STUDY GUIDE for *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Print out a copy of the study guide. Type the answers and submit them to Edmodo. I won’t accept handwritten responses. This must be upload to the assignment on Edmodo.

You can view the film *The Importance of Being Earnest* at:

http://putlocker.bz/watch-the-importance-of-being-earnest-online-free-putlocker.html

1. In Oscar Wilde’s time, “earnestness”—sober behavior, a serious turn of mind—was valued as an important character trait. How does Wilde undermine this value? Consider when the characters are earnest and when they are not. How does the pun on *earnest* and *Earnest* seen throughout the play, as well as Gwendolen’s and Cecily’s fascination with the name Ernest, further this satirization?

2. At the very beginning of the play, Algernon states, “I don’t play accurately—anyone can play accurately—but I play with wonderful expression.” How does this comment establish a theme for the play? In what other ways throughout the play is Algernon not accurate but expressive? Are other characters also not accurate but expressive?

3. Consider the invented word Bunburyist. Why is the term used so many times in quick succession in act I and with such relish? How many variations (different parts of speech, different definitions) does the word undergo? Why does a made-up term play such an important role in this play?

4. Compare and contrast the female characters in the play—Cecily and Gwendolen with Lady Bracknell and Miss Prism. What is Wilde’s attitude toward women in this play? Compare and contrast that attitude with his attitude toward Algernon and Jack. Does Wilde seem to have more sympathy for the women or for the men? Is one gender portrayed as more foolish, more clever, more self-aware, more naïve? When devising your answer, consider the different schemes with which male and female characters deceive others and themselves throughout the play.

5. What effect does the shift in setting from the city to the country in act II have on the plot’s development? How does this structure develop the play’s themes?
The Test

80% of the test is paragraph to multi-paragraph responses to the Study Guide. All students whether involved in the interview or in the video must complete the study guide.

20% of the test is a choice of an interview question test (similar to the Frankenstein assessment) or a video with a group of students of no more than 5 students in the group receiving credit.

You will be filming the scene where the mystery of the handbag is revealed and where Algy and Jack learn their true relationship to each other.

Option #1

The video should:

- At least 2 minutes in length
- Be true to the original script
- Be read in a natural voice and there is no evidence of a script being read on camera
- Appropriate costumes and setting
- Evidence that all members contributed to the project
- Be ready to be viewed by the class on Monday April 27th. Late videos will be counted as half credit.

Option #2

Book Interview:

- Must be completed by afterschool on Monday April 27th
- I will ask three questions (mostly from the 2nd half of play) and you have to persuade me you read or viewed the film The Importance of Being Earnest
- If you miss one of the three questions, you will have to answer three questions to make up for the missed question to be eligible to complete the three question quiz.
- If you miss two questions, then the quiz is over.