

Unit 7

The Importance of Being Earnest

by Oscar Wilde

Teacher Guide





Unit 7

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Teacher Guide

GRADE 8

Core Knowledge Language Arts®



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Alignment to the Common Core State Standards

The following chart indicates which lessons in the *Importance of Being Earnest* unit address content from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

| Unit 7: <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> | | Lessons | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Reading Standards for Literature | | | | | | | | | |
| Key Ideas and Details | | | | | | | | | |
| STD RL.8.1 | Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| STD RL.8.2 | Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| STD RL.8.3 | Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| STD RL.8.4 | Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| STD RL.8.5 | Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style. | | | | | | | | |
| STD RL.8.6 | Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| STD RL.8.7 | Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors. | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | |
| STD RL.8.8 | (Not applicable to literature) | | | | | | | | |
| STD RL.8.9 | Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new. | | | | | | | | |
| Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity | | | | | | | | | |
| STD RL.8.10 | By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently. | | | | | | | | |
| Reading Standards for Informational Text | | | | | | | | | |
| STD RI.8.1 | Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. | | | | | | | | |

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|--|---|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| STD RI.8.2 | Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text. | | | | | | | | |
| STD RI.8.3 | Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories). | | | | | | | | |
| STD RI.8.4 | Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts. | | | | | | | | |
| STD RI.8.5 | Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept. | | | | | | | | |
| STD RI.8.6 | Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints. | | | | | | | | |
| STD RI.8.7 | Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea. | | | | | | | | |
| STD RI.8.8 | Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced. | | | | | | | | |
| STD RI.8.9 | Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation. | | | | | | | | |
| STD RI.8.10 | By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently. | | | | | | | | |
| Writing Standards | | | | | | | | | |
| Text Types and Purposes: Argument | | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.1 | Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.1.a | Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically. | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.1.b | Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text. | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.1.c | Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.1.d | Establish and maintain a formal style. | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.1.e | Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented. | | | | | | | | |

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|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Text Types and Purposes: Informative/Explanatory | | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.2 | Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.2.a | Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.2.b | Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.2.c | Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.2.d | Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.2.e | Establish and maintain a formal style. | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.2.f | Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented. | | | | | | | | |
| Text Types and Purposes: Narrative | | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.3 | Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| STD W.8.3.a | Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| STD W.8.3.b | Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| STD W.8.3.c | Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events. | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| STD W.8.3.d | Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| STD W.8.3.e | Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events. | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.4 | Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.) | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |

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|--|--|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| STD W.8.5 | With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 8.) | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| STD W.8.6 | Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others. | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Research to Build and Present Knowledge | | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.7 | Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration. | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.8 | Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation. | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.9 | Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.9.a | Apply grade 8 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new”). | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.9.b | Apply grade 8 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced”). | | | | | | | | |
| Range of Writing | | | | | | | | | |
| STD W.8.10 | Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Speaking and Listening Standards | | | | | | | | | |
| Comprehension and Collaboration | | | | | | | | | |
| STD SL.8.1 | Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacherled) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| STD SL.8.1.a | Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

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|--|---|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| STD SL.8.1.b | Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| STD SL.8.1.c | Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| STD SL.8.1.d | Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| STD SL.8.2 | Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| STD SL.8.3 | Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| STD SL.8.4 | Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation. | | | | | | | | |
| STD SL.8.5 | Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest. | | | | | | | | |
| STD SL.8.6 | Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grade 8 Language standards 1 and 3 on page 53 for specific expectations.) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Language Standards | | | | | | | | | |
| Conventions of Standard English | | | | | | | | | |
| STD L.8.1 | Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| STD L.8.1.a | Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences. | | | | | | | | |
| STD L.8.1.b | Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice. | | | | | ✓ | | | |
| STD L.8.1.c | Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood. | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| STD L.8.1.d | Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.* | | | | | | | | |
| STD L.8.2 | Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| STD L.8.2.a | Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| STD L.8.2.b | Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission. | | | | | | | | |

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|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| STD L.8.2c | Spell correctly. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Knowledge of Language | | | | | | | | | |
| STD L.8.3 | Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| STD L.8.3.a | Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact). | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| STD L.8.4 | Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grade 8 reading and content</i> , choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| STD L.8.4.a | Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| STD L.8.4.b | Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede). | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| STD L.8.4.c | Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| STD L.8.4.d | Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary). | | | | | | | ✓ | |
| STD L.8.5 | Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| STD L.8.5.a | Interpret figures of speech (e.g. verbal irony, puns) in context. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| STD L.8.5.b | Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| STD L.8.5.c | Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute). | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| STD L.8.6 | Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies | | | | | | | | | |
| Key Ideas and Details | | | | | | | | | |
| STD RH.6-8.1 | Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources. | | | | | | | | |
| STD RH.6-8.2 | Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions. | | | | | | | | |

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|---|--|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| STD RH.6-8.3 | Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered). | | | | | | | | |
| STD RH.6-8.4 | Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies. | | | | | | | | |
| STD RH.6-8.5 | Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally). | | | | | | | | |
| STD RH.6-8.6 | Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts). | | | | | | | | |
| STD RH.6-8.7 | Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts. | | | | | | | | |
| STD RH.6-8.8 | Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text. | | | | | | | | |
| STD RH.6-8.9 | Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic. | | | | | | | | |
| Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity | | | | | | | | | |
| STD RH.6-8.10 | By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently. | | | | | | | | |
| Reading Standards for Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects | | | | | | | | | |
| STD RST.6-8.1 | Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts. | | | | | | | | |
| STD RST.6-8.2 | Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; provide an accurate summary of the text distinct from prior knowledge or opinions. | | | | | | | | |
| STD RST.6-8.3 | Follow precisely a multistep procedure when carrying out experiments, taking measurements, or performing technical tasks. | | | | | | | | |
| STD RST.6-8.4 | Determine the meaning of symbols, key terms, and other domain-specific words and phrases as they are used in a specific scientific or technical context relevant to <i>grades 6–8 texts and topics</i> . | | | | | | | | |
| STD RST.6-8.5 | Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to an understanding of the topic. | | | | | | | | |
| STD RST.6-8.6 | Analyze the author's purpose in providing an explanation, describing a procedure, or discussing an experiment in a text. | | | | | | | | |
| Integration of Knowledge and Ideas | | | | | | | | | |
| STD RST.6-8.7 | Integrate quantitative or technical information expressed in words in a text with a version of that information expressed visually (e.g., in a flowchart, diagram, model, graph, or table). | | | | | | | | |

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|--|---|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| STD RST.6-8.8 | Distinguish among facts, reasoned judgment based on research findings, and speculation in a text. | | | | | | | | |
| STD RST.6-8.9 | Compare and contrast the information gained from experiments, simulations, video, or multimedia sources with that gained from reading a text on the same topic. | | | | | | | | |
| STD RST.6-8.10 | By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend science/technical texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently. | | | | | | | | |
| Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects | | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.1 | Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content. | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.1.a | Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically. | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.1.b | Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources. | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.1.c | Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.1.d | Establish and maintain a formal style. | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.1.e | Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented. | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.2 | Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes. | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.2.a | Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to achieving purpose; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.2.b | Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.2.c | Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.2.d | Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.2.e | Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone. | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.2.f | Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented. | | | | | | | | |

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|--|--|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| STD WHST.6-8.3 | (See note; not applicable as a separate requirement) Note: Students' narrative skills continue to grow in these grades. The Standards require that students be able to incorporate narrative elements effectively into arguments and informative/explanatory texts. In history/social studies, students must be able to incorporate narrative accounts into their analyses of individuals or events of historical import. In science and technical subjects, students must be able to write precise enough descriptions of the step-by-step procedures they use in their investigations or technical work that others can replicate them and (possibly) reach the same results. | | | | | | | | |
| Production and Distribution of Writing | | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.4 | Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.5 | With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed. | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.6 | Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently. | | | | | | | | |
| Research to Build and Present Knowledge | | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.7 | Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration. | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.8 | Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation. | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.9 | Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. | | | | | | | | |
| Range of Writing | | | | | | | | | |
| STD WHST.6-8.10 | Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. | | | | | | | | |

Introduction

Unit 7: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Welcome

This introduction includes the necessary background information to teach the *Importance of Being Earnest* unit. **For detailed information about the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) approach to instruction, including reading, writing, grammar, morphology, speaking and listening, differentiation of instruction, and resources available in Grade 8 CKLA, see the Introduction to CKLA on pages 10–20 of the Unit 1 Teacher Guide.**

Lessons and activities address various aspects of a comprehensive language arts curriculum aligned to the Common Core State Standards–English Language Arts (CCSS–ELA): reading, writing, grammar, and morphology. When applicable, Grade 8 also covers Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (CCSS–RH and CCSS–RST). **Unit 7 contains eight daily lessons, each of which will require a total of ninety minutes, i.e., in schools in which forty-five minutes daily is allocated for English instruction, teachers will typically need to allocate two instructional days for each lesson.** Lesson 8 contains a Unit Assessment that assesses all of the skills taught in the unit. The Unit Assessment at the end of the unit will require one forty-five-minute session.

This unit contains two Pausing Points that may be used for differentiated instruction and have been included on the Pacing Guide on page 12. Following the completion of the *Importance of Being Earnest* lessons, several culminating activities are suggested from which teachers may choose.

It is recommended that you spend no more than eighteen instructional days total on this unit. Please refer to the Pacing Guide on page 12 for guidance.

Why *The Importance of Being Earnest* Is Important

This unit examines a comedic play by Oscar Wilde. In terms of literary skills, students will identify and analyze elements of a comedy such as characterization, themes, and the ways various literary devices produce humor. Students will also analyze theatrical performances and learn about the mores and manners of Victorian England.

Students will read an abridged version of *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde. Wilde (1854–1900) was born in Dublin, Ireland, and became one of the most successful playwrights of the Victorian era. His work is known for its wit and humorous wordplay, as well as its satirical comments on upper-class Victorian life.

The Importance of Being Earnest is a comedy about social class, gender roles, identity and mistaken identities, and love and marriage. The play focuses on the lives of two wealthy gentlemen who create double lives for themselves to avoid certain social obligations. Wilde’s play encourages audiences to think about a wide range of issues, particularly ideas

surrounding wealth and privilege, duty and obligation, respectability, and personal identity. By poking fun at Victorian society, Wilde exposes its weaknesses.

Students will not only enjoy the play's clever humor and wordplay but also critically consider how the rules of society create—and constrain—one's sense of self. They will explore and analyze *The Importance of Being Earnest* as an example of dramatic writing, examining the text's use of characterization, themes, and wit.

Teaching and Discussing Sensitive Topics

The Importance of Being Earnest satirizes rather than endorses Victorian morals. However, some students may be troubled by the pervasive misogyny and classism of the period. **We strongly encourage you to consult the following additional resources in advance and during your teaching of this unit.** Use this link to download the CKLA Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to resources regarding these topics can be found: <https://www.coreknowledge.org/free-resource/ckla-unit-7-Earnest/OnlineResources>

Sharing Experiences in the Classroom

Some students in the classroom who come from varying backgrounds or claim varying identities may enjoy the opportunities this unit provides to relate and share their own experiences with the class, but others may not. Teachers are encouraged to use their own judgment and may wish to speak ahead of time with students and parents to discover how students feel about sharing their own experiences in class.

Advance Preparation for Unit 7

To prepare to teach this unit, be sure to read the introduction (pages 1–9) and About the Author section (pages 262–266) in the Reader. As students will be reading an abridged version of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, you may wish to find a copy of the full text of the play and read it—or the relevant scenes—beforehand to support your teaching. The full text contains nuances and extra details that may assist you in leading the Reading lessons, exploring the text, and in answering student questions.

In Lesson 5 of this unit, students will view filmed clips from performances of the play. Though we recommend using the first part of Act One, the choice of scenes is up to you. You can find several links to clips in the CKLA Online Resources. You are also free to locate clips, which are readily available on YouTube and similar online sources. You should prepare to show these clips ahead of time by arranging and setting up necessary equipment for the classroom.

Be aware that some students may struggle with keeping track of Jack/Ernest's identities and the various characters' love interests. Others may have trouble understanding all the ways Wilde satirizes Victorian society. Use this link to download the CKLA Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to the original text of the play, clips of filmed performances, and information about Oscar Wilde and the Victorian era may be found: <https://www.coreknowledge.org/free-resource/ckla-unit-7-Earnest/OnlineResources>

Pacing Guide

The following is an overview and pacing guide to teaching the lessons of this unit.

| Lesson 1 | | Lesson 2 | | Lesson 3 |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 |
| Core Connections 45 min Core Connections: Review Prior Knowledge | Reading 45 min Read-Aloud: Prologue and Beginning of Act One (pages 22–49) | Reading 45 min Whole Group: Continuation of Act One (pages 50–74) | Reading 45 min Small Group: End of Act One (pages 74–112) | Reading 45 min Small Group: Interlude and First Half of Act Two (pages 114–162) |

| Lesson 3 | Lesson 4 | | Lesson 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| Day 6 | Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 | Day 10 |
| Reading 45 min Whole Group: End of Act Two (pages 162–210) | Reading 45 min Small Group: First Half of Act Three (pages 212–230) | Reading 45 min Whole Group: End of Act Three (pages 232–260) | Reading 45 min Whole Group: Video Clip of <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> Act One, Part One | Language 15 min Grammar Introduce the Present Subjunctive and Verb Voice Writing 30 min Write a Short Play: Plan |

| Lesson 6 | | Lesson 7 | | Lesson 8 |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| Day 11 | Day 12 | Day 13 | Day 14 | Day 15 |
| Language 15 min Morphology Introduce Roots <i>satis</i> , <i>sophos</i> , <i>sonus</i> , and <i>caput</i> | Language 15 min Grammar Practice Using Mood and Voice | Language 15 min Morphology Practice Roots <i>satis</i> , <i>sophos</i> , <i>sonus</i> , and <i>caput</i> | Writing 45 min Write a Short Play: Edit and Polish | Writing 45 min Write a Short Play: Publish |
| Writing 30 min Write a Short Play: Plan | Writing 30 min Write a Short Play: Draft | Writing 30 min Write a Short Play: Share, Evaluate, Revise | | |

| Lesson 8 |
|--------------------------------|
| Day 16 |
| Unit Assessment 35 min |
| Unit Feedback Survey 10 min |

| Pausing Points | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Day 17 | Day 18 |
| Culminating Activity 45 min | Culminating Activity 45 min |

Core Connections

The Core Connections section of Lesson 1 provides a broad overview of relevant background knowledge for *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Considering prior knowledge needed for comprehension is consistent with the CCSS three-part model concerning text complexity (specifically with regard to the qualitative dimension of knowledge demands). Students who had CKLA in earlier grades have had exposure to this relevant background knowledge. For those students, the Core Connections lesson will serve largely as a review of important related content. Students who did not have CKLA in earlier grades might not have prior knowledge of this related content. For those students, the Core Connections lesson provides foundational background knowledge about topics addressed in this unit. The Core Connections lesson ensures that all students have adequate background knowledge for the unit.

During the Core Connections lesson for Unit 7, students will learn about Oscar Wilde and the Victorian era and think about the factors that shape personal identity.

Reading

The Importance of Being Earnest

Unit 7 Reading lessons include comprehensive instruction in reading comprehension. For more detailed information, including reading groupings and comprehension question types, see the Introduction to CKLA on pages 13–17 of the Unit 1 Teacher Guide.

This unit is one of eight CKLA Grade 8 units. It uses a Reader adapted and published by the Core Knowledge Foundation. It includes complex text and prepares students in Grade 8 for the increased vocabulary and syntax demands aligned texts will present in later grades. The Reader is based on a play by Oscar Wilde.

Writing

In this unit, students write and publish a short play.

For detailed information about the CKLA approach to Writing and the writing process, see pages 17–18 of Introduction to CKLA in the Unit 1 Teacher Guide.

Grammar

In this unit, students will work on grammar skills involving voice and mood.

Students are expected to apply these grammar skills to oral activities, the unit writing project, and other writing throughout Grade 8.

Morphology

In this unit, students will study the Greek and Latin roots *satis*, *sophos*, *sonus*, and *caput*.

Students are expected to apply these morphology skills to oral activities, the unit writing project, and other writing throughout Grade 8.

Speaking and Listening

This unit allows for numerous speaking and listening opportunities, including read-alouds, class discussions, and small-group and partner activities. **For detailed information about the CKLA approach to Speaking and Listening, see page 19 of Introduction to CKLA in the Unit 1 Teacher Guide.**

Assessment

This unit includes a variety of assessment tools, including formative and summative assessments and progress-monitoring assessments targeting specific skills. **For an overview of assessment in CKLA, see pages 19–20 of Introduction to CKLA in the Unit 1 Teacher Guide.**

Activity Book

The Unit 7 Activity Book provides additional practice for students in reading comprehension, writing, grammar, and morphology, as well as student resources, enrichment pages, and opportunities for you to conduct formative assessments. Students will complete some activity pages in class as part of lessons and other activity pages for homework. Homework is assigned regularly and takes various forms.

The Activity Book also has a Student Resources section, which includes resources for the unit writing project.

For detailed information about resources in the Activity Book, see pages 12–13 of Introduction to CKLA in the Unit 1 Teacher Guide.

Teacher Resources

At the back of this Teacher Guide, you will find a section titled “Teacher Resources.” In this section, information is included about the following:

- The Writing Process
- Write a Short Play Rubric
- Write a Short Play Peer Review Checklist
- Write a Short Play Editing Checklist
- Proofreading Symbols
- Activity Book Answer Key

Online Resources

This unit provides links to free Online Resources to support and enrich teaching. You will see references to these resources at point of use throughout the unit. Use this link to download the CKLA Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links for each lesson may be found:

<https://www.coreknowledge.org/free-resource/ckla-unit-7-Earnest/OnlineResources>

Recommended Resources

The following resources are available from Core Knowledge:

- CKHG Grade 6, Unit 5, *The Industrial Revolution*
- CKLA Grade 5, Unit 5, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- CKLA Grade 6, Unit 5, *Julius Caesar*
- CKLA Grade 7, Unit 2, *The Tempest*
- CKLA Grade 7, Unit 3, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Links to these resources can be found in the Online Resources Guide for this unit. Follow this link to download these resources: <https://www.coreknowledge.org/free-resource/ckla-unit-7-Earnest/OnlineResources>

You should consider various times throughout the day when you might infuse the curriculum with authentic domain-related literature. If you are able to do so, you may recommend students select books from this trade book list:

- Coward, Noel. *Blithe Spirit, Hay Fever, Private Lives: Three Plays*. Knopf Doubleday, 1999. ISBN 978-0679781790
- Kaufman, George S. and Hart, Moss. *Three Plays by Kaufman and Hart: Once in a Lifetime, You Can't Take It with You and The Man Who Came to Dinner*. Grove/Atlantic, Inc, 1994. ISBN 978-0802150646
- Shaw, George Bernard. *Pygmalion*. Penguin, 2003. ISBN 978 0141439501
- Stoppard, Tom. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. Grove/Atlantic, Inc, 2017. ISBN 978-0802126214
- Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Barnes and Noble, 2015. ISBN 9781435159587

You might also consider creating a classroom lending library, allowing students to borrow domain-related books to read at home with their families.

Lesson 1

AT A GLANCE CHART

| Lesson | Time | Activity | Materials |
|------------------------------------|---------|--|---|
| DAY 1: Core Connections | 45 min. | Review Prior Knowledge Read-Aloud: Introduction, The Persons of the Play, and Image Gallery [pages 1- 21] | <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> Equipment to display short clips from the play |
| DAY 2: Reading | 45 min. | Read-Aloud: Prologue and Beginning of Act One [pages 22–49] | <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> Activity Page 1.2 |
| Take-Home Material | * | Core Connections Reading | Activity Page 1.1 Activity Page 1.2 |

Primary Focus Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

Core Connections

Identify factors that shape one’s personal identity and understand who Oscar Wilde was.

Reading

Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RL.8.1)

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text. (RL.8.2)

Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. (RL.8.3)

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts. (RL.8.4)

Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor. (RL.8.6)

Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors. (RL.8.7)

Writing

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. (W.8.10)

Speaking and Listening

Follow rules of classroom discussion. (SL.8.1.b)

Come to discussions prepared, ask questions during discussion, offer feedback, and absorb new information. (SL.8.1.a, SL.8.1.c, SL.8.1.d)

Ask and answer questions about the text. (SL.8.1, SL.8.2)

Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced. (SL.8.3)

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (SL.8.6)

Language

Follow standard English rules for writing and speaking. (L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.2.a)

Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. (L.8.3)

Determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases choosing flexibly from a range of strategies, including context and the relationship between words. (L.8.4, L.8.4.a, L.8.5.b)

Use a glossary to clarify the meaning of vocabulary words. (L.8.4.c)

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language. (L.8.5, L.8.5.a)

Distinguish among the connotations of words with similar denotations. (L.8.5.c)

Determine the meaning of domain-specific words. (L.8.6)

Academic Vocabulary

Academic vocabulary words support reading comprehension and may appear across a variety of materials, in language arts and in content areas. Understanding academic vocabulary may contribute to improved performance on assignments and assessments, as these words appear often in directions. Where applicable, general academic words are used throughout the unit, as they refer to all subjects—reading, writing, grammar, and morphology. They may appear in directions, assessments, activity pages, and discussion questions, among other places.

