

***The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde (Published by Putnam)**

Approved for use in Advanced Placement Communication Arts IV

Summary

Jack Worthing, the play's protagonist, is an upstanding member of the community in Hertfordshire, where he is guardian to Cecily Cardew, the pretty, eighteen-year-old granddaughter of the late Thomas Cardew, who found and adopted Jack when he was a baby. In Hertfordshire, Jack is a major landowner, with tenants, farmers, and a number of servants and other employees dependent on him. For years, he has also pretended to have an irresponsible black-sheep brother named Ernest who leads a scandalous life in pursuit of pleasure and is always getting into trouble of a sort that requires Jack to rush grimly off to his assistance. In fact, Ernest is merely Jack's alibi, an alter ego that allows him to disappear for days at a time and do as he likes. No one but Jack knows that he himself is Ernest. Ernest is the name Jack goes by in London, which is where he really goes on these occasions—probably to pursue the very sort of behavior he pretends to disapprove of in his imaginary brother.

Connection to the Curriculum

This book fills a gap in the AP CA IV curriculum—a comedy. Not only does this play provide practice in reading comedy and light satire, but it also adds a work to the canon of literature from which to write for the open ended question. *The Importance of Being Earnest* also gives a dramatic, period piece to students.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1-The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text. 2.2- The students understand the significance of literature and its contributions to various cultures.

Writing: 3.1- The students use writing as a tool for learning throughout the curriculum.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.2.1- The student reads fluently.

1.3.2- The student expands vocabulary.

1.4.11- The student uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.

1.4.15- The student synthesizes information from different portions of a passage to make complex or subtle generalizations.

1.4.17- The student analyzes and evaluates how an author's style and use of literary devices work together to achieve his purpose.

Literature:

2.1.1- The student identifies and describes different types of character and analyzes their development.

2.1.2- The student analyzes the historical, social, and cultural contextual aspects of the setting and their influence on characters and events in the story.

2.1.4- The student analyzes themes, tone, and the author's point of view across a variety of works and considers audience and purpose.

Writing:

3- The student writes effectively for a variety of audiences, purposes, and contexts.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

This light satire involves a man engaging in deception concerning his identity.

AP Connections

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon