergarments and Accessories



A lady's fan was a crucial part of courtship. A woman could flirt with her fan, as this behavior was within the protocol of accepted behavior.

Here are what different signals meant:

Fan fast = I am independent

Fan slow = I am engaged

Fan with right hand in front of face = Come on

Fan with left hand in front of face = Leave me

Fan open and shut = Kiss me

Fan open wide = Love

Fan half open = Friendship

Fan shut = Hate

Fan swinging = Can I see you home?



Pre-Performance DANCES



Performance

Theater is a Team Sport (“Who Does What?”)

The **Playwright** writes the script. Sometimes it is from an original idea and sometimes it is adapted from a book or story. The Playwright decides what the characters say, and gives the Designers guidelines on how the play should look.

The **Director** creates the vision for the production and works closely with the actors, costume, set and lighting designers to make sure everyone tells the same story.

The **Actors** use their bodies and voices to bring the author’s words and the director’s ideas to life on the stage.

The **Designers** imagine and create the lights, scenery, props, costumes and sound that will compliment and complete the director’s vision.



Stage Manager Amy Nicole Davis
Photo: Rob Jones

The **Stage Manager** assists the director during rehearsals by recording their instructions and making sure the actors and designers understand these ideas. The Stage Manager then runs the show during each performance by calling cues for lights and sound, as well as entrances and exits.

The **Shop and Stage Crew** builds the set, props and costumes according to the designer’s plans. The Stage Crew sets the stage with props and furniture, assists the actors with costume changes and operates sound, lighting and stage machinery during each performance.

The **Front of House Staff** welcomes you to the theater, takes your tickets, helps you find your seat and answers any question you may have on the day of performance.

The Theater is where it all takes place. Orlando Shakespeare Theater In Partnership with UCF is the only professional, classical theater company in Central Florida, reaching students and audiences in the surrounding eight counties.

Mission/Vision:

With Shakespeare as our standard and inspiration, the Orlando Shakespeare Theater In Partnership with UCF produces bold professional theater, develops new plays, and provides innovative educational experiences that enrich our community. Our vision is to create theater of extraordinary quality that encourages the actor/audience relationship, embraces the passionate use of language, and ignites the imagination.



Sound Designer Bruce Bowes
Photo: Rob Jones



Costume Designers
Denise Warner and Mel Barger
Photo: Rob Jones



Box Office Manager Gina Yolango
Photo: Rob Jones

Performance

The Actor/Audience Relationship

The Audience is the reason Live Theater exists. At Orlando Shakes, we cherish the Actor/Audience relationship, the unique give and take that exists during a performance which makes the audience an ACTIVE participant in the event. The actors see the audience just as the audience sees the actors, and every, laugh, snuffle, chuckle and gasp the audience makes effects the way the actor plays his next moment. We want you to be engaged, and to live the story with us!



Photo: Rob Jones

There are certain Conventions of the Theatrical Event, like, when the lights go down you know that the show is about to start, and that the audience isn't encouraged to come and go during a performance. Here are some other tips to help you and your classmates be top notch audience members:

- Please make sure to turn off your cell phones. And NO TEXTING!
- Please stay in your seat. Try to use the restroom before you take your seat and stay in your seat unless there is an emergency.
- Please do not eat or drink in the theater.

Performance

Enjoying the Production

- 1) Notice how the period costumes affect the way the actors move, sit, stand, etc. How do we move differently in today's clothing?
- 2) How do you know when the location has changed? Does the scenery change? The lighting? The sound?
- 3) Do actors playing more than one character enhance or detract from the story?

Post-Performance Talkback

After the performance, the actors will stay on stage for about 10 minutes to hear your comments and answer any questions you have about the play, the production and what it means to be a professional actor. We'd love to hear what you felt about the play, what things were clear or unclear to you, and hear your opinions about what the play means. This last portion of the Actor/Audience Relationship is so important to help us better serve you!

Post-Performance Discuss

1. How have manners changed since the Victorian Era? Do you think you would enjoy living then? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think Lady Bracknell was played a man? How did it affect the character?
3. Why was the play titled The Importance of Being Earnest? Are there two possible interpretations of the meaning of the title? What are they?

Post-Performance Bibliography

- http://www.cliffsnotes.com/study_guide/literature/The-Importance-of-Being-Earnest-Character-Map.id-29,pageNum-44.html
- <http://www.english.uwosh.edu/roth/VictorianEngland.htm>
- <http://www.literary-liaisons.com/article009.html>
- The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis Study Guide, <http://www.repstl.org/>
- http://www.cmgww.com/historic/wilde/lit_works.htm

Post-Performance Lesson Plans

Journeys Into Arts & Culture *Contemporary Oscar Wilde* Lesson Plan 1, page 1

Name of Organization: Orlando Shakespeare Theater in Partnership with UCF

Event title: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Grade levels appropriate: 7-12

Objectives:

The student will paraphrase the dialogue in a scene from Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* into contemporary speech.

The student will dramatize the scene, maintaining the themes while modernizing the setting.

The student will perform the updated scene.

The student will compare and contrast dialogue, characterization and relevant details in original to the contemporary version.

Sunshine State Standards:

The student will:

- Analyze the author's purpose and/or perspective in a variety of text and understand how they effect meaning; LA.7-12.1.7.2
- Determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details; LA.7-12.1.7.3
- Develop an interpretation of a literary work by describing an author's use of literary elements (e.g., theme, point of view, characterization, setting, plot) and explaining the literary techniques used to develop them (e.g., symbolism, allusion, omniscient, conflict, dialogue). LA.7-12.2.1.5
- Explain how ideas, values, and themes of a literary work often reflect the historical period in which it was written; and LA.7-12.2.1.9
- Make a plan for writing that addresses purpose, audience, a controlling idea, logical sequence, and time frame for completion; and LA.7-12.3.1.2
- Apply appropriate tools or strategies to evaluate and refine the draft (e.g., peer review, checklists, rubrics). LA.7-12.3.3.4
- Write an original script or a dramatic adaptation of a literary work to demonstrate knowledge of theatrical conventions. TH.912.0.1.4
- Make and defend conscious choices in the creation of a character that will fulfill anticipated audience response. TH.912.C.1.5
- Construct imaginative, complex scripts and revise them in collaboration with actors to convey story and meaning to an audience. TH.912.C.2.2
- Improve a performance or project using various self-assessment tools, coaching, feedback, and/or constructive criticism. TH.912.C.2.8

Materials needed: Handout #1 – Sample Scenes

Introductory/background information for teachers and students:

- Read the Plot Summary, p. 4 and Historical Context, p. 6-14

Post-Performance Lesson Plans

Journeys Into Arts & Culture *Contemporary Oscar Wilde* Lesson Plan 1, page 2

Name of organization: Orlando Shakespeare Theater in Partnership with UCF

Event title: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Lesson process:

Paraphrase: n. a rewording of the meaning of something spoken or written.

A paraphrase is NOT a translation of the text, but a *rewording* of the text. Paraphrasing is the tool we use to align our understanding with Shakespeare's meaning at Orlando Shakespeare Theater.

There are two basic kinds of paraphrases- **Figurative** and **Literal**.

Figurative: 1. Representing by means of a figure or symbol 2. Not in its usual or exact sense; metaphorical
3. Using figures of speech

Literal: 1. Following the exact words of the original 2. In basic or strict sense 3. Prosaic; matter of fact 4. Restricted to fact

We ask that the paraphrases the student creates are **Figurative** in nature. We don't ask them to create a word for word paraphrase of the text; but a common, lively rewording using their own daily expressions to capture the meaning of the original text.

Individually or with a small group, choose a small scene from the adaptation to contemporize. (See Handout #1 – Sample Scenes) Your scene should be guided by the dialogue and stage directions, but fit well into the 21st century.

Some things to consider:

- What would your characters be wearing?
- Where would the scene take place?
- In the original scene, find what each character wants from the other.
- What is the point of the scene?
- Is it possible to adapt the scene's modernity without compromising the themes?

1. Paraphrase and write out the dialogue.
2. Read it out loud to hear how the dialogue sounds. Does it convey the essence of the original? Make any changes you feel necessary.
3. "Cast" your scene from current, famous actors
4. Read the scene to the class and tell them who is in your "cast."