These words are underlined in lessons the first time they are included. You may wish to define these words and use them intentionally throughout the unit so students hear them used in multiple ways; it is not necessary to teach the words ahead of time.

Following the word list is a chart of applicable Spanish cognates. Providing Spanish cognates may support Spanish-speaking students in comprehending the words in English.

1. **act, n.** one of the main divisions of a play
2. **characterization, n.** how an author creates and describes fictional characters
3. **dialogue, n.** conversation between multiple characters in a drama
4. **dramatic irony, n.** a literary device by which the audience's understanding of events or individuals in a play is greater than that of the characters
5. **foreshadowing, n.** a literary device in which a writer gives a hint of what is to come later in the story
6. **irony, n.** a literary device in which contradictory statements or situations reveal a reality that is different from what appears to be true
7. **literary device, n.** a technique an author uses to produce a specific effect
8. **mood, n.** the atmosphere or emotions in a scene
9. **perspective, n.** the thoughts, feelings, and actions of a character; the lens through which they see the world
10. **pun, n.** a humorous use of words with multiple meanings or words that sound similar but have different meanings
11. **scene, n.** a single situation in a play where events happen in one location at one time
12. **setting, n.** in a play, the environment, background, and props that form the context of a scene
13. **theme, n.** the main subject of a piece of writing; a message or lesson that the author wants to convey to the audience

Spanish Cognates for Academic Vocabulary in *The Importance of Being Earnest*

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>acto</i> | <i>perspectiva</i> |
| <i>diálogo</i> | <i>escena</i> |
| <i>dramático ironía</i> | <i>tema</i> |
| <i>ironía</i> | |

ADVANCE PREPARATION

Core Connections

- Find and prepare audiovisual equipment to display clips from movies or filmed productions of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Some examples are provided in the Online Resources; others are readily available on YouTube and similar online sources. Use this link to download the CKLA Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to performances of *The Importance of Being Earnest* can be found: <https://www.coreknowledge.org/free-resource/ckla-unit-7-Earnest/OnlineResources>

Reading

- Write the purpose for reading on the board/chart paper: *To understand how Oscar Wilde introduces the themes in The Importance of Being Earnest.*

DAY 1

CORE CONNECTIONS

45 minutes

Introduce the Text

10 minutes

- Tell students that they will be reading a play called *The Importance of Being Earnest*, by Oscar Wilde. The play was first performed in 1895. Explain that the play is a comedy set in England in the late nineteenth century. The action concerns characters who adopt different personas or identities in an effort to escape social obligations. The play pokes fun at serious matters such as love and marriage and the expected formality and seriousness of Victorian society.
- Remind students of the theme of *identity* that has been running throughout the Grade 8 readings. For example, Unit 1 (*Us, In Progress*) focused on the perspective of young Latinos in modern America. Unit 5 (*A More Perfect Union*) examined the extent to which our identity is tied to our ethnicity. *The Importance of Being Earnest* features an exploration of self-identification and of adopting multiple identities in different contexts.
 - o Briefly review the concept of *identity* (identity involves the characteristics or traits that determine who a person is). Give students some examples of how one person might have more than one identity depending on the situation. For example, in the classroom your identity is *teacher*. To your family, your identity might be *parent* or *sibling*. Ask students to give some examples of ways they themselves have different identities in different contexts (*Possible responses: serious student/star athlete, child/friend, hard worker/silly joker*).
 - o As they read *The Importance of Being Earnest*, encourage students to think about the factors that shape the identities of the characters they encounter.
- Reintroduce the “windows and mirrors approach” to fiction you discussed in Unit 1. *The Importance of Being Earnest* offers a window into the experiences and cultures of others, as well as a mirror in which we can see ourselves reflected. Encourage students to think about how windows and mirrors help us to think about identity as a theme.
- Point out to students that, although they will be reading the text in class, *The Importance of Being Earnest* is intended to be performed by actors on a stage. Review with students the particular features of plays, such as italicized stage directions, bracketed directions, character names in capital letters, and so on. Remind students that stage directions are used to tell actors where to stand and how to move and that the text is the script of a performance.

Introduce the Play

30 minutes

- Ensure each student has a copy of the Reader, *The Importance of Being Earnest*.
- Tell students that the title of the play is a pun. If necessary, explain that a pun is a humorous use of words with multiple meanings or words that sound similar but have different meanings. Then explain that the word *earnest* is an adjective that means sincere

and serious. Spelled slightly differently, *Ernest* is also a person's name. Ask students to speculate on what the title might refer to.

- Tell students that before they begin to read the play, you will explore some more information about the play's background.
- Ask students to turn to the introduction on page 1 of the Reader. Have students follow along in the text as you read the introduction aloud. Call attention to the photo of Wilde on page 2, and call on selected students to give their impressions of Wilde, based on the photo. What kind of identity do they think he is trying to portray in this pose?

Note to Teacher: The About the Author section on pages 262–266 of the Reader briefly references the fact that Oscar Wilde was a gay man. In Victorian England, being homosexual could result in a prison sentence. Wilde himself was in fact imprisoned. You may or may not choose to call students' attention to this section and to discuss it. Use this link to access the Online Resources for this unit, where a brief description about the imprisonment and subsequent death of Oscar Wilde may be found: <https://www.coreknowledge.org/free-resource/ckla-unit-7-Earnest/OnlineResources>

- Then review with students both The Persons of the Play (cast of characters) on pages 12–13 and the images from performances on pages 14–21. Solicit student comments about the images regarding casting, costumes, props, setting, and other details. Ask students what these details tell you about the characters, and have them make some predictions about what the characters and their lives are like. (*For example, the main characters' fancy clothes and the presence of a servant suggest an upper-class setting.*) Ask students to speculate on how characters' lives and identities will be explored and challenged in the play.

Note to Teacher: Alternatively, consider showing short clips from *The Importance of Being Earnest* (listed in the CKLA Online Resources) in order to prompt a discussion. Present the clips to the class, and ask for students to respond to the actors' performances. Ask prompting questions such as: *What sort of moods are the actors conveying? How do they use their voices to convey them? How does the language and dialogue help establish mood?* Write or display responses on the board/chart paper.

- Finally, ask students to skim through the pages of the Reader, and point out to them that the text of the play usually appears on left (even-numbered) pages. Words and phrases in the text that are underlined are defined on the facing right (odd-numbered) pages. Helpful explanations or notes about the action are given for sections of text that include asterisks.

Note to Teacher: The version of *The Importance of Being Earnest* that students will read is not Wilde's original text but an edited and abridged version produced for classroom use. You may wish to point students toward a full text of the original, which can be found in the CKLA Online Resources for this unit: <https://www.coreknowledge.org/free-resource/ckla-unit-7-Earnest/OnlineResources>

Wrap Up

5 minutes

- Remind students that although they will be reading the text of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, the piece is meant to be performed by actors inhabiting the roles. Wrap up by asking students to suggest ways in which they can bring the words of the play to life as they are read. Suggestions might include reading aloud using dramatic voices and intonation, using gestures and movement as they read, and staging sections of the play as a performance. Write or display responses on the board/chart paper.

- Tell students they will read a prologue (not written by Wilde) before beginning their reading of the play itself in Act One. Remind students that they should pay close attention to the ways in which characters speak and act and what this reveals about their identities.

DAY 2

READING

45 minutes

Read-Aloud: Prologue and Beginning of Act One [pages 22–49]

Introduce the Selections

10 minutes

- Tell students you will read aloud the prologue and the beginning of Act One from *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Students should follow along in their Readers as you read.
- Have students turn to page 22 in the Reader. Point out to students that the prologue was not written by Oscar Wilde. It was written as a way to introduce a live performance of the play. The prologue helps set the tone by using a nearly endless stream of British expressions, mixed in with a bit of irreverent humor.
- If necessary, remind students that a play’s theme is its main subject or underlying message. The theme is the message the writer is trying to send to the audience. The theme of a story is often a message or observation about life.
 - Tell students that plays or stories can have more than one theme. For example, one theme of the *Percy Jackson* stories is identity. Another theme is the importance of courage and bravery.
 - Ask students to begin looking for themes in *The Importance of Being Earnest* as they read the opening sections.

SUPPORT: To understand the play, it is essential for students to understand that both class structure and morality in Victorian England were quite rigid. There were four primary class distinctions in Victorian England: the upper class (royalty and the very wealthy), the middle class (educated professionals), the working class (poorly educated laborers), and the underclass (the very poor). People rarely advanced in social class during this time, and people were expected to “know their place.” In the same way, morality in Victorian England was rigid and traditional. Family values, social deference, respectability, and sexual modesty were all hallmarks of Victorian morality. It was considered wrong to criticize or have a low opinion of people in a higher social class.

Additional information about Victorian England can be found in the Grade 7, Unit 3 Reader, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

Use this link to download the CKLA Online Resources for this unit, where links to information about class and morality in Victorian England can be found: <https://www.coreknowledge.org/free-resource/ckla-unit-7-Earnest/OnlineResources>

- As you read, help students understand the play and the way it is laid out by drawing attention to elements of the format such as italicized stage directions, bracketed directions, character names in capital letters, underlined words and phrases, and so on.

Core Vocabulary

- Tell students that they will be reading an adapted version of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, written to make the play accessible to modern-day readers. Sometimes, words and language used by Oscar Wilde that were very familiar to people reading and seeing his plays in the nineteenth century are less familiar today. These challenging words and phrases are underlined in the Reader when they first occur and are explained on the opposite page. Because all Core Vocabulary is defined in the Reader, there are no Core Vocabulary activity pages in Unit 7.
- Ask students to turn to page 26 of their Reader, and have them find the underlined words on that page (*thespian*, *vulgar*, and *dubious*).
- Call students' attention to and review the definitions for these words on page 27. Explain that challenging vocabulary and/or unfamiliar words and phrases will be treated in the same way throughout the Reader: the words and/or phrases will be underlined on the left page, with an explanation on the facing right page.
- Read the purpose for reading from the board/chart paper:

To understand how Oscar Wilde introduces the themes in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Read the Selections

25 minutes

Read the selections aloud as students follow along in their Readers. Then, read and discuss the corresponding guided reading supports, rereading text as necessary to support the discussion. Guided reading supports in brackets are directional and not intended to be read aloud. All other phrases and sentences are intended to be read aloud verbatim. Whenever asking a guided reading support question, explicitly encourage students to refer to the text and reread prior to offering an answer.

Note to Teacher: You may wish to have students complete Activity Page 1.2 after reading the selection, in addition to or in lieu of discussing the questions in class.

Throughout this lesson and other lessons in the Teacher Guide, you will see certain questions or activities labeled either **SUPPORT** or **CHALLENGE**. These questions and activities are not intended to be used in all situations. The items labeled **SUPPORT** provide additional scaffolding and should be used with classes that would benefit from additional support. The items labeled **CHALLENGE** should be used with classes that would benefit from additional enrichment opportunities.

Note to Teacher: As you read aloud, work to make the words of the play come alive. Use dramatic voices and intonation, gestures, and movement as you read—as if you were performing on stage. By doing so, you will not only help convey meaning to students but also model for them how to read dialogue during whole-group Reading lessons.

Read Prologue

[pages 22–28]

Note to Teacher: If students have familiarity with a British accent, it might be fun to have two students read the prologue aloud in front of the rest of the class. Choose students who might enjoy providing some theatrical flair.

Note to Teacher: Throughout the unit, avoid remarking on facing-page notes the first time the text is read. Generally, try to keep a quicker pace to maintain the spirit of the play. Notes can be examined in greater detail during a second read or during question time.

Inferential How does the text in the prologue help introduce the setting of the play?

- o The prologue is full of old-fashioned British expressions that convey the speech of the upper class in Britain. The two young gentlemen speaking also make direct reference to the fact that they are “young British gentlemen” with “many responsibilities,” and then they make it immediately plain that they have no such responsibilities.

Inferential What themes and what attitudes are suggested in the prologue? Explain.

- o Themes of self-awareness, or a lack of it, are suggested. There is also a sly tone of mocking the establishment or the social class the characters themselves are a part of. The theme of avoiding responsibility is also introduced here. The brief bursts of dialogue and the interplay between the two “young gentlemen” indicate a tone that will also be seen as the play opens.

Begin Reading Act One

[pages 30–36]

Literal Who is Lane?

- o Lane is the butler.

Inferential Algernon’s dialogue immediately gives us a peek into his character. What do his comments on pages 30–34 tell us about him?

- o Algernon’s opinion of himself is hinted at when he immediately tells Lane he plays the piano “with wonderful expression,” though not accurately. He also suggests that “anyone can play accurately,” so he seems a bit self-absorbed and careless regarding factual reality. Next, he is talking about a dinner he hosted at which there was champagne and then openly tells Lane he is “not much interested in” Lane’s family life. These bits of dialogue confirm a few points about Algernon already.

Note to Teacher: Wilde uses dramatic irony extensively throughout the play. Point out to students Algernon’s remark: “I don’t play accurately—anyone can play accurately—but I play with wonderful expression.” Wilde’s wordplay here is ironic. He wants the audience to understand that Algernon is a terrible piano player. Have students be on the lookout for irony as they read the play—often, the real meaning of the words is the opposite of what they say.

Inferential Do you think Algernon believes he is superior to Lane? Explain.

- o Algernon does think he is superior to Lane. He is clearly uninterested in him and refers to him as a member of “the lower order” (that is, the lower class of society).

Inferential What do you think Wilde’s opinion of Algernon might be? How does this help establish one of the themes in the play?

- o Wilde is mocking Algernon’s high opinion of himself. The upper-class Algernon comes across as pompous and lazy. Throughout the play, Wilde makes fun of people who think of themselves as sophisticated.

Inferential How does Wilde use Lane’s comments at the bottom of page 32 to mock Victorian attitudes toward marriage?

- o Proper Victorians were supposed to value marriage as a highly desirable and necessary institution. Lane suggests that his marriage not only was unsuccessful but occurred only because of “a misunderstanding” between him and a woman. This does not place marriage on the serious level Victorians are supposed to consider it—and reveals a contrast between what they “should” think and what they “do” think.

Note to Teacher: Point out to students another instance of irony on page 34. Algernon says that the lower class needs to set a good example for upper-class people such as himself. Not only is this comment a reversal of the cliché that the upper class should set a good example for the lower classes, but Wilde uses it to mock the very idea. Clearly, Algernon is not a good role model for anyone.

Inferential Oscar Wilde subtitled the play as “A Trivial Comedy for Serious People.” *Trivial* means of little value or importance. From what you’ve read so far, do you think the play will be trivial? Explain.

- o The play begins with a wry humor that starts hinting at the serious issues, beginning on page 32. Class expectations are made clear immediately, marriage is suggested as something that might happen due to a mere “misunderstanding,” and family life is mentioned. Marriage and family are specifically noted in more negative terms, as opposed to the romantic ideals so frequently expressed at that time. Students may say that the play will not be trivial because it deals with serious topics.

Note to Teacher: Point out to students the foreshadowing at the bottom of page 34, where Algernon refers to Jack as Ernest.

[pages 36–41]

Inferential How does Jack immediately begin to reveal his character in the dialogue on page 36?

- o Jack seems bored and insincere and in fact says he finds it “excessively boring” to amuse other people. He shows no interest in the people he is supposedly “amusing” in Shropshire, then states that he “never speaks” to any of them! He is also immediately critical of his friend, Algernon, noting that Algernon is “eating as usual.”

Inferential How are romance and marriage discussed in this section in a way that reveals the social norms of the time and place?

- o Jack suggests that merely flirting with Gwendolen is “perfectly disgraceful” and seems to have some idea that romance and marriage are important. After all, he tells Algernon that he finds his point of view to be “unromantic” when Algernon calls marriage a business rather than a pleasure. The perspectives of the two young men, taken together, suggest either a very romantic view of marriage or the exact opposite: the understanding of it as a serious, unpleasant, and ultimately boring business arrangement.

Inferential What can already be guessed about Aunt Augusta’s views of romance and marriage? Explain.

- o Aunt Augusta, we can assume, takes a very serious view of marriage and has less interest in romance. The hint is that, according to Algernon, Aunt Augusta won’t want

Jack around to flirt with Gwendolen but that that problem (from her point of view) might be solved if Jack proposes marriage.

Inferential What themes suggested in the prologue are reinforced in this section of the play? Explain.

- o The idleness and resulting boredom for young, wealthy people of this time and place are emphasized. In addition, pleasure is all these young men can think to live for, as illustrated by Jack when he says, “Oh, pleasure, pleasure! What else should bring one anywhere?”

[pages 42–49]

Inferential Jack and Algernon have an exchange about eating the cucumber sandwiches at the top of page 42, a discussion started on the previous page. While the content of their exchange is over something trivial, what ideas are suggested in how they talk to each other?

- o Several ideas are suggested: hypocrisy, for one, as Algernon doesn’t want Jack to eat the cucumber sandwiches but to save them for his aunt; then Algernon eats them himself. Immaturity, or a lack of self-development, is also suggested. There is a lack of self-awareness, as they each focus on what the other one is doing and not on their own behavior.

Inferential Algernon says to Jack, as Jack eats up the bread and butter sandwiches, “Well, my dear fellow, you need not eat as if you were going to eat it all. You behave as if you were married to her already.” What is Algernon suggesting about romance and marriage in this statement?

- o He is suggesting that Jack would be considerate and leave some of the bread and butter sandwiches for Gwendolen if they were still unmarried but that he would be free to be inconsiderate and eat them all once they were husband and wife.

Turn and Talk Ask students: “Is being in love a good and sufficient foundation for a marriage to begin?” as they consider Jack’s comment, “I am in love with Gwendolen. I have come up to town expressly to propose to her.” Have students turn to a partner and talk about their thoughts and ideas. As time allows, invite a few students to share what they discussed with their partner.

Evaluative Jack has a rather lengthy protest when Algernon says he should “clear up the whole question of Cecily.” Jack protests that he doesn’t know anyone named Cecily. Do you think we should believe him?

- o Students may say that we should not believe Jack. We’ve had a pretty good peek into the character of these two young men, and it seems that Algernon has found some evidence of something in Jack’s cigarette case. It’s also a giveaway, often enough, when someone protests too much rather than simply wondering what the other person means and waiting to find out.

Inferential How does Jack respond when Algernon reveals that he has Jack’s lost cigarette case? Why does Algernon say the cigarette case does not belong to Jack?

- o Jack reacts with surprise and anger that Algernon has not given the case back to him. He seems especially upset that Algernon has opened the case. Algernon says the case isn’t Jack’s after all because it is a present from someone named Cecily and Jack said earlier that he did not know anyone by that name.

Stop and Jot Have students stop and jot a *why* question about possible reasons Jack is so eager to get that cigarette case away from Algernon. As time allows, invite a few students to share their questions and discuss answers. Explain that sometimes students will need to keep reading in order to find an answer.

Inferential Jack tells Algernon that Cecily is his aunt. From everything we know so far about Jack, would you guess this is the truth or something Jack made up on the spot?

- o Students can be encouraged to cite examples from the text that suggest that Jack is telling the truth or that he is lying. Students may point out that it seems suspicious that Jack feels the need to hide what is on the cigarette case, and so he is likely making it up. Perhaps Cecily is someone he is romantically involved with. Students who wish to think Jack is being honest might point to his openly stating that he has come to town “expressly” to propose to Gwendolen, since he is in love with her. Another example that shows Jack may say anything is to point out that he has both claimed to “amuse” neighbors in Shropshire and stated that he “never speaks” to any of them.

Discuss the Selections and Wrap Up the Lesson

10 minutes

Remind students of the purpose for reading:

To understand how Oscar Wilde introduces the themes in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

If necessary, remind students that a play’s theme is the message the writer is trying to send to the audience. Then use the following question to lead a discussion: *What are some themes you have seen so far in The Importance of Being Earnest?* You may wish to prompt the discussion by mentioning themes such as identity, social class, and manners.

- Partner students to discuss the question.
- After partners share ideas, have each pair join another pair to form a group of four. Have pairs share their ideas.
- Have each group of four join another group to form a group of eight. Have those groups share their ideas with each other. Repeat until the whole class forms one discussion group.
- Call on several students to share how their thinking changed over the course of the discussion. Have students cite specific passages in the text that inform their opinions.

TAKE-HOME MATERIAL

Reading

- Distribute copies of Letter to Family on Activity Page 1.1 for students to share with their families.
- If students did not complete Activity Page 1.2 during the Reading lesson, have them complete it for homework.

Lesson 2

AT A GLANCE CHART

| Lesson | Time | Activity | Materials |
|---------------------------|--------|--|---|
| DAY 1: Reading | 45 min | Whole Group: Continuation of Act One [pages 50–74] | <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> Equipment to display short clips from the play Activity Page 2.1 |
| DAY 2: Reading | 45 min | Small Group: End of Act One [pages 74–112] | <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> Activity Page 2.2 Activity Page 2.3 |
| Take-Home Material | * | Reading (Day 1) Reading (Day 2) | Activity Pages 2.1, 2.2 Activity Pages 2.3, 2.4 |

Primary Focus Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

Reading

Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RL.8.1)

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of a text. (RL.8.2)

Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. (RL.8.3)

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings. (RL.8.4)

Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor. (RL.8.6)

Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors. (RL.8.7)

Writing

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. (W.8.10)

Speaking and Listening

Follow rules of classroom discussion. (SL.8.1.b)

Come to discussions prepared, ask questions during discussion, offer feedback, and absorb new information. (SL.8.1.a, SL.8.1.c, SL.8.1.d)

Ask and answer questions about the text. (SL.8.1, SL.8.2)

Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced. (SL.8.3)

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (SL.8.6)

Language

Follow standard English rules for writing and speaking. (L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.2.a)

Spell correctly. (L.8.2.c)

Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. (L.8.3)

Determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases choosing flexibly from a range of strategies, including context and the relationship between words. (L.8.4, L.8.4.a, L.8.5.b)

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language. (L.8.5, L.8.5.a)

Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. (L.8.6)

ADVANCE PREPARATION

Reading

- Be prepared to review events of the play from the previous lesson with students.
- Find and prepare equipment to display a recording of a performance scene from *The Importance of Being Earnest* in class. A link to a recommended clip can be found in the Online Resources for this unit: <https://www.coreknowledge.org/free-resource/ckla-unit-7-Earnest/OnlineResources>
- Write the purpose for reading on the board/chart paper: *To analyze how dialogue develops characterization and humor in The Importance of Being Earnest.*

Whole Group: Continuation of Act One [pages 50–74]

Review

5 minutes

- Review the events of the play from the previous lesson: *As wealthy Algernon Moncrieff plays the piano in his apartment, his butler, Lane, prepares sandwiches for the arrival of Algernon’s aunt (Lady Bracknell) and her daughter (Gwendolen). Algernon’s friend Jack Worthing (whom Algernon knows as Ernest) arrives and states his intention to propose marriage to Gwendolen. Algernon says he will not allow them to marry and hints that Jack is leading a double life, based on a mysterious inscription from a woman named Cecily, which he has found in a cigarette case in Jack’s possession.* Ask students to recap events, themes, dialogue, and any other details as needed.

Introduce the Selection

5 minutes

- Tell students they will continue reading Act One from *The Importance of Being Earnest* as a group.
- Remind students that *characterization* is a literary device authors use to develop characters. Explain that an author most often uses indirect characterization to show things that reveal a character’s traits, rather than directly stating them. In a play, the audience must examine characters’ behavior and dialogue—as well as the way other characters relate to them—to determine what characters are like. This is called *making an inference*.
- Have students turn to page 50 in the Reader.
- Read the purpose for reading from the board/chart paper:

To analyze how dialogue develops characterization and humor in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Read the Selection

25 minutes

Have individual students take turns reading the selection aloud. Encourage students to read the text as if they were performing on stage, with dramatic voices and intonation. You may also alternate between having students read aloud and read silently. Occasionally pause to ask questions in order to check for understanding and draw students’ attention to key vocabulary and concepts. Use the guided reading supports listed below for this purpose.

Note to Teacher: Have students read to the top of page 74, when Gwendolen says “Certainly, mamma.”

Note to Teacher: You may wish to have students complete Activity Page 2.1 after reading the selection, in addition to or in lieu of discussing the questions in class.

[pages 50–62]

Literal Explain why Jack goes by the name Ernest in the city.

- o Jack claims that he has made up the character of Ernest because it gives him an excuse to visit the city. In the country, however, he is known as Jack Worthing, with a troubled brother named Ernest.

Literal At the bottom of page 52, Jack says that Algernon is talking like a dentist, which “produces a false impression.” Algernon answers that is what dentists do. What kind of joke is Oscar Wilde making here? Does Wilde make a similar joke earlier on page 52?

- o Oscar Wilde is making a pun, or a play on words that sound or look alike but have two different meanings. Jack suggests that Algernon will sound “vulgar” if he talks like a dentist rather than a gentleman, which will give people the wrong idea about him, or make a false impression. Algernon replies that dentists literally do make false, or physical, impressions of teeth. Wilde also uses a pun when Algernon tells Jack, “You are the most earnest-looking person I ever saw in my life.”

Inferential Jack seems to take his responsibility toward Cecily very seriously. Yet he expresses feeling so stifled by it that he pretends to be someone else to escape and have fun once in a while. What kind of culture is Oscar Wilde starting to reveal?

- o A major theme throughout this play is the idea of how culture can help shape identity. The culture Wilde is writing about, the economic upper class of that time and place, was very repressed and yet very hypocritical. There was the expectation—and great pressure—to always be thinking of others (poor Bunbury, for example, or a responsibility such as guardianship of Cecily). This show of thinking about others often concealed a group of people who were largely idle, without work and often without other real responsibilities. There was little time or patience for fun, even for the young people, other than carefully chaperoned events.

Inferential Right after Jack explains who he really is in relation to Cecily and also admits to being Ernest, he says he has told Algernon “the whole truth pure and simple.” Does Jack consider his double life a contradiction to the “whole truth pure and simple” he says he is telling?

- o Jack has reasons for behaving one way in relation to young Cecily and another way when he is able to be in the city. There is little doubt that he sees this deception as relatively innocent, as it is carried out mostly with relative strangers when he is “Jack” in the country.

Note to Teacher: Make sure that students notice that Jack was adopted by Mr. Cardew (page 56). This fact will become quite important later in the play and will fit in with the themes of identity and social class that Wilde is examining and mocking. Point out to students that this is an example of foreshadowing.

Inferential Jack and Algernon have a conversation on page 60 about a meal that evening. What does Algernon say about “dining” with “one’s own relations”? What does this comment tell you about Algernon’s character?

- o He says that once a week is enough to dine with his aunt, although he has been obliged to spend time with her, as he also mentions, for “more than a week.” It

suggests that he is not especially devoted to his family—a feeling upper-class Victorians would not have been expected to express publicly.

Literal Jack says he is “not a Bunburyist at all.” Is he? What is a Bunburyist?

- o He is indeed, as Algernon points out to him. Both Jack and Algernon have a convenient alias who is quite different than who they present themselves as being for the most part. That is what is meant here by a Bunburyist.

Inferential How would you characterize Jack’s comments about marriage on page 62? Do they differ from Algernon’s? Which man has the most “Victorian” view of marriage?

- o Jack claims that he would be devoted to Gwendolen if they married and that he would give up his double life. Algernon, by contrast, suggests that spouses would soon tire of each other’s company. Jack’s view is the more “Victorian,” though Algernon’s may be the more realistic.

[pages 64–68]

Inferential When we first meet Lady Bracknell, what is the first thing she asks her nephew, Algernon? What does this tell us about both people?

- o She wants to know if he is behaving well. Given what we already know of Algernon, it seems a fair question. It suggests that Algernon often misbehaves and that his aunt disapproves of his misbehavior.

Inferential Algernon, upon seeing Gwendolen, says, “Dear me, you are smart!” She responds, “I am always smart!” Why might Wilde have chosen the word *smart* rather than *stylish* or *fashionable*?

- o It’s a way to have another pun, as *smart* also means intelligent, and it allows Gwendolen to suggest she is always both intelligent and fashionable.

Think-Pair-Share Have students stop and think about Lady Bracknell’s comments about “dear Lady Harbury” on page 66. How would a “proper Victorian” expect Lady Harbury to look after her husband’s death? How does she actually look? What is Wilde saying about Victorian views of marriage? After they have time to reflect independently, ask students to pair with a partner and share their thinking. As time allows, invite a few students to share their thinking and what they discussed with their partner.

Inferential Algernon reacts as if in horror that there are no cucumber sandwiches for his aunt. Why does he do this? What does this reveal about his character?

- o Algernon’s character—or lack thereof—is pretty clear by now. And his dramatic, false reaction is very funny to watch, unless you are Lady Bracknell, perhaps. It really is funny from the detached view of the audience and would have been funny to the very people Wilde is actually spoofing here.

Note to Teacher: If necessary, remind students that Algernon has eaten all of the cucumber sandwiches (see page 40). His butler, Lane, is covering for him by inventing the story about the lack of cucumbers at the market.

[pages 70–74]

Literal Lady Bracknell has quite a lot to say about Mr. Bunbury at the end of page 70 through the top of page 72. What is her main concern regarding this ill man? What does this tell us about her character?

- o Her main concern is expressed after her scolding statements that Mr. Bunbury is essentially to blame for his own ill health. It is important to her that he does not have a relapse on Saturday, because she is counting on Algernon to be there to arrange music for a party she is having. Her comments reveal her to be shallow and self-centered.

Inferential Why is Lady Bracknell’s speech about Mr. Bunbury so funny?

- o To use the cliché, it’s funny because it’s true. It reveals her character as shallow and self-centered, the very thing that was supposed to remain hidden under a pretense of concern. Her sudden and utter lack of even fake concern over her nephew’s supposed friend is over the top. It’s funny because we expect she would at least pretend to care and she doesn’t.

CHALLENGE: If time permits, show the class a brief clip from the play showing the arrival of Lady Bracknell and Gwendolen (corresponding to pages 66–72 of the text). Call on students to give their reaction to the clip. Ask if students believe the filmed performance stays faithful to or departs from the text or script. Have students pay close attention to the body language and intonations of the actors. Did any of the actors’ choices surprise them? A link to the clip can be found in the Online Resources for this unit: <https://www.coreknowledge.org/free-resource/ckla-unit-7-Earnest/OnlineResources>

Discuss the Selection and Wrap Up the Lesson

10 minutes

Remind students of the purpose for reading:

To analyze how dialogue develops characterization and humor in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Bring students back together, and use the following questions to discuss the selection.

For each question, have students cite the specific passage in the text that provides the information needed to answer the question. If students have difficulty responding to the questions, reread pertinent passages of the chapter and/or refer to specific images or graphics. If students give one-word answers and/or fail to use appropriate vocabulary in their responses, acknowledge correct responses by expanding students’ responses using richer and more complex language. Have students answer in complete sentences by restating the question in their responses. It is highly recommended that students answer at least one question in writing and that several students share their writing as time allows.

1. **Literal** What words would you use to describe Algernon’s character? What about Jack’s character? Explain.
 - o Students may use words such as *humorous*, *playful*, *lazy*, *cynical*, or *bored* to describe Algernon. They may use words such as *serious*, *sincere*, or *romantic* to describe Jack. Students will cite various passages to support their answers.

2. **Evaluative** Which character do you like best so far? Which do you like least? Why?
 - o Students' responses will vary.
3. **Evaluative** Why do you think Wilde chose to mock Victorian values through comedy rather than through drama?
 - o Possible answer: Wilde did not want to offend his audience, who (at least nominally) would have been expected to support and defend traditional Victorian values. By laughing at those values instead of harshly denouncing them, Wilde takes a bit of the sting out of his criticisms.

TAKE-HOME MATERIAL

Reading

- If students did not complete Activity Page 2.1 during the Reading lesson, have them complete it for homework.
- Ask students to complete the writing prompt activity on Activity Page 2.2 for homework.

ADVANCE PREPARATION

Reading

- Be prepared to review events of the play from the previous lesson with students.
- Be prepared to discuss the homework writing assignment on Activity Page 2.2.
- Write the purpose for reading on the board/chart paper: *To examine how themes are developed at the end of Act One in The Importance of Being Earnest.*

DAY 2

READING

45 minutes

Small Group: End of Act One [pages 74–112]

Review

5 minutes

- Review the events of the play from the previous lesson: *Jack admits that he has made up the character of Ernest because it gives him an excuse to visit the city. In the country, he is guardian to a young woman named Cecily, who lives on his estate with her governess, Miss Prism. Algernon also has another excuse he uses when he wants to get away: Bunbury, an invalid whom he visits in the country when he needs to escape his family in the city. Later, Algernon's aunt, Lady Bracknell, and her daughter Gwendolen arrive. Algernon uses Bunbury to get out of dinner that evening with his aunt but assures her he will be at her reception the next Saturday. He then arranges to leave Jack alone with Gwendolen. Ask students to recap events, themes, dialogue, and any other details as needed.*

- Review Activity Page 2.2, which students were asked to do as homework. Call on one or two students to share what they wrote.

Introduce the Selection

5 minutes

- Tell students they will read the rest of Act One from *The Importance of Being Earnest* in small groups.
- Have students turn to page 74 in the Reader.
- Read the purpose for reading from the board/chart paper:

To examine how themes are developed at the end of Act One in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Establish Small Groups

Before reading the selection, divide students into two groups using the following guidelines:

- **Small Group 1:** This group should include students who need extra scaffolding and support to read and comprehend the text. Use the guided reading supports to guide students through reading the text and completing Activity Page 2.3 together. This is an excellent time to make notes in your anecdotal records.
- **Small Group 2:** This group should include students who are capable of reading and comprehending text without guided support. These students may work as a small group, as partners, or independently to read the text, discuss it with others in Small Group 2, and then complete Activity Page 2.3. Make arrangements to check that students in Small Group 2 have answered the questions on Activity Page 2.3 correctly. You may choose to do one of the following to address this:
 - o Collect the pages and correct them individually.
 - o Provide an answer key for students to check their own or a partner's work after they have completed the activity page.
 - o Confer with students individually or as a group at a later time.

Read the Selection

25 minutes

The following guided reading supports are intended for use with Small Group 1. Guided reading supports in brackets are intended to guide you in facilitating discussion and should not be read verbatim to students. Guided reading supports not in brackets should be read aloud verbatim. After students read several lines of text, ask students if they have any questions, if anything was confusing, or if anything was hard to understand.

Note to Teacher: In the interest of time, you may have students read portions of the selection silently and then discuss the questions.

[pages 74–82]

Literal On page 76, Gwendolen mentions that she has had an “irresistible fascination” with the man she knows as Ernest. When did her interest in Jack/Ernest begin?

- o Her interest began before she even met the man, as she tells him (much to his surprise).

Inferential Gwendolen says she loves Jack/Ernest “passionately.” What is her love based on, from what we actually see so far in the text?

- o She is in love with his name, Ernest, which she talks about quite a bit. She also mentions he has “wonderful eyes” and hopes he will “always look at [her] just like that, especially when there are other people present.”

Note to Teacher: Point out to students, if necessary, that this is an example of dramatic irony. In this case, the audience’s understanding of the situation (Jack’s name is not really Ernest) is greater than Gwendolen’s. Her perspective regarding Jack is quite mistaken.

Inferential Does Gwendolen truly love Jack/Ernest? How is Wilde developing the theme of love and marriage in this section?

- o Gwendolen may be infatuated with him and believe herself to love him, but there is the complication that she doesn’t actually know him. And while her love at first sight (well, love before first sight) may or may not deepen in time, it’s fair to say Gwendolen doesn’t truly love Jack, at least not yet. At best, we can say she loves him in a romantic way, with the caveat that only time will reveal if she loves him deeply and passionately. If Gwendolen can love—and agree to marry someone—based on his name, Wilde is suggesting that the Victorian ideal of marriage is something of a sham.

Evaluative Jack is ready to change his name as soon as possible to marry Gwendolen. Does Jack love Gwendolen? Is he missing any clues here that she might not be as perfect as he thinks? Again, how does this tie into the theme of the (supposed) importance of love and marriage?

- o Students’ answers will vary. Some may suggest that Jack truly loves Gwendolen, based on his earlier comments about her. Others may say that Jack loves Gwendolen in the same way she loves him—in a romantic way. He has idealized her, and we know this because he is ready to overlook clues that she cannot love him as she claims to, at least not yet. In fact, her insistence on the importance of a name is just one instance of her immaturity on display.

[pages 84–94]

Literal What does Lady Bracknell say on page 84 to make it clear that, in her view and that of her culture, marriage is essentially a business contract that parents arrange for their offspring?

- o Lady Bracknell says that an engagement should come on a young girl “as a surprise, pleasant or unpleasant . . . It is hardly a matter that she could be allowed to arrange for herself.”

Note to Teacher: Students may be interested to know that arranged marriages have been common for thousands of years in many cultures. For social, financial, or political reasons or for a combination of those factors, marriages are still arranged in some parts of the world today.

Inferential What do you think Lady Bracknell means when she says she is of the opinion that “a man who desires to get married should know either everything or nothing.”

- o A witty aphorism is put in Lady Bracknell’s mouth here. Very young people, who know (supposedly) “nothing,” can be married and learn together; if a man is older and knows more (supposedly “everything”), he can be assumed to know enough, perhaps, to make a marriage work successfully.

Inferential One of the most-quoted lines from this play is a statement Lady Bracknell makes after Jack tells her he has lost both of his parents. Why is that comment usually received as hilarious in this context, rather than horrific? How might her comment develop one of Wilde’s themes about the upper class?

- o It is horrific to “lose” both parents to death or in any other way. Here, Lady Bracknell uses the word as if to suggest that a person has a responsibility to keep track of the location of one’s parents, and so it seems utterly careless to lose them as if misplacing a book. Wilde portrays the upper-class Lady Bracknell as vulgar or oblivious—perhaps both—and certainly not a model of intelligence, dignity, or even compassion.

Note to Teacher: If necessary, point out to students that Wilde is making a pun here. The verb *to lose* can mean both “to misplace” and “to suffer the death of someone.”

Inferential How does Jack’s revelation to Lady Bracknell about his origins impact her view of him? What theme is Wilde developing here?

- o Lady Bracknell did not have an especially high opinion of Jack at the outset. Learning that he is an orphan without any idea of who his parents are has lowered him considerably in her eyes. Wilde is developing themes of identity, respectability, and the importance of social class in Victorian England.

Note to Teacher: Tell students that the French Revolution involved a revolt of the French lower classes against the nobility and upper classes in the late 1700s, thus explaining Lady Bracknell’s comment on page 94.

[pages 96–102]

Inferential Jack asks Algernon if he thinks there is any chance that Gwendolen will become like her mother, Lady Bracknell, in about “a hundred and fifty years.” Why does he ask this?

- o The romantic ideal would be that Gwendolen would never mature into someone as overbearing and businesslike as her mother is. It would also be that Jack would always look at Gwendolen with infatuation (“always look at [her] just like that”). In Jack’s question, there is a little acknowledgment that a marriage is different from a romance. People do not stay always in a static state of some romantic ideal.

Literal What reason does Jack give for not telling Gwendolen the truth about his supposed brother, Ernest? Which theme is developed here?

- o As if duplicity is not only called for but preferable, he tells Algernon that he has not revealed the truth about Ernest because, “My dear fellow, the truth isn’t quite the sort of thing one tells to a nice, sweet, refined girl.” Through Jack’s comment, Wilde develops the theme of truth/deception.

Inferential Cecily has reportedly shown some interest in the fictional brother Ernest who gets himself into trouble. If Jack simply tells her that Ernest is dead, why does he imagine Cecily won’t feel bad?

- o He imagines she won’t feel bad because he considers her not to be romantic in the sense that she would have little real feeling for an unseen brother who suddenly dies. Having such feeling—or pretending to—might be “romantic.” And yet she clearly is

romantic in the sense that is appealing to Jack. His further explanation makes little sense, yet it describes a few ways a woman might be thought of as relatively practical (not romantic) at that time—at least that’s what Jack thinks.

[pages 102–112]

Note to Teacher: Point out to students Jack’s assertion on page 102 that Cecily and Gwendolen will become great friends upon meeting. Tell students this is an example of foreshadowing, and have them watch to see if Jack’s prediction is accurate.

Inferential At the bottom of page 102, Algernon says, “It is awfully hard work doing nothing. However, I don’t mind hard work where there is no definite object of any kind.” What does he mean by those statements? Which themes does his comment touch on?

- o Based on comments Algernon has made throughout, he may actually mean it, in that he is bored with his idleness, combined with his various social obligations. His second sentence is classic Oscar Wilde: a pithy observation that even hard work, if it is imaginative and has no particular or immediate “object” or goal to it, can include an element of play. In fact, one definition of *play* is any pursuit taken on for enjoyment, without the necessity of a goal at the end of it. Algernon’s comment also mocks the idea of the upper classes as being serious and responsible.

Think-Pair-Share Have students stop and think about Algernon’s comment that it is “awfully hard work doing nothing.” After they have time to reflect independently, ask students to pair with a partner and share their thinking. As time allows, invite a few students to share their thinking and what they discussed with their partner.