Post-Performance Lesson Plans

Journeys Into Arts & Culture *Contemporary Oscar Wilde* Lesson Plan 1, page 3

Name of organization: Orlando Shakespeare Theater in Partnership with UCF

Event title: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Assessment:

The student successfully:

- Paraphrased the dialogue in a scene from Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* into contemporary speech
- Dramatized the scene, maintain the themes while modernizing the setting.
- Performed the updated scene.
- Compared and contrasted dialogue, characterization and relevant details in original to the contemporary version.

Reflection:

Discussion:

- Why do you think that *The Importance of Being Earnest* is still so popular? Are there any themes in the play that would not make sense in a contemporized adaptation?
- Have attitudes changed as to how men and women can behave, as individuals and especially, with each other?

Shakespeare Alive!

Want more paraphrasing? Orlando Shakes' Actor/Educators will come to your classroom and lead your students in an exploration of the Shakespeare play of your choice through an interactive plot summary and paraphrasing! 407-447-1700 ext. 208

Post-Performance Lesson Plans

Journeys Into Arts & Culture *Fantastical Diary Entry* Lesson Plan 2, page 1

Name of Organization: Orlando Shakespeare Theater in Partnership with UCF

Event title: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Grade levels appropriate: 7-12

Objectives:

- The student will invent an alter ego.
- The student will dramatize an imaginary situation.
- The student will compose an imaginary diary entry.
- The student will communicate the risks inherent in an imaginary situation.
- The student will devise a solution to an imaginary problem.
- The student will assess the presence of an alter ego would affect a situation.

Sunshine State Standards:

The student will pre-write by:

- Making a plan for writing that addresses purpose, audience, a controlling idea, logical sequence, and time frame for completion; and LA.712.3.1.2

The student will draft writing by:

- Establishing a logical organizational pattern with supporting details that are substantial, specific, and relevant; and LA.712.3.2.2

The student will revise by:

- Evaluating the draft for development of ideas and content, logical organization, voice, point of view, word choice, and sentence variation; LA.712.3.3.1

The student will write in an expressive and reflective form with:

- Incorporating figurative language, emotions, gestures, rhythm, dialogue, characterization, plot, and appropriate format. LA.712.4.1.2

Materials needed: Pen and paper

Introductory/background information for teachers and students:

Review the Plot Summary

Post-Performance Lesson Plans

Journeys Into Arts & Culture *Fantastical Diary Entry* Lesson Plan 2, page 2

Name of organization: Orlando Shakespeare Theater in Partnership with UCF

Event title: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Lesson process:

Mistaken and fabricated identities are pivotal to the plot and comedy of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, as is the society of rigid manners that turned every day experiences into “life and death” social situations.

Imagine that you can re-invent yourself to be whomever you want, having whatever qualities and talents you wish. As this alter ego, write a diary entry of an instance when you found yourself in an awkward and potentially embarrassing situation. Describe the location and people present in detail. Explain and how your alter ego escaped without harm or embarrassment due to your own ingenuity. Don’t be afraid to give yourself super abilities or personality traits.

In pre-writing, list:

- To whom you will be writing
- The event in your life you will recount for them
- What is at stake in the situation
- The character traits and talents your alter ego will use to prevail in the situation

Post-Performance Lesson Plans

Journeys Into Arts & Culture

Fantastical Diary Entry

Lesson Plan 2, page 3

Name of organization: Orlando Shakespeare Theater in Partnership with UCF

Event title: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Assessment:

The student successfully:

- invented an alter ego.
- dramatized an imaginary situation.
- composed an imaginary diary entry.
- communicated the risks inherent in an imaginary situation.
- devised a solution to an imaginary problem.
- assessed the presence of an alter ego would affect a situation.
-

Reflection:

Discussion questions:

- How important were social mores and manners in the situation you described.
- What was at stake if you did not “escape” the situation gracefully?
- What actual experiences have you had in which super abilities or personality traits could have changed the outcome? How would the results have altered?
- What one quality would you choose if you could adopt a special power or ability?

Additional Materials: None