Note to Teacher: In thinking about the question in the Think-Pair-Share activity, students may point out that everyone needs a little time to do nothing; rest is crucial to our mental well-being. Encourage students, as needed, to consider what they like to do for fun, as well as thinking of work they have done and felt good about doing. Then ask students to reconsider, as needed, what it would be like to live as Jack and Algernon do.

Inferential On pages 104–106, Gwendolen says, “Few parents nowadays pay any regard to what their children say to them. The old-fashioned respect for the young is fast dying out.” Why would this have been especially funny to Wilde’s Victorian audience?

- o It would have been especially funny because Victorians were supposed to highly respect their elders—not the young. Gwendolen turns that sentiment on its head. Respect for the older generation was really the thing that was dying out, to some degree. Again, Wilde’s witty dialogue comments on and satirizes social convention.

Evaluative Why might it be so difficult for these two young men, Jack and Algernon, to mature into an adult identity that includes some kind of work?

- o They were not expected to, and in fact, their class and culture at that time would have busied them with social obligations, including (for many eligible bachelors, meaning wealthy young men) the expectation that they would marry, whether they wanted to or not. Such a marriage would have been strongly encouraged. In addition, certain kinds of work would have been considered “beneath them.” So their options were limited in this way—through strong social pressures.

Inferential Why does Algernon smile to himself when he writes down Jack’s address in the country? What does he intend to do?

- o He smiles because, now that he knows where Jack’s country estate is, he can visit Cecily.

Discuss the Selection and Wrap Up the Lesson

10 minutes

Remind students of the purpose for reading:

To examine how themes are developed at the end of Act One in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Arrange students in groups of four, and assign each group one of the themes from *The Importance of Being Earnest*. You may choose themes that have been discussed so far in this unit. (Possible examples include *identity*, *love and marriage*, *social class/respectability*, *Victorian morality/hypocrisy*, and *truth vs. deception*) Then assign each group member a number from one to four. All group members must be prepared to speak for their group.

- Ask the question: *How has Oscar Wilde developed your group’s assigned theme in Act One of The Importance of Being Earnest?*
- Have groups agree on an answer to the question.
- When enough time has passed, call a number from one to four at random.
- Have students with that assigned number move to the front of the class to share their group’s answer and explain how they arrived at their answer.
- Call on several students to share how the activity shaped their thinking.

TAKE-HOME MATERIAL

Reading

- If students did not complete Activity Page 2.3 during the Reading lesson, have them complete it for homework.
- Ask students to complete the writing prompt activity on Activity Page 2.4.

Lesson 3

AT A GLANCE CHART

| Lesson | Time | Activity | Materials |
|---------------------------|--------|--|--|
| DAY 1: Reading | 45 min | Small Group: Interlude and First Half of Act Two [pages 114–162] | <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> Activity Page 2.4 (for review) Activity Page 3.1 |
| DAY 2: Reading | 45 min | Whole Group: End of Act Two [pages 162–210] | <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> Activity Page 3.2 (for review) Activity Page 3.3 (optional) |
| Take-Home Material | * | Reading (Day 1) Reading (Day 2) | Activity Pages 3.1, 3.2 Activity Pages 3.3, 3.4 |

Primary Focus Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

Reading

Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RL.8.1)

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of a text. (RL.8.2)

Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. (RL.8.3)

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings. (RL.8.4)

Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor. (RL.8.6)

Writing

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. (W.8.10)

Speaking and Listening

Follow rules of classroom discussion. (SL.8.1.b)

Come to discussions prepared, ask questions during discussion, offer feedback, and absorb new information. (SL.8.1.a, SL.8.1.c, SL.8.1.d)

Ask and answer questions about the text. (SL.8.1, SL.8.2)

Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced. (SL.8.3)

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (SL.8.6)

Language

Follow standard English rules for writing and speaking. (L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.2.a)

Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. (L.8.3)

Determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases choosing flexibly from a range of strategies, including context and the relationship between words. (L.8.4, L.8.4.a, L.8.4.c, L.8.5.b)

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language. (L.8.5, L.8.5.a)

Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. (L.8.6)

ADVANCE PREPARATION

Reading

- Be prepared to review events of the play from the previous lesson with students.
- Be prepared to discuss the homework writing assignment on Activity Page 2.4.
- Be prepared to review a few literary devices (such as dramatic irony, allusion, and hyperbole) with students.
- Write the purpose for reading on the board/chart paper: *To analyze how dialogue, word choices, and literary devices are used to produce humor in The Importance of Being Earnest.*

DAY 1

READING

45 minutes

Small Group: Interlude and First Half of Act Two [pages 114–162]

Review

5 minutes

- Review the events of the play from the previous lesson: *Jack (still posing as Ernest) proposes to Gwendolen, who accepts his proposal and explains that her ideal is to marry someone named Ernest. Learning of their engagement, Lady Bracknell asks Jack about*

his family background and learns to her horror that he was adopted after being found abandoned in a handbag in a railway station. She storms away, forbidding the marriage. Gwendolen returns and asks for Jack's country address so she can write to him. Algernon slyly records the address, hoping to visit Jack's ward, Cecily. Ask students to recap events, themes, dialogue, and any other details as needed.

- Review the previous lesson's homework. Call on one or two students to share their responses to the prompt.

Introduce the Selection

5 minutes

- Tell students they will read the interlude and the first half of Act Two from *The Importance of Being Earnest* in small groups.
- Have students turn to page 114 in the Reader.
- Read the purpose for reading from the board/chart paper:

To analyze how dialogue, word choices, and literary devices are used to produce humor in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

- Students have already encountered the use of puns, foreshadowing, and irony in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. If necessary, briefly review a few other literary devices with students, and tell them to be on the lookout for them as they read. Students should think about how Wilde uses these devices to produce humor. Possible devices to review include the following:
 - o Allusion: a figure of speech that references a famous person, place, event, or literary work
 - o Hyperbole: exaggerated and often melodramatic comparisons or overstatements

Establish Small Groups

Before reading the selection, divide students into two groups using the following guidelines:

- **Small Group 1:** This group should include students who need extra scaffolding and support to read and comprehend the text. Use the guided reading supports to guide students through reading the text and completing Activity Page 3.1 together. This is an excellent time to make notes in your anecdotal records.
- **Small Group 2:** This group should include students who are capable of reading and comprehending text without guided support. These students may work as a small group, as partners, or independently to read the text, discuss it with others in Small Group 2, and then complete Activity Page 3.1. Make arrangements to check that students in Small Group 2 have answered the questions on Activity Page 3.1 correctly. You may choose to do one of the following to address this:
 - o Collect the pages and correct them individually.
 - o Provide an answer key for students to check their own or a partner's work after they have completed the activity page.
 - o Confer with students individually or as a group at a later time.

The following guided reading supports are intended for use with Small Group 1. Guided reading supports in brackets are intended to guide you in facilitating discussion and should not be read verbatim to students. Guided reading supports not in brackets should be read aloud verbatim. After students read several lines of text, ask students if they have any questions, if anything was confusing, or if anything was hard to understand.

Note to Teacher: In the interest of time, you may have students read portions of the selection silently and then discuss the questions.

[pages 114–126]

Literal In the spirit of the play, there is an instance of irony on page 114 of the interlude (not written by Wilde). Where and what is that instance?

- o Gentleman 2 says of Jack and Algernon, “They remind me of someone—for the life of me, can’t say who.” Well, the roles of Gentleman 1 and Gentleman 2 are clearly written to very closely echo the characters of Jack and Algernon. So the line is typically delivered “straight,” but the audience will catch the humor.

Literal What is the setting for Act Two? Is it different than Act One’s setting?

- o The setting for Act Two is Jack’s manor house in the country. Act One took place in Algernon’s apartment in London.

Inferential At the bottom of page 126, in referring to a piece of fiction she has written, Miss Prism states, “The good ended happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what Fiction means.” Why is this line so funny to the audience but not to Cecily? What kind of literary device is Wilde using here?

- o Even a very young person knows that good people aren’t always happy and people who are not so good may be quite happy for a while. It is a “fiction” to say otherwise. Thus, the statement is ironic. Wilde is poking fun at the Victorian idea that good should always triumph and that evil is always punished. Cecily has stated that happy endings in novels “depress” her, and without seeming to know why, she is also making a comment about the culture she lives in and the hypocrisy of it.

[pages 128–136]

Note to Teacher: Without revealing its importance, consider telling students that Miss Prism’s comment about losing her manuscript is an example of foreshadowing.

Inferential We know why Cecily makes up that Miss Prism has a headache, but why does she not simply state that she needs a break from her studies and suggest the same thing outright?

- o Cecily doesn’t ask for a break from her studies outright because she is expected to study and to take her studies more seriously. Further, to come up with an excuse, in the form of an outright lie, is actually preferable in this culture. It fits the social norms she would understand, and others would understand, too.

Inferential Dr. Chasuble says, “Were I fortunate enough to be Miss Prism’s pupil, I would hang upon her lips.” Then Chasuble immediately feels the need to explain, “I spoke metaphorically.”

It is a well-understood metaphor to the original audience, so why does Chasuble feel the need to explain himself?

- o Chasuble explains himself because of the obvious double entendre here. He clearly has feelings for Miss Prism. Either he meant it both ways, or it was a beautiful Freudian slip! In either case, the audience and Miss Prism fully catch the meanings, and it's very funny, especially when the actors play their parts well.

SUPPORT: The term *Freudian slip* is commonly used to refer to any slip of the tongue, or sudden mistake in speaking, that reveals the true meaning in a person's mind, rather than what they intended to say. A *double entendre* is a word or phrase that is open to two interpretations, one of which is usually somewhat risqué.

Literal Who suddenly shows up to interrupt Cecily's totally unwanted lessons? Why is this an example of dramatic irony?

- o Algernon shows up unexpectedly. His appearance is an example of dramatic irony because we know he is actually Algernon, but the characters in the play believe him to be Jack's wicked brother, Ernest.

Inferential Cecily comments at the top of page 136 that “pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time” would be “hypocrisy.” Why is the choice of the word *hypocrisy* so funny here?

- o Cecily's comment is already funny because Wilde has turned an obvious statement on its head (irony; who pretends to be wicked if they are truly good?). The word *hypocrisy*, coming from Cecily, just puts a fine point on it, as she has previously said so many rather naive things. She also says other ironic things, and in the context of the play, she says them seriously, making it quite hilarious to watch.

[pages 138–142]

Literal Finally, Algernon admits that while “this world is good enough for [him],” Cecily is correct in saying he is not good enough for the world. Who does Algernon suggest should reform him?

- o He slyly and flatteringly suggests that the good Cecily should reform him.

Literal Since Cecily has no time to reform Algernon, how does he suggest he will be reformed?

- o Algernon says he will reform himself that afternoon. The absurdity of becoming a better person in a single afternoon isn't utterly lost on Cecily—or is it? She thinks he should “try.” The dialogue is written as if Cecily isn't quite sure such a thing is possible.

Evaluative Are Algernon and Cecily portrayed realistically? Why are they portrayed in this way?

- o The characters are not portrayed realistically. They are comically lacking in both common sense and intelligence. Much of the play's humor comes from the farcical situation and the unrealistic characters.

Inferential A subplot is introduced in this section with an attraction between Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble. Both characters speak in a way to show the feeling is mutual; Cecily also notices it. How do the different perspectives of the characters provide a slight, momentary suspense and then more humor?

- o There is just enough dialogue between Miss Prism and Chasuble to hint that something might come of this attraction. Our curiosity is raised as they navigate a culture centered on romance and marriage. So there is suspense. But the humor follows almost immediately as Miss Prism notes, perhaps hopefully but not realistically, that “no married man is ever attractive except to his wife.” After Chasuble suggests a married man is often not attractive even to his wife, the moment is over, and Miss Prism is wondering where Cecily is. Chasuble’s statement, of course, is also unintentionally ironic.

[pages 144–150]

Inferential Jack walks into the house, dressed in “the deepest mourning.” He is clearly distressed. How does Miss Prism react when she learns that Jack’s brother is dead? Why is her comment funny? Which of the play’s themes is touched upon here?

- o Miss Prism says, “What a lesson for him! I trust he will profit by it.” The theme of hypocrisy—always pretending to care yet often being utterly heartless—is so outrageous, so over the top, that it’s very funny.

Literal Miss Prism has another comment to make about the death of Ernest on page 146. Has she recovered herself in order to make a more appropriate comment?

- o No! She says, “As a man sows, so shall he reap.” This, in contrast to the sympathy that Dr. Chasuble has started to express, seems funny.

Note to Teacher: If necessary, point out to students that Miss Prism is making an allusion here. The allusion is to a passage in the Bible, Galatians 6:7. Her statement is also an example of foreshadowing—that Jack and Algernon’s actions will indeed have consequences.

Inferential Why does Jack say the things he does on page 150? Consider what we know as the audience, and consider what Jack may or may not know until he is confronted with Algernon posing as Ernest. What kind of literary device is Wilde using here?

- o The suspense is great at this point because we know that Jack is about to confront Algernon, who is pretending to be Ernest. Jack may or may not be considering this possibility, although it’s most likely he is simply confused. Clearly, no matter what he imagines to be going on, he is aware that someone has shown up and Cecily is convinced that it is Jack’s brother, Ernest. This is another example of dramatic irony.

Stop and Jot: Have students stop and jot a *how* question about Jack’s predicament now that “Ernest” has shown up, just as Jack has returned from “Ernest’s” funeral. How do they think Jack will handle this? As time allows, invite a few students to share their questions and discuss answers. Explain that sometimes students will need to keep reading in order to find an answer.

[pages 152–162]

Inferential Why is Chasuble’s comment at the top of page 156 so funny?

- o It’s funny because, from Chasuble’s perspective, he is witnessing the reconciliation of two brothers, but the audience knows better. It’s even funnier because Jack is left with no real options, since Cecily, Miss Prism, and Chasuble all think that Jack’s brother has come to visit. Furthermore, he seems fine to them, as he has made a point of letting them all know of his supposed frequent visits to see his “poor invalid friend Mr. Bunbury.”

Evaluative On page 160, Algernon says he makes up for being a little over-dressed by being “immensely over-educated.” What do you make of the idea that he is “over-educated” in the context of the play?

- o Recall that Lady Bracknell earlier said that “the whole theory of modern education is radically unsound. Fortunately in England, at any rate, education produces no effect whatsoever.” Consider, too, that the education of the idle upper classes is most often not put to any practical use. In this context, Algernon seems to be reflecting seriously that he was very well educated but to no particular end. It’s witty but also sad upon reflection.

Note to Teacher: If necessary, point out to students that Algernon’s comment here is an example of hyperbole.

Discuss the Selection and Wrap Up the Lesson

10 minutes

Remind students of the purpose for reading:

To analyze how dialogue, word choices, and literary devices are used to produce humor in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Bring students back together, and use the following questions to discuss the selection.

Evaluative Which moments or lines of dialogue in this scene struck you as particularly funny? Explain. Identify the literary device Wilde was using.

- o Students’ responses will vary.

Inferential How does the use of dramatic irony produce humor in this scene?

- o Possible answer: Characters in the play often say and do things that appear funny to the audience because the audience has knowledge the characters do not. A character’s limited knowledge can cause them to react in ways that seem reasonable to them but that may not actually be reasonable given the course of action. In this scene, for example, Jack’s statement that “Ernest” has died and his subsequent confusion upon learning that “Ernest” is visiting are funny because we know Algernon is on the scene pretending to be Ernest but—at least at first—Jack does not know. Because of the audience’s knowledge, the character’s ignorance can become humorous.

Inferential How do you think Wilde’s use of humor helps him develop his ideas?

- o Possible answer: Wilde uses humor by making certain aspects of society ridiculous or exaggerating parts of society that he wants to criticize.

TAKE-HOME MATERIAL

Reading

- If students did not complete Activity Page 3.1 during the Reading lesson, have them complete it for homework.
- Ask students to complete the writing prompt activity on Activity Page 3.2.

ADVANCE PREPARATION

Reading

- Be prepared to review events of the play from the previous lesson with students.
- Be prepared to discuss the homework writing assignment on Activity Page 3.2.
- Write the purpose for reading on the board/chart paper: *To examine how the setting and manners of Victorian society are used to create humor in The Importance of Being Earnest.*

DAY 2

READING

45 minutes

Whole Group: End of Act Two [pages 162–210]

Review

5 minutes

- Review the events of the play from the previous lesson: *At Jack’s country house, Cecily is getting grammar lessons from her governess, Miss Prism, who tries to discourage her interest in Jack’s wicked brother, Ernest. The local pastor, Dr. Chasuble, enters and takes Miss Prism for a walk. Meanwhile, Algernon (assuming the role of Ernest) arrives and chats with Cecily, whom he finds very beautiful. Dr. Chasuble and Miss Prism return from their walk as Jack enters and announces that his brother Ernest has died—only to find Algernon is present and pretending to be Ernest. Jack demands that Algernon leave, but Algernon says he is in love with Cecily and promises to reform.* Ask students to recap events, themes, dialogue, and any other details as needed.
- Review the previous lesson’s homework. Call on one or two students to share their responses to the prompt.

Introduce the Selection

5 minutes

- Tell students they will read the rest of Act Two from *The Importance of Being Earnest* as a group.
- Have students turn to page 162 in the Reader.
- Read the purpose for reading from the board/chart paper:

To examine how the setting and manners of Victorian society are used to create humor in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Read the Selection

25 minutes

Have individual students take turns reading the selection aloud. Encourage students to read the text as if they were performing on stage, with dramatic voices and intonation. You may also alternate between having students read aloud and read silently. Occasionally pause to ask questions in order to check for understanding and draw students’ attention to key vocabulary and concepts. Use the guided reading supports listed below for this purpose.

Note to Teacher: If time permits, ask for volunteers to read aloud the roles as a readers' theater exercise. You may want these students to come to the front of the classroom to read their parts aloud. Again, encourage the "performers" to use expression and movement during their reading and to follow the stage directions. Tell the remaining students to follow along in their Readers.

Note to Teacher: You may wish to have students complete Activity Page 3.3 after reading the selection, in addition to or in lieu of discussing the questions in class.

[pages 162–166]

Literal At the end of page 166, there's a sudden change in Algernon's plans. What just happened?

- o After Algernon's impassioned plea with a very young and immature woman he just met, he is planning to stay another week as a houseguest, despite Jack's insistence that he leave right away.

Inferential Algernon just basically invited himself to stay, and the butler seems to have let him. Is that what happened, or was it something else?

- o The play is set in the home of very wealthy Jack and the young Cecily, supposedly in his care. Cecily is easily able to get around Jack, however, by merely letting the butler glance at her for either permission or disapproval as to what she wishes. She shows no disapproval after Algernon says of the carriage driver and the carriage, "Tell it to come round next week, at the same hour." It's ridiculous and funny by merely exaggerating Victorian manners of the upper classes.

[pages 168–172]

Literal Cecily says she fell in love with Ernest, sight unseen, on what basis?

- o He was much talked about and, in fact, "the chief topic of conversation between myself and Miss Prism," as Cecily puts it. She says, "And of course a man who is much talked about is always very attractive."

Literal Cecily is talking nonsense about her engagement to Algernon, but he goes along with it. Why?

- o He is infatuated, or pretending to be. They just met! We already know that Algernon is bored and doesn't understand marriage as a serious commitment on his part. He says early on in the play, "If ever I get married, I'll certainly try to forget the fact." He likely does want to marry her and is not worried about what might come next.

Evaluative Do Cecily and Algernon seem to understand more might be needed in a marriage than only being in love?

- o Cecily and Algernon have grown up in a setting that encourages romantic love and marriage without considering other factors—except the importance of money. There seems to be little expectation of any possible happiness within marriage, as it is often more of a business arrangement.

[pages 174–182]

Inferential Upon meeting Cecily, Gwendolen says, “Something tells me that we are going to be great friends. I like you already more than I can say. My first impressions of people are never wrong.” How does her dialogue reflect the customs and manners of the time?

- o Again, Oscar Wilde is merely exaggerating the manners and speech of the upper class in the Victorian era.

Inferential Gwendolen makes the statement about how much she already likes Cecily after Cecily says, “I suppose [you are] one of the many good elderly women who are associated with Uncle Jack in some of his philanthropic work in London.” Why would she say this?

- o Cecily is very young. From her point of view, Gwendolen might seem middle-aged, though she is clearly not elderly, as we know she is young enough to be engaged to Jack. So it’s outrageous and meant to be insulting to an unmarried older woman in that setting. It also suggests that Jack has been falsely filling Cecily’s head with stories about “philanthropic work in London” when the audience knows better.

Inferential How does Gwendolen initially react when she learns that Cecily has no mother and Jack has never mentioned having a young, pretty ward?

- o She thinks it was a pretty serious omission on Jack’s part (“How secretive of him!”). She also implies that Cecily is a threat to her own relationship with Jack.

[pages 184–190]

Inferential How does the dialogue between Gwendolen and Cecily reflect the setting and manners of upper-class Victorian society?

- o The women clearly do not like each other, after they have come under the impression that they are both engaged to the same “Ernest.” However, their dialogue is—on the surface, at least—nominally polite. Upper-class Victorians were not supposed to show rudeness or anger toward one another—at least not directly.

Literal Trading witty insults has become insufficient for both Cecily and Gwendolen by page 190. Who is the first to break the standoff with an action?

- o Cecily is the first to break the standoff. She puts four lumps of sugar into Gwendolen’s tea after Gwendolen had declined sugar in her tea.

Literal What two actions together finally cause Gwendolen to suggest that Cecily “may go too far” and distress Gwendolen’s supposed “gentleness” of disposition?

- o In addition to the overly sweetened tea, Cecily has the butler hand Gwendolen a slice of cake when Gwendolen had asked for bread and butter.

Stop and Jot: Have students stop and jot a *when* question about this most recent exchange between Cecily and Gwendolen: “When, if ever, do you think either or both of these women will confront the man they think is Ernest?” As time allows, invite a few students to share their questions and discuss answers. Explain that sometimes students will need to keep reading in order to find an answer.

[pages 192–204]

Literal What is the first thing Gwendolen and Cecily do when they find out they have been deceived by Algernon and Jack?

- o They turn to one another in sisterly solidarity and begin to question Algernon and Jack.

Inferential Jack is the first of the two men forced to confess that he invented a brother named Ernest. Does he seem truly remorseful? Compare his behavior to Algernon's.

- o Possible answer: Jack does seem a bit remorseful, as he confesses his lie “slowly and hesitatingly.” After the young women go into the house, he turns to Algernon and declares the situation “ghastly.” Algernon, in response, seems to think the whole thing is a great joke—he says this is the most wonderful Bunbury he has ever had in his life.

[pages 206–210]

Inferential Jack and Algernon basically have the same problem. How are they handling it so far?

- o Jack and Algernon are handling their problems badly, by accusing the other one of exactly what each of them has done, being irritable, and eating.

Discuss the Selection and Wrap Up the Lesson

10 minutes

Remind students of the purpose for reading:

To examine how the setting and manners of Victorian society are used to create humor in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

If necessary, remind students that the characters in this play belong to the upper class of Victorian society. Then use the following question to lead a discussion: *How does the contradiction between what the characters “should” do, given their position in society, and what they actually do, create humor in The Importance of Being Earnest?*

- Partner students to discuss the question.
- After partners share ideas, have each pair join another pair to form a group of four. Have pairs share their ideas.
- Have each group of four join another group to form a group of eight. Have those groups share their ideas with each other. Repeat until the whole class forms one discussion group.
- Call on several students to share how their thinking changed over the course of the discussion. Have students cite specific passages in the text that inform their opinions.

TAKE-HOME MATERIAL

Reading

- If students did not complete Activity Page 3.3 during the Reading lesson, have them complete it for homework.
- Ask students to complete the writing prompt activity on Activity Page 3.4.

Lesson 4

AT A GLANCE CHART

| Lesson | Time | Activity | Materials |
|---------------------------|--------|--|---|
| DAY 1: Reading | 45 min | Small Group: First Half of Act Three [pages 212–230] | <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> Activity Page 3.4 (for review) Activity Page 4.1 |
| DAY 2: Reading | 45 min | Whole Group: End of Act Three [pages 232–260] | <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> Activity Page 4.2 (for review) Activity Page 4.3 |
| Take-Home Material | * | Reading (Day 1) Reading (Day 2) | Activity Pages 4.1, 4.2 Activity Pages 4.3, 4.4 |

Primary Focus Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

Reading

Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RL.8.1)

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of a text. (RL.8.2)

Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. (RL.8.3)

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings. (RL.8.4)

Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor. (RL.8.6)

Writing

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. (W.8.10)

Speaking and Listening

Follow rules of classroom discussion. (SL.8.1.b)

Come to discussions prepared, ask questions during discussion, offer feedback, and absorb new information. (SL.8.1.a, SL.8.1.c, SL.8.1.d)

Ask and answer questions about the text. (SL.8.1, SL.8.2)

Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced. (SL.8.3)

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (SL.8.6)

Language

Follow standard English rules for writing and speaking. (L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.2.a)

Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. (L.8.3)

Determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases choosing flexibly from a range of strategies, including context and the relationship between words. (L.8.4, L.8.4.a, L.8.4.c, L.8.5.b)

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language. (L.8.5, L.8.5.a)

Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. (L.8.6)

ADVANCE PREPARATION

Reading

- Be prepared to review events of the play from the previous lesson with students.
- Be prepared to discuss the homework writing assignment on Activity Page 3.4.
- Write the purpose for reading on the board/chart paper: *To examine how Oscar Wilde sets up the final act of The Importance of Being Earnest.*

DAY 1

READING

45 minutes

Small Group: First Half of Act Three [pages 212–230]

Review

5 minutes

- Review the events of the play from the previous lesson: *Algernon asks Cecily to marry him. She agrees, showing him letters and a diary filled with her imagination of their courtship and marriage. She says she has always wanted to marry someone called Ernest. Algernon goes to find Dr. Chasuble to christen him as Ernest. Meanwhile, Gwendolen arrives to visit Jack (who she still believes is named Ernest) and meets Cecily. They soon find that they*

are both engaged to a man named Ernest Worthing. As the two young women turn on each other during tea, Jack and Algernon enter. After some confusion, they admit their true identities. Cecily and Gwendolen make up and call off their respective engagements, believing themselves the object of a cruel joke.

- Ask students to recap events, themes, dialogue, and any other details as needed.
- Review the previous lesson's homework. Call on one or two students to share their responses to the prompt.

Introduce the Selection

5 minutes

- Tell students they will read the first half of Act Three from *The Importance of Being Earnest* in small groups.
- Have students turn to page 212 in the Reader.
- Read the purpose for reading from the board/chart paper:

To examine how Oscar Wilde sets up the final act of *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Establish Small Groups

Before reading the selection, divide students into two groups using the following guidelines:

- **Small Group 1:** This group should include students who need extra scaffolding and support to read and comprehend the text. Use the guided reading supports to guide students through reading the text and completing Activity Page 4.1 together. This is an excellent time to make notes in your anecdotal records.
- **Small Group 2:** This group should include students who are capable of reading and comprehending text without guided support. These students may work as a small group, as partners, or independently to read the text, discuss it with others in Small Group 2, and then complete Activity Page 4.1. Make arrangements to check that students in Small Group 2 have answered the questions on Activity Page 4.1 correctly. You may choose to do one of the following to address this:
 - o Collect the pages and correct them individually.
 - o Provide an answer key for students to check their own or a partner's work after they have completed the activity page.
 - o Confer with students individually or as a group at a later time.

Read the Selection

25 minutes

The following guided reading supports are intended for use with Small Group 1. Guided reading supports in brackets are intended to guide you in facilitating discussion and should not be read verbatim to students. Guided reading supports not in brackets should be read aloud verbatim. After students read several lines of text, ask students if they have any questions, if anything was confusing, or if anything was hard to understand.

Note to Teacher: In the interest of time, you may have students read portions of the selection silently and then discuss the questions.

[pages 212–214]

Literal On these pages, the two women talk to each other, discussing whether or not to forgive the respective young men. They agree not to speak to them but to let the men approach them, hopefully in repentance. What happens next?

- o Gwendolen immediately speaks to Jack, right after she and Cecily agreed not to speak first.

Evaluative Based on how Wilde sets up the first two pages of Act Three, how do you think this play will end?

- o Some students will likely guess by now that the two couples will get married or reunite. Other students may suggest endings that are less happy or less complete. Either way, Act Three is set up to keep a bit of suspense as to how it will all work out, but hints are in place that it will all work out with two happy couples at the end.

[pages 216–218]

Inferential Are Gwendolen and Cecily really struggling to forgive Jack and Algernon for dishonesty in this part of the play?

- o Gwendolen and Cecily are not really struggling to forgive Jack and Algernon. They want to believe they are loved and they are in love as well. On page 216, Cecily briefly drops the mask and answers “yes” when Gwendolen asks if they should forgive the young men.

Inferential The women make it sound as if having the men agree to change their names is a big ordeal. When the men agree that they are prepared to take on this “terrible thing,” they don’t merely answer “yes” but boldly proclaim “I am [willing]!” How is Wilde’s choice to have the men say “I am!” over this particular issue an especially meaningful word choice?

- o The irony is incredible and would have been even more obvious in that culture. When a woman gets married, she very typically changes her name and begins to use her husband’s last name. To have the men agree to such a thing, something women do all the time, is funny enough. It’s even better as they say, “I am!”—a very emphatic type of yes that is interestingly similar to the traditional vows at a wedding, when a couple states emphatically, “I do!”

Turn and Talk: Present a question about all the over-the-top romanticism, flattery, and willingness to dismiss dishonesty in the name of love: “Does our current culture need more romance, more honesty, or both?” Have students turn to a partner and talk about their thoughts and ideas. As time allows, invite a few students to share what they discussed with their partner.

[pages 220–226]

Inferential At the top of page 220, Gwendolen says, “How absurd to talk of the equality of the sexes! Where questions of self-sacrifice are concerned, men are infinitely beyond us.” Does Gwendolen’s comment reflect Victorian morality and society? Do you think Wilde would agree with Gwendolen’s comment?

- o During the Victorian era, men were generally considered to be “superior” to women, and women were considered “the weaker sex.” So Gwendolen’s comments reflect Victorian attitudes. Given Jack and Algernon’s behavior, however, it seems clear that Wilde would not agree that they are “superior” in any way to the young women.

SUPPORT: Gender roles in Victorian England were strict and stereotypical. Use this link to download the CKLA Online Resources for this unit, where further information about womens' rights during the Victorian era can be found: <https://www.coreknowledge.org/free-resource/ckla-unit-7-Earnest/OnlineResources>

Inferential After Jack agrees with Gwendolen's statement, Cecily adds, "They have moments of physical courage of which we women know absolutely nothing." What physical moments of courage in men of this wealthy class would she be referring to?

- o Cecily puts a fine point on the irony in Gwendolen's statement. Men of this social class might hunt, but they would typically not fight in war. That men do have greater upper-body strength is not her point, however, nor is it Wilde's point. He is simply stating, through irony, that both men and women have moments of physical courage.

Inferential What does Algernon tell Lady Bracknell about Bunbury? How might these comments foreshadow the end of the play?

- o Algernon tells Lady Bracknell that Bunbury has died. He amusingly trips over his words. The comment that Bunbury was "found out" echoes how his and Jack's deceptions were "found out" by Gwendolen and Cecily. These comments suggest that even more will be "found out" by the end of the play.

[pages 228–230]

Literal Lady Bracknell's opinion of Cecily changes quickly and thoroughly. Why?

- o She finds out that Cecily has a large fortune.

Discuss the Selection and Wrap Up the Lesson

10 minutes

Remind students of the purpose for reading:

To examine how Oscar Wilde sets up the final act of *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Pose the following question to students to spark discussion: *What do you think will happen in the final part of The Importance of Being Earnest? Why?*

- Have students write answers to the question, exploring different possibilities.
- Have students move around the room to discuss ideas with other classmates in response to the question. Students should try to get at least one new idea from each peer conversation.
- Call on several students to share an idea that shaped their thinking.

TAKE-HOME MATERIAL

Reading

- If students did not complete Activity Page 4.1 during the Reading lesson, have them complete it for homework.
- Ask students to complete the writing prompt activity on Activity Page 4.2.

ADVANCE PREPARATION

Reading

- Be prepared to review events of the play from the previous lesson with students.
- Be prepared to discuss the homework writing assignment on Activity Page 4.2.
- Write the purpose for reading on the board/chart paper: *To examine how multiple perspectives and dramatic irony produce humor in the conclusion of The Importance of Being Earnest.*

DAY 2

READING

45 minutes

Whole Group: End of Act Three [pages 232–260]

Review

5 minutes

- Review the events of the play from the previous lesson: *Gwendolen and Cecily forgive the young men for their deceits, particularly when Jack and Algernon announce that they both plan to be re-christened as Ernest. The couples embrace as Lady Bracknell arrives. She forbids Jack and Gwendolen's marriage before asking about Algernon's friend Bunbury, who Algernon explains has died. Algernon also adds that he and Cecily are engaged. Immediately, Lady Bracknell begins questioning Jack about Cecily. Ask students to recap events, themes, dialogue, and any other details as needed.*
- Review the previous lesson's homework. Call on one or two students to share their responses to the prompt.

Introduce the Selection

5 minutes

- Tell students they will read the rest of Act Three from *The Importance of Being Earnest* as a group.
- Have students turn to page 232 in the Reader.
- As they read, tell students to think back to how themes and ideas were set up and foreshadowed earlier in the play and how those produce a comic result at the play's conclusion.
- If necessary, remind students that *dramatic irony* is a literary device by which the audience's understanding of events or individuals is greater than that of the characters. *Perspective* refers to a character's thoughts, feelings, and actions.
- Read the purpose for reading from the board/chart paper:

To examine how multiple perspectives and dramatic irony produce humor in the conclusion of *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Have individual students take turns reading the selection aloud. Encourage students to read the text as if they were performing on stage, with dramatic voices and intonation. You may also alternate between having students read aloud and read silently. Occasionally pause to ask questions in order to check for understanding and draw students' attention to key vocabulary and concepts. Use the guided reading supports listed below for this purpose.

Note to Teacher: If time permits, ask for volunteers to read aloud the roles as a readers' theater exercise. You may want these students to come to the front of the classroom to read their parts aloud. Again, encourage the "performers" to use expression and movement during their reading, and to follow the stage directions. Tell the remaining students to follow along in their Readers.

Note to Teacher: You may wish to have students complete Activity Page 4.3 after reading the selection, in addition to or in lieu of discussing the questions in class.

[pages 232–234]

Inferential On page 232, Lady Bracknell says, "To speak frankly, I am not in favor of long engagements. They give people the opportunity of finding out each other's character before marriage, which I think is never advisable." As the audience, we now know a lot about Lady Bracknell's character. What do we know about her that she doesn't know about herself?

- o The audience knows that Lady Bracknell, along with every other character in the play, is two-faced. She is duplicitous and shallow and contradicts herself frequently. But this character and the others are just gross exaggerations displaying the manners and true priorities of the period. The audience sees such manners are really not manners at all but often behaviors that cover the realities of that culture. Dramatic irony, knowing more about the characters than they know about themselves, has been apparent throughout the play.

Inferential How does Jack turn the tables on Lady Bracknell on these pages? How is his perspective toward Algernon different than hers? Do you think Jack is being serious here, or does he have another motive?

- o After Lady Bracknell has spent much of the play forbidding Jack to marry Gwendolen, Jack now threatens to forbid Algernon to marry his ward, Cecily. From his perspective, Algernon is a lying scoundrel. From Lady Bracknell's perspective, he is an extremely eligible young man. As for Jack's motives, he may be sincere—or he may be withholding his consent until Lady Bracknell approves of his engagement to Gwendolen.

[pages 236–248]

Literal What does Jack reveal about Cecily that creates a potential problem regarding her marriage to Algernon?

- o He reveals that she will not receive her fortune until she is thirty-five years old. Though Algernon says he is willing to wait, Lady Bracknell seems to have her doubts.

Inferential Why does Lady Bracknell react with alarm when Dr. Chasuble tells her that both Jack and Algernon want to be baptized? How do multiple perspectives and dramatic irony make her reaction funny?

- o Lady Bracknell does not know anything about the "Ernest" situation and is therefore appalled to think that two grown men have not yet been baptized. The audience knows

the real reason why the christenings have been scheduled. The contrast between Lady Bracknell's perspective on the situation and the audience's perspective make her reaction funny.

Literal How does Lady Bracknell react when she hears the name *Prism*? How does Miss Prism react when she sees Lady Bracknell? What does Lady Bracknell demand to know?

- o Lady Bracknell reacts quite violently and immediately asks Dr. Chasuble about Miss Prism, ordering her to be summoned. Miss Prism seems horrified to see Lady Bracknell, who demands to know where “the baby” is.

Note to Teacher: Students may be confused about this sudden and dramatic turn of events. For a moment, it is the audience that is unaware of what is happening. Point out that Lady Bracknell and Miss Prism have a perspective on something that everyone else in the play—and the audience—currently lack.

Literal Summarize the events that Lady Bracknell and Miss Prism discuss on pages 244–246.

- o Twenty-eight years earlier, Miss Prism took a baby from Lord and Lady Bracknell's house for a walk in a stroller. Neither she nor the baby ever returned. Weeks later, the stroller was found containing the manuscript of a novel . . . but no baby. Miss Prism explains that she had a handbag with her and absentmindedly placed the baby in the handbag and the manuscript in the stroller.

Note to Teacher: If necessary, remind students that Miss Prism had earlier told Cecily about her novel and how the manuscript had been lost (pages 126–128).

CHALLENGE: Why do you think Miss Prism did not go looking for the baby she accidentally misplaced?

- o Possible answer: Miss Prism's behavior can be explained in the same way as much of the nonsensical behavior we have seen throughout the play—the play is a farce, the situations are unbelievable, and it's all set up for the themes and the witty dialogue. Themes explored through dialogue and setting are what this play is about. It is not intended to be “realistic” in any meaningful way.

Inferential What does the audience know about Jack and a handbag and a three-volume novel that the other characters present don't know?

- o Jack was adopted after being left in a handbag at Victoria Station (pages 92–94). And we also know of Miss Prism's failed “novel,” as she revealed that to Cecily (pages 126–128). Of course, Lady Bracknell knows about Jack and the handbag, but as she confronts Miss Prism and all becomes clear, the audience sees Jack and Algernon (who know full well) anxiously attempting to shield Cecily and Gwendolen from the events. Dr. Chasuble “starts back in horror.” This is another example of dramatic irony as the audience knows considerably more than most of the characters.

Inferential As soon as Miss Prism admits she left a baby boy in a handbag at Victoria Station (the Brighton line), Jack runs off “to [his] room for a moment.” What's that all about?

- o Some students may blurt out that Jack has figured out that he is the baby Miss Prism dropped off and that that's how he came to be adopted. Other students may be so caught up in the humor of it all that they miss this clue.

Stop and Jot: Have students stop and jot a *who* question about the mother of the baby that Miss Prism lost, in light of Lady Bracknell saying she “dare not even suspect” what Jack is doing, running off, but mentions to Chasuble, “I need hardly tell you that in families of high position strange coincidences are not supposed to occur.” As time allows, invite a few students to share their questions and discuss answers. Explain that sometimes students will need to keep reading in order to find an answer.

[pages 250–252]

Literal Jack warmly embraces Miss Prism as his mother. How does she react?

- o She recoils and tells him she is unmarried. The implication is that she is not his mother or possibly that she is but doesn’t want to admit that she had a child when she was unmarried—but she doesn’t say that. This is great dialogue, because it leads to something even funnier.

Inferential How do Jack’s comments at the bottom of page 252 relate back to themes Wilde has put forth throughout the play, especially the theme of identity?

- o Again, it’s funny because Jack always said exactly the opposite, stating that he had no real brother, only the one he had dreamed up. But Algernon and Jack are clearly close friends, like brothers, throughout the play. So they have created a bond, an identity, through friendship. There is also a nod to the theme of self-awareness—or a lack of it—as Jack suggests Algernon should have treated him a bit better, since Algernon “never behaved” like a brother to him.

Note to Teacher: If necessary, take a moment to explain Jack’s parentage to any students who may be confused.

[pages 254–260]

Literal What was Jack’s given name at birth?

- o Jack was (quite conveniently) given the name “Ernest” at birth.

Inferential Why was Algernon never on speaking terms with his own father? How is this a pun?

- o Algernon’s father died before he was a year old. The phrase “not on speaking terms” usually means “not having a friendly relationship.” The comment is a pun because infants quite literally cannot speak. The dialogue is written, even here at the end, to be witty.

Inferential Interpret the play’s concluding line.

- o Students’ answers may vary. Jack may be saying that, after all the tumult, he finally understands that the truth is important. Others may note that the irony of the lies Jack has been telling all along about his name were actually true—were actually “in earnest.” Accept all reasonable responses.

Evaluative Do you think Wilde achieved his goal of writing a trivial play for serious people?

- o Student answers may vary. With relatively less life experience, some students may be so caught up in the humor that they focus more on that. Students with more life experience may want to discuss the themes Wilde addresses in the play.

Remind students of the purpose for reading:

To examine how multiple perspectives and dramatic irony produce humor in the conclusion of *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Bring students back together, and have them form two concentric circles. Pair students from the inner circle with students from the outer circle. Have pairs discuss the first discussion question. Then have outer circle students rotate clockwise to discuss the second question with new partners.

- How much of the humor in *The Importance of Being Earnest* depends on dramatic irony? Give some examples.
- Do you think Wilde would have achieved his purposes for writing *The Importance of Being Earnest* without the extensive use of dramatic irony? Explain.

Call on several students to share a takeaway from their discussions.

TAKE-HOME MATERIAL

Reading

- If students did not complete Activity Page 4.3 during the Reading lesson, have them complete it for homework.
- Ask students to complete the writing prompt activity on Activity Page 4.4.

Lesson 5

AT A GLANCE CHART

| Lesson | Time | Activity | Materials |
|--|--------|---|---|
| DAY 1: Reading | 45 min | Whole Group: Video Clip of <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> Act One, Part One | <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> Equipment to display short clips from the play Activity Pages 4.4 (Review), 5.1, 5.2 |
| DAY 2: Grammar Writing | 15 min | Introduce the Present Subjunctive and Verb Voice | Activity Page 5.3 |
| | 30 min | Write a Short Play: Plan | Activity Pages 5.4 |
| Take-Home Material | * | Reading, Grammar, Writing | Activity Pages 5.1, 5.2 |

Primary Focus Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

Reading

Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RL.8.1)

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of a text. (RL.8.2)

Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. (RL.8.3)

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings. (RL.8.4)

Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor. (RL.8.6)

Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors. (RL.8.7)

Writing

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. (W.8.3, W.8.3.a-d)

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (W.8.4)

With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed. (W.8.5)

Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others. (W.8.6)

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. (W.8.10)

Speaking and Listening

Follow rules of classroom discussion. (SL.8.1.b)

Come to discussions prepared, ask questions during discussion, offer feedback, and absorb new information. (SL.8.1.a, SL.8.1.c, SL.8.1.d)

Ask and answer questions about the text. (SL.8.1, SL.8.2)

Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced. (SL.8.3)

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (SL.8.6)

Language

Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice. (L.8.1.b)

Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood. (L.8.1.c)

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization and punctuation when writing. (L.8.2, L.8.2.a, L.8.2.c)

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact). (L.8.1, L.8.3, L.8.3.a)

Determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases choosing flexibly from a range of strategies, including context and the relationship between words. (L.8.4, L.8.4.a, L.8.4.c, L.8.5.b)

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language. (L.8.5, L.8.5.a)

Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. (L.8.6)

ADVANCE PREPARATION

Reading

- Be prepared to review events of the play from the previous lesson with students.
- Be prepared to discuss the homework writing assignment on Activity Page 4.4.
- Find and prepare equipment to display one or more recordings of performance scenes from *The Importance of Being Earnest* in class.
- Identify clips from *The Importance of Being Earnest* that have corresponding text in the Reader so students can follow along as they watch. We recommend the opening scene from Act One. Additional scenes are provided in the Online Resources, or you may choose other scenes (readily available on YouTube and similar online sources). Use this link to download the CKLA Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to performances of *The Importance of Being Earnest* can be found: <https://www.coreknowledge.org/free-resource/ckla-unit-7-Earnest/OnlineResources>
- Write the purpose for reading on the board/chart paper: *To compare a filmed or live performance of The Importance of Being Earnest with the written text.*

DAY 1

READING

45 minutes

Whole Group: Video Clip of Act One, Scene One

Review

5 minutes

- Review the events of the play from the previous lesson: *When Lady Bracknell learns that Cecily is wealthy, she agrees to Algernon's engagement. However, Jack objects, calling Algernon a liar—then agrees to the union if Lady Bracknell will consent to his marriage to Gwendolen, which Lady Bracknell refuses. As she prepares to leave with Gwendolen, Dr. Chasuble arrives and mentions Miss Prism. Lady Bracknell is shocked to hear the name Prism and accuses the governess of abducting her sister's baby years ago. Miss Prism tells her own story of having lost the baby in a handbag at the railway station. Jack produces the handbag and soon discovers he is the nephew of Lady Bracknell, his mother's sister, and that Algernon is his elder brother. Jack's given name was actually Ernest John. Jack declares that he finally understands the importance of being earnest.* Ask students to recap events, themes, dialogue, and any other details as needed.
- Review the previous lesson's homework. Call on one or two students to share their responses to the prompt.

Introduce the Scene

5 minutes

- Tell students they will view a staged performance of the first part of Act One and compare it to the text on the page.
- Remind students that *The Importance of Being Earnest* is a play. While it has been published and read for decades, it was always intended to be experienced primarily as a theatrical production.

- Tell students that watching a play, in the theater or in a movie adaptation, is a different experience from reading it. When we read a play, we get to imagine the characters in a certain way. We get to decide how they speak their lines and what actions they take, according to our own interpretation of the play. In a production, all those decisions are made by actors, directors, set designers, and many others. Hearing lines spoken aloud by actors can give us a very different interpretation of the lines and their emphasis than those we can come up with ourselves. Decisions about costumes (what actors wear) and setting (how the scenes are set up visually) can often provoke the audience to consider the relevance of material like *The Importance of Being Earnest* to their own lives. Tell students that performances of *The Importance of Being Earnest* have sometimes been staged as if it were the modern day, to establish connections between the events in the play and those in a contemporary era.

Note to Teacher: You may find it useful to reinforce with students that the purpose of comparing the written text to a performance is not to track every deviation from the text. Instead, encourage students to look for general similarities and differences.

- Have students turn to page 30 in the Reader.
- Read the purpose for reading from the board/chart paper:

To compare a filmed or live performance of *The Importance of Being Earnest* with the written text.

View the Scene

25 minutes

- Set up the scene from *The Importance of Being Earnest* on the equipment you procured for this lesson. Before you begin to display the scene, make sure students have turned to the relevant scene in the Readers. Have students quickly read or skim through the text to remind themselves of the main points and events of the scene.
- Direct students' attention to Activity Page 5.1, which features a selection of questions that will help students think about how to compare the text of the play to the performance they are viewing.
- After you have viewed the scene, ask the questions on Activity Page 5.1 aloud to prompt discussion of the similarities and differences between the text and the performance.

Discuss the Scene and Wrap Up the Lesson

10 minutes

Remind students of the purpose for reading:

To compare a filmed or live performance of *The Importance of Being Earnest* with the written text.

- Ask students to look at “Discussion and Wrap-Up” on Activity Page 5.1. Tell students that they will write a comparison based on a prompt.
- Pick from one of the following prompts to compare and contrast the scene you watched to the text in *The Importance of Being Earnest*:
 - Pick one of the characters in the scene. Describe ways in which their presentation in the performance differs from the way they are described on the page, and describe

ways in which they are the same. Think about elements like language, dialogue, movement, and costuming, and explain your answer with reference to examples from the text and the performance.

- o Identify the mood of the scene in the text and the performance. Describe ways in which the mood of the performance differs from the way it is described or suggested on the page, and describe ways in which it is the same. Think about elements like lighting, staging, costuming, angles, and setting, and explain your answer with reference to examples from the text and the performance.
- Have students work independently. Give students time to think about their response and take notes. Then, go around the class, and ask a few students to read or state their response to whichever prompt they chose. Make sure students support their ideas with examples from the text and the performance. Ask several students to respond in turn.

TAKE-HOME MATERIAL

Reading

- If students did not complete Activity Page 5.1 during the Reading lesson, have them complete it for homework.
- Ask students to complete the writing prompt activity on Activity Page 5.2.

ADVANCE PREPARATION

Grammar

- Prepare and display somewhere in the classroom the Present Subjunctive Chart and the Active and Passive Voice Chart found on page 66 of this Teacher's Guide. You and students may refer to these charts when completing this unit's Grammar activities.

DAY 2

GRAMMAR

15 minutes

Active and Passive Voice

Introduce the Present Subjunctive and Verb Voice

15 minutes

- Remind students that in the previous unit they learned about the use of the past subjunctive mood of verbs. Ask students to give an example of a sentence using the past subjunctive.
- Prompt students by telling them that the past subjunctive mood of a verb is used to describe conditions and actions that are contrary to fact; the past subjunctive form resembles the past-tense form: for example, the past subjunctive form of the verb *can* is *could*.
 - o If only I *could* speak Italian. (expresses a wish)

- o If only I *had* waited another few minutes. (expresses regret)
- o If I *were* you, I would have taken a day off from work. (introduces a conditional statement)
- Tell students that there is another form of the subjunctive, the present subjunctive. Inform students that this form is used with certain verbs that convey instructions and commands, such as *insist*, *recommend*, *suggest*, or *demand*. Explain that the present subjunctive form of a verb resembles the present-tense form; it is noticeably different from the present tense only in the third-person singular and with the irregular verb *to be*.
 - o I insisted that the mechanic *check* the tires as well.
 - o They recommend that each applicant *visit* the office in person.
 - o We suggest that each traveler *arrive* an hour early at the airport.
 - o I demand that your children *refrain* from coming into my garden.
 - o I request that you *be* more attentive during class.
- Remind students that in Grade 7 they learned that verbs could have not only different moods but also different voices, an active voice and a passive voice.
 - o Students should already be familiar with the active voice, because it is the most common way of constructing sentences. In sentences written in the active voice, the subject performs the action of the verb. The verb may have a direct or indirect object.
 - Chelsea sees the gardener.
 - Chelsea gave her best friend a book.
 - o In sentences written in the passive voice, the subject receives the action of the verb. The helping verb *to be* is used with the past participle of the verb. The performer of the action is often named in a prepositional phrase beginning with *by*.
 - Chelsea *is seen* by the gardener.
 - Chelsea *was given* a book by her best friend.
 - o It is preferable to use the active voice whenever you easily and logically can do so. Avoid unnecessary passive constructions.
 - “The gardener saw Chelsea” is the clearest and most straightforward way of communicating this action.
 - However, you might have a reason for using the passive voice. Chelsea might be trying to sneak across the yard without being noticed. Then, you might write, “Unfortunately, Chelsea was seen by the gardener.”
 - o Use the passive voice when it is the most logical and efficient way to communicate an idea.
 - “Edible mushrooms *are* often *found* under hardwood trees.” (Here the emphasis is on the mushrooms and where to look for them and not on who finds them.)

- “Each player *was given* five minutes to rest before the next round.” (Here the emphasis is on the players and the rules they played by rather than on who made the rules.)
- “Sometime during the night, my bicycle *was taken* from the front porch.” (In this case, the performer of the action is not known, only the action itself.)
- “Independent clauses can *be joined* with a semicolon or with a comma and a conjunction.” (Here the emphasis is on the action and the recipient of the action rather than on the performer of the action.)
- Show students the Present Subjunctive and Active and Passive Voice Charts you prepared in advance. Go over the charts to show the difference between the present tense and the present subjunctive and the difference between the active voice and the passive voice.

Present Subjunctive Chart

| Present Tense | Present subjunctive |
|--|---|
| The mechanic checks the tires as well. | I insisted that the mechanic check the tires as well. |
| Each applicant visits the office in person. | They recommend that each applicant visit the office in person. |
| Each traveler arrives an hour early at the airport. | We suggest that each traveler arrive an hour early at the airport. |
| Your children refrain from coming into my garden. | I demand that your children refrain from coming into my garden. |

Active and Passive Voice Chart

| Active Voice | Passive Voice |
|--|---|
| Chelsea sees the gardener. | Chelsea is seen by the gardener. |
| Chelsea gave her best friend a book. | Chelsea was given a book by her best friend. |
| The gardener saw Chelsea. | Unfortunately, Chelsea was seen by the gardener. |
| People often find edible mushrooms under hardwood trees. | Edible mushrooms are often found under hardwood trees. |
| They gave each player five minutes to rest before the next round. | Each player was given five minutes to rest before the next round. |
| Sometime during the night, someone took my bicycle from the front porch. | Sometime during the night, my bicycle was taken from the front porch. |
| You can join independent clauses with a semicolon or with a comma and a conjunction. | Independent clauses can be joined with a semicolon or with a comma and a conjunction. |

- Have students turn to Activity Page 5.3. Briefly review together the directions. Tell students to complete the items on the page. Circulate around the room to be certain that students understand the directions. Tell students to complete the remainder of the activity page for homework.

WRITING

30 minutes

Write a Short Play: Plan

Introduce

10 minutes

- Tell students they will be planning and writing an original short comedy play. Explain that students will use their reading and analysis of *The Importance of Being Earnest* as a guide and inspiration.
- Refer to the Writing Process Chart as needed to reinforce that today students will be working on the Plan step of the process.
- To access prior knowledge and connect to students' experiences, have them discuss briefly how people create humor: *What makes a story or show funny? What makes a stand-up comic funny? What makes The Importance of Being Earnest funny? How can you categorize types of humor?*
- Tell students that like Wilde's play, their plays should use some of the following elements to create humor:
 - o **dramatic irony and misunderstandings:** Dramatic irony occurs when the audience knows something a character does not know. For example, the audience may know a character is in disguise or eavesdropping while other characters do not. This can easily lead to situations in which a character misunderstands what someone says or does while the audience knows exactly what is going on.
 - o **flashback:** Flashback occurs when a story presents an event or memory from the past. This is often used to reveal a secret from the past or some details that make sense of the present situation. A flashback can create humor; for example, a sitcom might flash back to a past moment in time when the characters had hilariously outdated hairstyles or fashions.
 - o **foreshadowing:** Foreshadowing is a reference early in a story that hints at something significant that will occur later in the narrative or a theme that will become clear later. In a play, for example, a chance remark or seemingly unimportant prop may prove important later on in the play.
 - o **satire and parody:** Satire uses exaggeration and irony to critique something about society. *The Importance of Being Earnest* uses satire to make fun of Victorian society. Modern examples of satire are Steven Colbert's *The Colbert Report* and the satirical news publication *The Onion*. Parody occurs when a writer mimics another work, such as a song or film, in order to make fun of something. An example is Seth Grahame-Smith's *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, a parody of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

- Review with students the structural elements of a written drama, called a **script**, explaining that they need to include these elements in their own plays:
 - **cast of characters:** This is a list of the characters who will appear in the play, often with a short description of each.
 - **acts:** A play is divided into acts. Divisions between acts often occur when there is a major change in the action or setting. Usually, the opening act sets up the characters and the main problem, additional acts complicate the problem, and the final act resolves the problem. Shorter plays may only be one act.
 - **scenes:** Each act is further divided into scenes. A scene change may happen when the setting shifts or when different characters take the stage.
 - **lines of dialogue:** Dialogue is what the characters say to each other. Unlike in a short story, where dialogue is set inside quotation marks and formatted in paragraphs, in a play each actor's lines of dialogue are introduced by their character's name and a colon, and no quotation marks are used.
 - **stage directions:** Stage directions, often set in italics and inside parentheses or brackets, provide instructions for how the actors move, how they should say their lines, what the characters are feeling or thinking, and how the scenes change.
 - **set and props:** Stage directions may include specific instructions about the set (larger structures that create the setting) and props (smaller objects).
- Encourage students to find examples of these elements in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Brainstorming Session

7 minutes

- Have students look at Activity Page 5.4. This page will help students devise a comic situation and some elements of a comedic play that they will create in this unit.
- Tell students that they can take a few minutes to brainstorm ideas with a peer and that then they will complete the page as homework. Have them meet with peers for a brainstorming session.

Wrap Up

3 minutes

- Allow a few students to share one of their ideas as a way to further inspire brainstorming.

TAKE-HOME MATERIAL

Grammar

- If students did not complete Activity Page 5.3 during the Grammar lesson, have them complete it for homework.

Writing

- Have students take home Activity Page 5.4 to complete for homework.

Lesson 6

AT A GLANCE CHART

| Lesson | Time | Activity | Materials |
|------------------------------|--------|--|--|
| DAY 1: Morphology | 15 min | Introduce Roots <i>satis</i> , <i>sophos</i> , <i>sonus</i> , and <i>caput</i> | Activity Page 6.1 |
| Writing | 30 min | Write a Short Play: Plan | Activity Page 6.2 |
| DAY 2: Grammar | 15 min | Practice Using Mood and Voice | Activity Page 6.3 |
| Writing | 30 min | Write a Short Play: Draft | Activity Pages 6.4, 6.5 |
| Take-Home Material | * | Morphology, Grammar, Writing | Activity Pages 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 |

Primary Focus Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

Writing

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. (W.8.3)

Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. (W.8.3.a)

Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. (W.8.3.b)

Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events. (W.8.3.c)

Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. (W.8.3.d)

Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events. (W.8.3.e)

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (W.8.4)

With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed. (W.8.5)

Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others. (W.8.6)

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. (W.8.10)

Speaking and Listening

Follow rules of classroom discussion. (SL.8.1.b)

Come to discussions prepared, ask questions during discussion, offer feedback, and absorb new information. (SL.8.1.a, SL.8.1.c, SL.8.1.d)

Ask and answer questions about the text. (SL.8.1, SL.8.2)

Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced. (SL.8.3)

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (SL.8.6)

Language

Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice. (L.8.1.b)

Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood. (L.8.1.c)

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact). (L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.2.a, L.8.3, L.8.3.a)

Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word. (L.8.4.b)

Determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases choosing flexibly from a range of strategies, including context and the relationship between words. (L.8.4, L.8.4.a, L.8.4.c, L.8.5.b)

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language. (L.8.5, L.8.5.a)

Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. (L.8.6)

ADVANCE PREPARATION

Morphology

- Prepare and display somewhere in the classroom the Greek and Latin Roots Chart found on page 72 of this Teacher's Guide. You and students may refer to this chart when completing this unit's Morphology activities.

DAY 1

MORPHOLOGY

15 minutes

Greek/Latin Roots *satis*, *sophos*, *sonus*, and *caput*

Introduce Roots *satis*, *sophos*, *sonus*, and *caput*

15 minutes

- Point out the Greek and Latin Roots Chart you displayed in the classroom, and read it with students.
- Tell students this unit they will study the roots *satis*, *sophos*, *sonus*, and *caput*.
 - Explain that *satis* means “enough.”
 - Explain that *sophos* means “wise.”
 - Explain that *sonus* means “sound.”
 - Explain that *caput* means “head.”
- Write the root *satis* on the chart, and point out that it is pronounced /sotis/. Write the meaning of the root on the chart.
- Write the root *sophos* on the chart, and point out that it is pronounced /soefos/. Write the meaning of the root on the chart.
- Write the root *sonus* on the chart, and point out that it is pronounced /soenus/. Write the meaning of the root on the chart.
- Write the root *caput* on the chart, and point out that it is pronounced /kopoot/. Write the meaning of the root on the chart.
- Remind students that roots can help with understanding the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases. Point out the role the root plays in each of the examples given. Use the chart below as a guide.
 - *Satisfy* means to make happy or complete.
 - *Sophisticated* means worldly wise, advanced, or complex.
 - *Sonar* is the use of sound to image objects in water or air.
 - A *capital* crime is one punishable by death.

Greek and Latin Roots Chart

| Root | Meaning | Example |
|--------|---------|--|
| satis | enough | <i>Satisfy</i> means to make happy or complete. |
| sophos | wise | <i>Sophisticated</i> means worldly wise, advanced, or complex. |
| sonus | sound | <i>Sonar</i> is the use of sound to image objects in water. |
| caput | head | A <i>capital</i> crime is one punishable by death. |

- Have students turn to Activity Page 6.1. Briefly review the directions together. Tell students to complete the activity page in class or for homework.

WRITING

30 minutes

Write a Short Play: Plan

Review

5 minutes

- Remind students that they are using the writing process to create an original short comedic play. Tell students they will be continuing to plan their plays today.
- Ask a few students to share examples of dramatic irony, parody, satire, foreshadowing, or flashback that they have decided to use in their plays from Activity Page 5.4, which they completed as homework.
- Note that students will need to make sure they have included *at least two* of the comedic elements mentioned above in their plays.

SUPPORT: If students do not yet have two comedic elements, allow a few minutes for them to add to their activity page, working either with a partner or with you one-on-one.

Elements of Drama

20 minutes

- Have students take a look at Activity Page 6.2. Explain that before students begin drafting, they will use this graphic organizer to plan their plays.
- Review the parts of the graphic organizer, pointing out that a play has several (but not all) elements in common with other narratives, such as novels or short stories. Write definitions and clarifying examples on the board as needed as you discuss:
 - o **characters:** the people in the play, portrayed by actors
 - o **setting:** where and when the play takes place
 - o **plot:** the events of the play, which revolve around a main problem or conflict that is first complicated and then resolved
 - o **dialogue:** words characters speak to each other
 - o **theme:** underlying message of a work (A comedic play can still have an underlying theme that may be funny or more serious; it might cause us to reflect on the absurdity of life or human nature, for example.)

- o **staging:** decisions about the way the play appears on stage, such as **blocking** (positions of the actors on the stage), the set (structures and larger objects such as furniture that create the world of the play), **costumes**, props, **lighting**, and **sound effects**.

- Have students begin filling out Activity Page 6.2.

SUPPORT: Work with individual students as they develop their staging. Have students talk through the ideas they have written down on Activity Pages 5.4 and 6.2. Then, have students picture the stage in their mind and describe what they see. Ask questions such as: What are your characters wearing? What does the stage look like? Are the lights bright or dim? Have students jot down ideas on their graphic organizers as you discuss.

CHALLENGE: If students are ready for a challenge, introduce the idea of breaking the fourth wall. Explain that the fourth wall is the invisible wall between the actors on stage and the audience. Usually, both the actors and the audience pretend the wall is a real separation—the actors ignore the audience, and the audience doesn’t participate in the play. Actors that break the fourth wall somehow acknowledge the audience—by speaking directly to or somehow interacting with audience members—or otherwise call attention to the fact that the environment is artificial. In this play, the prologue is an example of breaking the fourth wall. Challenge students to think of ways this device could be used for comedic effect and include it in their plays.

Wrap Up

5 minutes

- Have a few students share examples of the characters, plot, setting, and staging they wrote on Activity Page 6.2 with the class.
- Tell students they can continue filling in Activity Page 6.2 for homework if they were not able to complete it during class.

TAKE-HOME MATERIAL

Morphology

- If students did not complete Activity Page 6.1 during the Morphology lesson, have them complete it for homework.

Writing

- Have students take home Activity Page 6.2 to complete.

DAY 2

GRAMMAR

15 minutes

Verb Mood and Voice

Practice Using Mood and Voice

15 minutes

- Remind students that in the previous lesson, they learned about the use of the present subjunctive mood and the active and passive voices of verbs.

- Review how the present subjunctive mood of a verb is used with another verb that expresses a suggestion or command. Point out that the present subjunctive is usually identical in form to the present indicative; it is distinguishable in only two situations:
 - When it is used with a third-person singular subject:
 - I insisted that he *hold* his tongue when I am speaking. (present subjunctive)
 - He usually *holds* his tongue when I am speaking.
 - When the present subjunctive verb is any form of the irregular verb *to be*:
 - They suggested I *be* more attentive during lectures.
 - I *am* usually very attentive during lectures.
 - We request that you *be* present during the meetings.
 - You *are* usually present during meetings.
- Tell students that good writers avoid using the passive voice unnecessarily or inappropriately.
 - Using the passive can result in sentences that are awkward and wordy. Correct such sentences in your own writing by rewriting them in the active voice.
 - Jen’s calculator was purchased by her at Nice Device.
 - Jen purchased her calculator at Nice Device.
 - Using the passive voice can be unclear or even deliberately misleading, because it can hide the person or thing performing the action of the verb. Correct such sentences in your own writing by rewriting them in the active voice.
 - Rocks were thrown at the people peacefully demonstrating in support of the bill.
 - Opponents of the bill threw rocks at the people peacefully demonstrating in support of the bill.
- Have students turn to Activity Page 6.3. Briefly review together the directions. Tell students to complete the items on the page. Circulate around the room to be certain that students understand the directions. Tell students to complete the remainder of the activity page for homework.

WRITING

30 minutes

Write a Short Play: Draft

Review

3 minutes

- Remind students that they completed a plan for their short play in the last lesson. Review what students have learned about structural elements of a script (e.g., acts, scenes, stage directions), devices that can create humor (e.g., dramatic irony, parody, flashback), and literary elements of plays (e.g., character, plot, staging). Have a few students offer examples or thoughts on these to spark recollections of this prior learning.

- Tell students that they are almost ready to begin drafting their plays. Refer to the Writing Process Chart as needed.
- Remind students that they are in charge of their own writing process and at any time can add to or change their plan if they find it isn't working. The plan is simply an outline for students as they begin the drafting process.

Develop Humor

10 minutes

- Tell students that before they begin to draft, they will explore the elements that create humor a little more.
- Have students work with peers to complete Activity Page 6.4 with original examples of dramatic irony, flashbacks, foreshadowing, satire, and parody.

Draft a Play

15 minutes

- Have students work independently to begin writing their plays on Activity Page 6.5.
- As students write, circulate throughout the room, monitoring students' progress and providing guidance and support as needed.

SUPPORT: If students need additional help with formatting, consider setting up a template in a word processing app that includes the correct formatting for placing act and scene numbers, characters' lines, and stage directions and having students copy and paste them as needed to complete their drafts.

CHALLENGE: If students are ready for a challenge, have them sketch ideas for sets, props, and costumes to go with their drafts.

Wrap Up

2 minutes

- Have a few students share an example from Activity Page 6.4.
- Tell students they can continue their drafts for homework.

TAKE-HOME MATERIAL

Grammar

- If students did not complete Activity Page 6.3 during the Grammar lesson, have them complete it for homework.

Writing

- If students did not complete Activity Page 6.4 during the Writing Lesson, have them complete it for homework.
- Students can also continue their drafts on Activity Page 6.5.

Lesson 7

AT A GLANCE CHART

| Lesson | Time | Activity | Materials |
|------------------------------|--------|---|-------------------------|
| DAY 1: Morphology | 15 min | Practice Roots <i>satis</i> , <i>sophos</i> , <i>sonus</i> , and <i>caput</i> | Activity Page 7.1 |
| Writing | 30 min | Write a Short Play: Share, Evaluate, Revise | Activity Pages 7.2, 7.3 |
| DAY 2: Writing | 45 min | Write a Short Play: Edit and Polish | Activity Page 7.4 |
| Take-Home Material | * | Morphology, Writing | Activity Page 7.1 |

Primary Focus Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

Writing

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. (W.8.3)

Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. (W.8.3.a)

Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. (W.8.3.b)

Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events. (W.8.3.c)

Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. (W.8.3.d)

Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events. (W.8.3.e)

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (W.8.4)

With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed. (W.8.5)

Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others. (W.8.6)

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. (W.8.10)

Speaking and Listening

Follow rules of classroom discussion. (SL.8.1.b)

Come prepared, ask questions during discussion, offer feedback, and absorb new information. (SL.8.1.a, SL.8.1.b, SL.8.1.c, SL.8.1.d)

Ask and answer questions about the text. (SL.8.1, SL.8.2)

Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced. (SL.8.3)

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (SL.8.6)

Language

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (L.8.1, L.8.1.c, L.8.2, L.8.2.a, L.8.2.c, L.8.3)

Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects. (L.8.3.a)

Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word. (L.8.4.b)

Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary). (L.8.4.d)

Determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases choosing flexibly from a range of strategies, including context and the relationship between words. (L.8.4, L.8.4.a, L.8.4.c, L.8.5.b)

Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. (L.8.6)

DAY 1

MORPHOLOGY

15 minutes

Greek/Latin Roots *satis*, *sophos*, *sonus*, and *caput*

Practice Roots *satis*, *sophos*, *sonus*, and *caput*

15 minutes

- Remind students that in the previous lesson, they studied the roots *satis*, *sophos*, *sonus*, and *caput*.

- Tell students that the rich vocabulary of the English language comes in part from the development of words that combine roots with other roots and with affixes.
 - The word *satisfaction* combines the root meaning “enough” with a root meaning “to make” and the suffix *tion* and means the state or condition of having been made enough.
 - The word *sophomore* combines the root meaning “wise” with a root meaning “foolish” to indicate that a student has some learning but still a long way to go. Adding the suffix *ic* turns the word into an adjective meaning pretentious or juvenile.
 - Adding the prefix *hyper* (“above” or “beyond”) to the root *sonos* yields the word *hypersonic*, meaning faster than sound, which was needed once aviation technology achieved that level of speed in flight.

CHALLENGE: As time allows, invite students to use their considerable experience of word roots to find combinations of roots in their reading that help clarify the meaning of unfamiliar words. Have students confirm their findings in a dictionary.

- Have students turn to Activity Page 7.1. Briefly review the directions. Tell students to complete the activity page in class or for homework.

WRITING

30 minutes

Write a Short Play: Share, Evaluate, Revise

Introduce

3 minutes

- Tell students that they should now be ready to share their drafts with a peer and get feedback that will help them revise their plays.
- Refer to the Writing Process Chart as needed to reinforce that students are moving to the revising step of the process.
- Review the Write a Short Play Rubric on Activity Page 7.2 with students. Explain that the rubric describes the criteria on which students’ plays will be assessed. Answer any questions students may have about the rubric.
- Introduce students to the Write a Short Play Peer Review Checklist on Activity Page 7.3. Explain that students will work with a partner to review their plays using the checklist.
- Pair up students to conduct the peer review.

Review a Peer’s Short Play

15 minutes

- Encourage students to read their drafts aloud to one another, noticing how the dialogue sounds when spoken. Remind students that a play is ultimately meant to be seen and heard, not read silently.
- Have students review each other’s plays using the Write a Short Play Peer Review Checklist on Activity Page 7.3. Students can also consult the Write a Short Play Rubric on Activity Page 7.2.
- As students share their plays and complete Activity Page 7.3, circulate around the room, and provide assistance as needed.

SUPPORT: If students need support in evaluating their partner's plays, work with them to go through the Peer Review Checklist and consider each item, discussing whether their peer completed each item fully, some, or not at all. Have students jot down ideas for their peer conference as you discuss.

Conduct a Peer Conference

10 minutes

- When students have completed their review of their peer's play, provide them an opportunity to confer with one another to discuss the suggestions recorded on the Write a Short Play Peer Review Checklist on Activity Page 7.3.
- Remind students to make their feedback constructive and helpful, focusing on how the short play can be improved, not just pointing out negatives.

Wrap Up

2 minutes

- Have a few students share with the class one piece of feedback they are going to use as they continue revising their drafts.
- Tell students that they should complete their revisions as homework. Encourage students to read their plays aloud to family or friends for additional feedback on the lines of dialogue.

TAKE-HOME MATERIAL

Morphology

- If students did not complete Activity Page 7.1 during the Morphology lesson, have them complete it for homework.

Writing

- If students did not complete their revisions during the Writing lesson, have them complete them for homework.

DAY 2

WRITING

45 minutes

Write a Short Play: Edit and Polish

Review

3 minutes

- Display the Writing Process Chart. Review the steps in the process that students have completed so far.
- Tell students that once they finish their revisions, they will begin to edit their plays. Inform students that in the editing step, they will make sure their plays are polished and ready to publish.

Prepare to Edit

15 minutes

- Tell students they will now have time to make any final revisions to their plays. Remind students that in the revision step, they can make bigger changes to their plays, such as rearranging dialogue or rewriting parts that are not working well.
- Remind students that they can consult the Rubric and the Peer Review Checklist from the previous session.
- Students can also read their play from start to finish and think about whether there is anything more they would like to add or change.
- As students revise, circulate throughout the room, monitoring students' progress and providing guidance and support as needed.

Edit and Polish a Play

20 minutes

- Have students look at Activity Page 7.4, and explain that they will use the Write a Short Play Editing Checklist to guide the editing and polishing process.
- Review the checklist with students and answer any questions before students begin editing. Point out that since their play is not in prose (sentences and paragraphs) and is made up mostly of dialogue, many of the items students are used to seeing on their checklist are not here. Stress that it is more important that students' dialogue suits each character and flows naturally.
- Remind students to consult the rubric as needed to make sure they have completed all the requirements.
- Have students work independently to edit and polish their plays.
- As students edit, circulate throughout the room, monitoring students' progress and providing guidance and support as needed.

SUPPORT: Remind students to refer to the Reader as a model of the format they can follow as they edit to ensure all lines of dialogue begin with a character's name and stage directions are formatted correctly.

CHALLENGE: If students complete the revision and editing steps and still have time to spare, challenge them to add humor visually, without changing dialogue. For example, to heighten dramatic irony, students might have something going on behind a character who is unaware of it. Any number of visual gags could be added, such as a seemingly strong character who struggles to lift a small suitcase or a piece of toilet paper stuck to a character's shoe.

Wrap Up

7 minutes

Have several students share their favorite section of their play with the class.

TAKE-HOME MATERIAL

Writing

- Allow students to continue editing and polishing their short plays as homework. Additionally, encourage students to prepare to publish their short plays, especially if they will be performing them.

Lesson 8

AT A GLANCE CHART

| Lesson | Time | Activity | Materials |
|-----------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| DAY 1: Writing | 45 min | Write a Short Play: Publish | Copies of students' plays |
| DAY 2: Unit Assessment | 35 min | Unit Assessment | Activity Page 8.1 |
| Unit Feedback Survey | 10 min | Unit Feedback Survey | Activity Page 8.2 |

Primary Focus Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

Writing

Write narrative to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. (W.8.3)

Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. (W.8.3.a)

Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. (W.8.3.b)

Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. (W.8.3.d)

Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events. (W.8.3.e)

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others. (W.8.6)

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. (W.8.10)

Speaking and Listening

Follow rules of classroom discussion. (SL.8.1.b)

Come prepared and questions during discussion, offer feedback, and absorb new information. (SL.8.1.a, SL.8.1.c, SL.8.1.d)

Ask and answer questions about the text. (SL.8.1, SL.8.2)

Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced. (SL.8.3)

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (SL.8.6)

Language

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (L.8.1, L.8.1.c, L.8.2, L.8.2.a, L.8.2.c, L.8.3)

Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects. (L.8.3.a)

Determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases choosing flexibly from a range of strategies, including context and the relationship between words. (L.8.4, L.8.4.a, L.8.4.c, L.8.5.b)

Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. (L.8.6)

ADVANCE PREPARATION

Writing

- Prepare copies of students’ plays if you decide to publish the plays in a performance or table-read format. Ensure there are enough copies of the finished plays for students to share, read, and follow along as needed.

DAY 1

WRITING

45 minutes

Write a Short Play: Publish

Introduce

10 minutes

- Explain that publishing a short play can take different forms. Suggest one of these two options for publishing students’ short plays:
 - o A table read: A table read is a type of dramatic reading that typically occurs in the early part of a rehearsal process, in which actors with assigned roles circle up and read through a play. Often stage directions are also read aloud.
 - o A staged reading: A staged reading is a way of performing a play without elements such as costumes and sets. In a staged reading, the actors perform the play using some elements of stagecraft (such as simple blocking and a few set pieces or props) but with their scripts in hand.

- Note that students may do a table read or staged reading of their entire play or of just a scene or two, depending on time. For a table read or staged reading, consider dividing students into groups. Each group will choose one of the students' plays to perform. Assign five- or ten-minute slots for each group to perform or read aloud their plays. Encourage students to divide the characters up amongst themselves and think about how they wish to perform their assigned roles before their performance. You may wish to use one of the Pausing Point days to allow extra time for each group to perform their chosen play.
- Guide a brief discussion of what option or options students prefer.
- Consider guiding the class to a consensus or taking a class poll to decide which option to use for the whole class.

Publish a Play

30 minutes

- Have students prepare to publish their plays using the method chosen.
- If students choose a performance option, set up time and space for the table reads or staged readings, and gather materials as needed.
- If time does not allow for all students to publish their plays during this lesson, have them complete the publishing step during a Pausing Point or an Enrichment activity.

Wrap Up

5 minutes

Ask several students to share the following:

- something they found hilarious about another student's play
- their favorite part of this writing project
- one surprising thing they learned as they wrote their plays

DAY 2

UNIT ASSESSMENT

45 minutes

- Make sure each student has a copy of Activity Page 8.1. You may have collected this activity page from students at the beginning of the unit.
- Tell students they will read two selections, answer questions about each, and respond to a writing prompt. In the next sections, students will answer grammar and morphology questions evaluating the skills they have practiced in this unit.
- Encourage students to do their best.
- Once students have finished the assessment, encourage them to review their papers quietly, rereading and checking their answers carefully.
- Circulate around the room as students complete the assessment to ensure everyone is working individually. Assist students as needed, but do not provide them with answers.

Reading Comprehension

The reading comprehension section of the Unit Assessment contains two selections and accompanying questions. Both selections are literary texts taken from George Bernard Shaw’s play *Pygmalion*.

These texts were created using guidance from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and recommendations from Student Achievement Partners (achievethecore.org). These texts are considered worthy of students’ time to read and meet the expectations for text complexity at Grade 8. The texts feature core content and domain vocabulary from the *Importance of Being Earnest* unit that students can draw on in service of comprehending the text.

The questions pertaining to these texts are aligned to the CCSS and are worthy of students’ time to answer. Questions have been designed so they do not focus on minor points in the text, but rather, they require deep analysis. Thus, each item might address multiple standards. In general, the selected-response items address Reading standards, and the constructed-response item addresses Writing standards. To prepare students for CCSS-aligned assessments, such as those developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced, some items replicate how technology may be incorporated in those assessments, using a paper-and-pencil format.

UNIT ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS

Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of Text

The literary texts used in the reading comprehension assessment, from George Bernard Shaw’s *Pygmalion*, have been profiled for text complexity using the quantitative measures described in the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, Supplement to Appendix A, “New Research on Text Complexity,” (CoreStandards.org/resources). Both selections fall within the Common Core Grades 7–8 Band.

Reading Comprehension Item Annotations and Correct Answer and Distractor Rationales

* To receive a point for a two-part question, students must correctly answer both parts of the question.

| Item | Correct Answer(s) | Standards |
|-------------------------|--|------------------|
| 1 <i>Inferential</i> | The guests are enchanted by Eliza. The text says that her appearance “produces an impression of such remarkable distinction and beauty as she enters that they all rise, quite flustered.” Clara cannot take her eyes off of Eliza, and Freddy immediately begins to flirt with her. | RL.8.1 |
| 2 <i>Literal</i> | B | RL.8.3 RL.8.4 |

| Item | Correct Answer(s) | Standards |
|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| *3 Part A Inferential | B | RL.8.1 RL.8.3 RL.8.4 |
| *3 Part B Inferential | Possible answer: They emphasize the class differences between Eliza and the two older women, who do not understand Eliza's decidedly unsophisticated language. The guests' astonishment at Eliza's lines also shows that, in upper-class society, one does not talk about such things as excessive drinking or "doing a person in." | RL.8.2 RL.8.3 RL.8.6 |
| 4 Inferential | A, D | RL.8.3 RL.8.6 |
| 5 Inferential | D | RL.8.1 RL.8.2 |
| 6 Inferential | The audience knows that Eliza is actually a lower-class flower girl who has been taught how to behave like an upper-class woman. Mrs. Higgins's guests do not know this. When Eliza first arrives, her dress and manner fool them into believing that she is a "duchess." As she begins to describe her family, however, they think she is using "the new small talk" (i.e., slang words). We, the audience, know this is how she actually speaks. This disparity creates humor. | RL.8.6 |
| 7 Inferential | C | RL.8.3 RL.8.4 |
| *8 Part A Inferential | Underline the sentence "You certainly are a pretty pair of babies, playing with your live doll." | RL.8.1 RL.8.2 RL.8.3 |
| *8 Part B Inferential | A | RL.8.4 |
| 9 Literal | C | RL.8.2 RL.8.3 |
| *10 Part A Inferential | A, B | RL.8.2 |

| Item | Correct Answer(s) | Standards |
|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| *10 Part B Inferential | Possible answer: Mrs. Higgins understands that teaching Eliza how to speak and behave like “a lady” will likely mean she will have no way to earn an income. She is not actually an upper-class woman, so she is not suitable for marriage to someone from that class. Yet her newfound manners will make it hard for her to take on traditional Victorian working class roles and employment. The two men seem not to understand that—or not to care. | RL.8.2 RL.8.6 |
| 11 Inferential | A | RL.8.1 RL.8.3 |
| 12 Inferential | Possible answer: Although she is frustrated by her son and Pickering, in this scene it is Mrs. Higgins who is logical and reasonable. She has a much better understanding than the men on how their experiment might impact Eliza. The men are presented as heartless and foolish boys. Their dominance of Eliza is shown as ultimately cruel. | RL.8.2 RL.8.3 RL.8.6 |

Writing Prompt Scoring

The writing prompt addresses CCSS W.8.1.a, W.8.1.c, W.8.1.d, L.8.1, L.8.2, and L.8.3.

| Score | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|-----------------|---|---|--|--|
| Criteria | Student writes a clear, coherent response. Response includes all the following: a comparison of the two texts that responds appropriately to the question. Response has no errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Response organizes information in a clear and logical manner. | Student writes a mostly coherent response. Response includes some of the following: a comparison of the two texts that responds appropriately to the question. Response has few errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Response mostly organizes information or presents information mostly logically. | Student writes a response that doesn’t compare the two texts fully. Response may be missing a full comparison of the two texts or may not respond adequately to the question. Response has some errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Response shows an attempt to organize information logically. | Student response fails to clearly address the prompt or lacks clarity and organization. Response features many errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. |

Grammar Answer Key

The Grammar section addresses CCSS L.8.1.b, L.8.1.c, L.8.1.d, and L.8.3.a.

1. refrain
2. be
3. arrive
4. attend
5. wear

6. be
7. I made several errors on my math test yesterday.
8. Everyone had a good time at the party last night.
9. Imelda brought her backpack to school that day.
10. During the night, all the garbage bins on the block had been knocked over.
11. Pumpkin pies are best enjoyed warm and with whipped cream.
12. She took her pencil out of her bag and wrote a letter.

Morphology Answer Key

The Morphology section addresses CCSS L.8.4.b.

1. H
2. F
3. G
4. K
5. I
6. L
7. A
8. C
9. B
10. D
11. E
12. J

UNIT FEEDBACK SURVEY

10 mins

At the conclusion of the unit, students complete the Unit Feedback Survey on Activity Page 8.2. Make sure students know that you respect their opinions and will take seriously all constructive feedback. Please take time to review and react to students' responses and comments. Consider how you might teach the next unit differently to improve learning and students' experiences.

Pausing Point

Culminating Activities

The following activities are offered should you choose to pause at one or two points during the teaching of this unit. During that time, we recommend that you use one or more of the Culminating Activities described below or an activity you create.

Pausing Point to Address Assessment Results

Please use the final two days of this unit to address results of the Unit Assessment (for reading comprehension, grammar, and morphology). Use each student's scores on the Unit Assessment to determine which remediation and/or enrichment opportunities will benefit particular students. In assigning these remediation and/or enrichment activities, you may choose to have students work individually, in small groups, or as a whole class.

Remediation

Reading Comprehension

It is important to understand that poor performance on the Reading Comprehension section of the Unit Assessment may be attributable to any number of factors. To ascertain which remediation efforts will be most worthwhile, it is highly recommended that you ask any student who performed poorly on this section to read at least one of the assessment passages aloud to you orally, one-on-one. If the student frequently misreads words in the text, this is indication of a more global decoding problem that may require further assessment and remediation by a reading specialist outside the context of the regular classroom.

Once the student finishes reading the passage(s) aloud, ask the comprehension questions orally. Analyze whether the student makes errors on the same questions answered incorrectly on the written assessment, as well as the type of questions answered incorrectly. Does the student have difficulty answering particular types of questions? If so, guided rereading of specific chapters in a small-group setting with other students who are struggling may be helpful.

Grammar and Morphology

For additional practice with the grammar and morphology skills taught in this unit, you may wish to have students complete the Grammar and Morphology Pausing Point activity pages provided in the Activity Book (PP.1–PP.2).

If students demonstrate a need for remediation in the foundational grammar and morphology skills required for the lessons in Grade 8, consult the CKLA Grades 6 and 7 materials for additional grammar and morphology lessons and activities. Alternatively, for students who demonstrate a general proficiency in grammar and morphology but who demonstrate a need for remediation in connection with specific skills covered in this unit, you may provide a more targeted remediation by reteaching only the lessons for those skills.

Writing

Redirect students to Activity Page SR.2 (Write a Short Play Rubric), Activity Page SR.4 (Write a Short Play Editing Checklist), and their completed short play. Provide time during the Pausing Point for students to revise and rewrite their essay using all of the above tools. The Write a Short Play Rubric and Write a Short Play Editing Checklist are included in the Teacher Resources section of this Teacher Guide for your reference.

If possible, meet briefly with each student to review their plans for revision and provide additional guidance.

Evaluate students' work after revisions are complete using the Write a Short Play Rubric and Write a Short Play Editing Checklist. Meet briefly with each student to provide feedback.

Enrichment

If students have mastered the skills in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, their experience with the unit concepts may be enriched by the following activities. Please preview in advance any third-party resources, i.e., links to websites other than the Core Knowledge Foundation, to determine suitability for the students with whom you work.

- Among other things, *The Importance of Being Earnest* satirizes Victorian ideas regarding social and gender roles. Ask interested students to explore societal attitudes toward gender and social class in Victorian England. Have students present their findings in a slideshow or multimedia presentation. Students can use Activity Page E.1 to list the sources they used to create their presentations.
- Many stage and film productions of *The Importance of Being Earnest* embrace the styles and aesthetics of Oscar Wilde's lifetime. Artistically minded students might enjoy designing settings and/or costumes for a reimagining of the play set in modern times. What would a contemporary Algernon's apartment look like? How would the characters be dressed? Students can sketch rough drafts of their designs on Activity Page E.2, but they should use their own materials to create their finished products.
- There are three couples in *The Importance of Being Earnest*: Jack and Gwendolen, Algernon and Cecily, and Dr. Chasuble and Miss Prism. What will their lives be like after they marry? Ask students to create a brief playlet focusing on one of the couples exactly one year after the end of Oscar Wilde's play. Students' playlets should include stage directions and dialogue and be written in the style of Oscar Wilde—droll, witty, and full of wordplay—yet true to the characters and themes as presented in the original play. Students can use Activity Page E.3 to write their playlets—along with an appropriate title.
- Oscar Wilde is eminently quotable. Many of his puns, epigrams, and paradoxical sayings are well-known and often repeated. Have students research some of Wilde's humorous quotations and use desktop publishing software to create a small chapbook of his best. Ask selected students to share some of their favorites before leading the class in a brief discussion about the use of humor in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Students can begin recording quotations on Activity Page E.4.

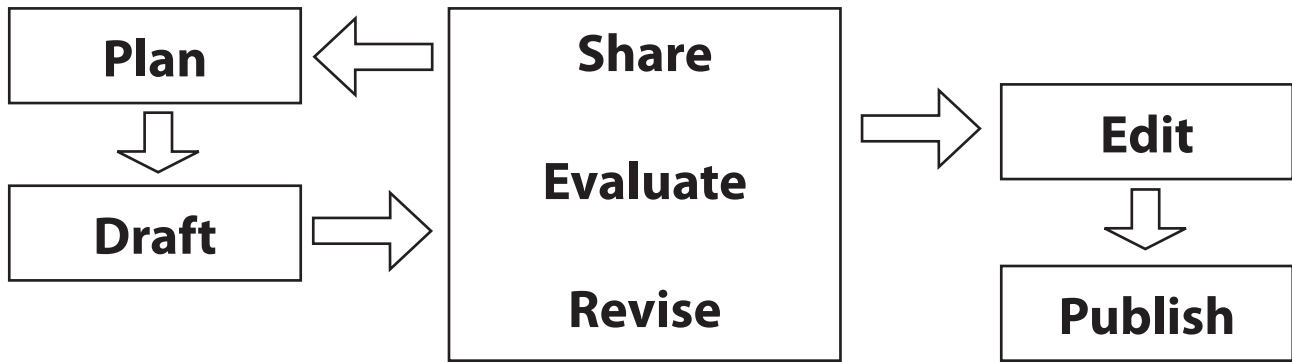
- Ask students to watch a film version of the entire play. The 1952 film starring Michael Redgrave and Edith Evans is well regarded, but there are many others. Some complete films are available for no cost on YouTube. Others can be streamed for a nominal fee. See the Online Resource Guide for specific links. Have students use Activity Page E.5 to compare/contrast the film with the version in the Reader. Also ask students to write a paragraph explaining which version they liked the best and why.
- Students may enjoy performing one (or more) scenes from the play for the class as a readers theater exercise. If students are sufficiently interested, have them create their own period costumes and props.
- Have students create collages of costuming and staging ideas, referring to images of performances of *The Importance of Being Earnest* found in the Reader for inspiration. Ask students to use ideas for costumes, props, and set design that will enhance the comedy.
- Have students stage a full performance of their plays (or scenes from their plays, depending on time), with lines memorized and a set, props, audio design, lighting if possible, and costumes. Consider working with the drama club or theater teacher at your school if available to coordinate performances.
- Have students adapt their short plays to different media; for example, they may use them to create a video or audio recording of their play. Allow time for these students to present their work to the class.

Teacher Resources

In this section you will find:

- The Writing Process
- Write a Short Play Rubric
- Write a Short Play Peer Review Checklist
- Write a Short Play Editing Checklist
- Proofreading Symbols
- Activity Book Answer Key

The Writing Process



Write a Short Play Rubric

| | Exemplary | Strong | Developing | Beginning |
|---------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| Use of Comedic Elements | The play creatively and effectively uses at least two elements that create humor. | The play clearly and effectively uses of at least two elements that create humor. | The play somewhat effectively uses of one or two elements that create humor. | Elements that create humor are missing from the play. |
| Script Structure | Script uses correct structural elements and is formatted correctly. | Script uses correct structural elements and is mostly formatted correctly. | Structure and format are not always appropriate for a script. | Script structural conventions are not followed. |
| Characters | Characters are very well developed through dialogue and clear stage directions. Dialogue flows naturally and is effective. | Characters are developed through dialogue and some stage directions. Dialogue is a little unnatural but is still effective. | Characters are developed only through dialogue. Dialogue is somewhat unnatural. | Characters are not well developed. Dialogue is unnatural and unclear. |
| Plot Events and Conflict | Plot events are completely clear and logically sequenced. | Plot events are somewhat clear and logically sequenced. | Plot events are somewhat clear and logically sequenced. | Plot events are not clear or logically sequenced. |
| | Conflict is clear and made more complex as events unfold. Complications add to the humor. | Conflict is somewhat clear and develops slightly as events unfold. Complications mostly add to the humor. | Conflict is somewhat unclear, and events do not develop it very much. Complications don't add much to the humor. | Conflict is unclear and is not impacted significantly by events. |
| Conclusion | The play ends in a satisfying way that resolves the problem. | The play ends in a somewhat satisfying way that resolves the problem. | The play ends in an unsatisfying way. | The ending of the play is far too brief or missing. |
| Staging | Staging ideas are fresh and creative and enhance the play's humor. | Staging ideas enhance the play's humor. | Staging ideas are lacking or do not enhance the humor. | Staging ideas are missing. |
| Language | Excellent spelling, grammar, and punctuation are used. | Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are mostly correct. | Spelling, grammar, and punctuation have several errors. | Spelling, grammar, and punctuation have many errors, and this interferes with communicating meaning. |

You may correct capitalization, punctuation, and grammar errors while you are revising.

Write a Short Play Peer Review Checklist

Complete this checklist as you read the draft of the short play written by a classmate.

Author's Name: _____

Reviewer's Name: _____

_____ The play correctly uses the structural elements of a script, such as stage directions and lines of dialogue.

_____ The play contains interesting characters and clear settings.

_____ The play contains a sequence of events. The events revolve around a main problem or conflict.

_____ The play contains dialogue that flows naturally and is effective in adding to the humor.

_____ The play uses elements that create and heighten humor, such as dramatic irony or flashback.

_____ The play comes to a conclusion that resolves the plot and ties up loose ends.

_____ The play uses staging creatively and in a way that enhances the humor.

Use the checklist above to help you complete the Peer Feedback on the back of this Activity Page.

Peer Feedback #1: Please select ONE prompt below to provide specific, constructive feedback to your partner. CIRCLE the prompt you select, and RESPOND with your feedback below.

Writing Power: What was the greatest strength of this draft? Why was it so powerful? How did it add to the draft as a whole?

Writing Inspiration: What aspect of this draft inspired you? What did you like about it? How can you incorporate it into your writing?

Writing Innovation: What part of the draft was most original? What made it so inventive? How can it be included in other writings?

Feedback #1:

Peer Feedback #2: Please select ONE prompt below to provide specific, constructive feedback to your partner. CIRCLE the prompt you select, and RESPOND with your feedback below.

Building Stamina: What information was missing from the draft? Where would more details strengthen the writing?

Building Technique: What aspect of this draft needs reworking? How would this revision strengthen the draft?


















Building Clarity: What part of the draft was unclear? What can be adjusted to provide clarity in the draft?

Feedback #2:

Write a Short Play Editing Checklist

| | After reviewing for each type of edit, place a check mark here. |
|---|---|
| Vocabulary and Style | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have used clear, precise language for stage directions. • I have used dialogue that makes my characters sound natural. • I have used dialogue that enhances each character's personality. | |
| Format | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have used the correct format for lines of dialogue and stage directions. • I have included a cast of characters. • I have titled my play and labeled its acts and scenes. • I have included the proper heading, including my name, my teacher's name, the class title, and the date. | |
| Grammar | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If I have used incorrect grammar, I have done so intentionally when it creates more natural-sounding dialogue. • For all other cases, I have used correct verb tense, subject-verb agreement, and complete sentences. | |
| Spelling | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have used resources to check my spellings. • I have used commonly confused words correctly. | |
| Punctuation | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have used end marks (periods, question marks, exclamation points) correctly. • I have used hyphens, ellipses, parentheses, and dashes correctly. | |

Proofreading Symbols

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
|  | Insert |
|  | Insert period |
|  | Insert comma |
|  | Insert apostrophe |
|  | Insert space |
|  | New paragraph |
|  | No new paragraph |
|  | Close up the space |
|  | Capitalize |
|  | Make lowercase (small letter) |
|  | Delete |
|  | Reword |
|  | Move according to arrow direction |
|  | Transpose |
|  | Move to the left |
|  | Move to the right |
|  | Add a letter |

Activity Book Answer Key

NAME: _____
DATE: _____

1.2 ACTIVITY PAGE

Guided Questions for *The Importance of Being Earnest* (pages 22–49)

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. How does the text in the prologue help introduce the setting of the play?

The prologue is full of old-fashioned British expressions that convey the speech of the upper class in Britain. The two young gentlemen speaking also make direct reference to the fact that they are “young British gentlemen” with “many responsibilities,” and then they make it immediately plain that they have no such responsibilities.

2. What themes and what attitude are suggested in the prologue? Explain.

Themes of self-awareness, or a lack of it, are suggested. There is also a sly tone of mocking the establishment or the social class the characters themselves are a part of. The theme of avoiding responsibility is also introduced here. The brief bursts of dialogue and the interplay between the two “young gentlemen” indicates a tone that will also be seen as the play opens.

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3. Algernon’s dialogue immediately gives us a peek into his character. What do his comments on pages 30–34 tell us about him? Explain.

His opinion of himself is hinted at when he immediately tells Lane he plays the piano “with wonderful expression,” though not accurately. He also suggests that “anyone can play accurately,” so he seems a bit self-absorbed and careless regarding factual reality. Next, he is talking about a dinner he hosted at which there was champagne and then openly tells Lane he is “not much interested in” Lane’s family life. These bits of dialogue confirm a few points about Algernon already.

4. How does Wilde use Lane’s comments at the bottom of page 32 to mock Victorian attitudes toward marriage?

Proper Victorians highly valued marriage as a desirable and necessary institution. Lane suggests that his marriage not only was unsuccessful but occurred only because of “a misunderstanding” between him and a woman. This does not place marriage on the serious level Victorians would have expected it to be.

4 Unit 7 | Activity Book

Grade 8 | Core Knowledge Language Arts

NAME: _____
DATE: _____

1.2 ACTIVITY PAGE
CONTINUED

5. Oscar Wilde subtitled the play as “A Trivial Comedy for Serious People.” *Trivial* means of little value or importance. From what you’ve read so far, do you think the play will be trivial? Explain.

The play begins with a wry humor that starts hinting at the serious issues, beginning on page 32. Class expectations are made clear immediately, marriage is suggested as something that might happen due to a mere “misunderstanding,” and family life is mentioned. Marriage and family are specifically noted in more negative terms, as opposed to the romantic ideals so frequently expressed at that time. Students may say that the play will not be trivial because it deals with serious topics.

6. How does Jack immediately begin to reveal his character in the dialogue on page 36?

Jack seems bored and insincere and in fact says he finds it “excessively boring” to amuse other people. He shows no interest in the people he is supposedly “amusing” in Shropshire, then states that he “never speaks” to any of them! He is also immediately critical of his friend, Algernon, noting that Algernon is “eating as usual.”

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Activity Book | Unit 7 5

7. How are romance and marriage discussed in this section in a way that reveals the social norms of the time and place?

Jack suggests that merely flirting with Gwendolen is “perfectly disgraceful” and seems to have some idea that romance and marriage are important. After all, he tells Algernon that he finds his point of view to be “unromantic” when Algernon calls marriage a business rather than a pleasure. The perspectives of the two young men, taken together, suggest either a very romantic view of marriage or the exact opposite: the understanding of it as a serious, unpleasant, and ultimately boring business arrangement.

8. What can already be guessed about Aunt Augusta’s views of romance and marriage? Explain.

Aunt Augusta, we can assume, takes a very serious view of marriage and has less interest in romance. The hint is that, according to Algernon, Aunt Augusta won’t want Jack around to flirt with Gwendolen but that the problem (from her point of view) might be solved if Jack proposes marriage.

6 Unit 7 | Activity Book

Grade 8 | Core Knowledge Language Arts

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1.2 ACTIVITY PAGE
CONTINUED

9. Jack and Algernon have an exchange about eating the cucumber sandwiches at the top of page 42, a discussion started on the previous page. While the content of their exchange is over something trivial, what ideas are suggested in how they talk to each other?

Several ideas are suggested: hypocrisy, for one, as Algernon doesn't want Jack to eat the cucumber sandwiches but to save them for his aunt; then Algernon eats them himself. Immaturity, or a lack of self-development, is also suggested. There is a lack of self-awareness, as they each focus on what the other one is doing and not on their own behavior.

10. Algernon says to Jack, as Jack eats up the bread and butter sandwiches, "Well, my dear fellow, you need not eat as if you were going to eat it all. You behave as if you were married to her already." What is Algernon suggesting about romance and marriage in this statement?

He is suggesting that Jack would be considerate and leave some of the bread and butter sandwiches for Gwendolen if they were still unmarried but that he would be free to be inconsiderate and eat them all once they were husband and wife.

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11. Jack has a rather lengthy protest when Algernon says he should "clear up the whole question of Cecily." Jack protests that he doesn't know anyone named Cecily. Do you think we should believe him?

Students may say that we should not believe Jack. We've had a pretty good peek into the character of these two young men, and it seems that Algernon has found some evidence of something in Jack's cigarette case. It's also a giveaway, often enough, when someone protests too much rather than simply wondering what the other person means and waiting to find out.

12. How does Jack respond when Algernon reveals that he has Jack's lost cigarette case? Why does Algernon say the cigarette case does not belong to Jack?

Jack reacts with surprise and anger that Algernon has not given the case back to him. He seems especially upset that Algernon has opened the case. Algernon says the case isn't Jack's after all because it is a present from someone named Cecily and Jack said earlier that he did not know anyone by that name.

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2.1 ACTIVITY PAGE

Guided Questions for *The Importance of Being Earnest* (pages 50–74)

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Explain why Jack goes by the name Ernest in the city.

Jack claims that he has made up the character of Ernest because it gives him an excuse to visit the city. In the country, however, he is known as Jack Worthing, with a troubled brother named Ernest.

2. At the bottom of page 52, Jack says that Algernon is talking like a dentist, which "produces a false impression." Algernon answers that is what dentists do. What kind of joke is Oscar Wilde making here? Does Wilde make a similar joke earlier on page 52?

Oscar Wilde is making a pun, or a play on words that sound or look alike but have two different meanings. Jack suggests that Algernon will sound "vulgar" if he talks like a dentist rather than a gentleman, which will give people the wrong idea about him, or make a false impression. Algernon replies that dentists literally do make false, or physical, impressions of teeth. Wilde also uses a pun when Algernon tells Jack, "You are the most earnest-looking person I ever saw in my life."

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3. Jack seems to take his responsibility toward Cecily very seriously. Yet he expresses feeling so stifled by it that he pretends to be someone else to escape and have fun once in a while. What kind of culture is Oscar Wilde starting to reveal?

A major theme throughout this play is the idea of how culture can help shape identity. The culture Wilde is writing about, the economic upper class of that time and place, was very repressed and yet very hypocritical. There was the expectation—and great pressure—to always be thinking of others (poor Bunbury, for example, or a responsibility such as guardianship of Cecily). This show of thinking about others often concealed a group of people who were largely idle, without work and often without other real responsibilities. There was little time or patience for fun, even for the young people, other than carefully chaperoned events.

4. Right after Jack explains who he really is in relation to Cecily and also admits to being Ernest, he says he has told Algernon "the whole truth pure and simple." Does Jack consider his double life a contradiction to the "whole truth pure and simple" he says he is telling?

Jack has reasons for behaving one way in relation to young Cecily and another way when he is able to be in the country. There is little doubt that he sees this deception as relatively innocent, as it is carried out mostly with relative strangers when he is "Jack" in the country.

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5. Jack and Algernon have a conversation on page 60 about a meal that evening. What does Algernon say about "dining" with "one's own relations"? What does this comment tell you about Algernon's character?
- He says that once a week is enough to dine with his aunt, although he has been
obliged to spend time with her, as he also mentions, for "more than a week." It
suggests that he is not especially devoted to his family—a feeling upper-class
Victorians would not have been expected to express publicly.
6. Jack says he is "not a Bunburyist at all." Is he? What is a Bunburyist?
- He is indeed, as Algernon points out to him. Both Jack and Algernon have a
convenient alias who is quite different than who they present themselves as being for
the most part. That is what is meant here by a Bunburyist.
7. How would you characterize Jack's comments about marriage on page 62? Do they differ from Algernon's? Which man has the most "Victorian" view of marriage?
- Jack claims that he would be devoted to Gwendolen if they married and that he would
give up his double life. Algernon, by contrast, suggests that spouses would soon tire of
each other's company. Jack's view is the more "Victorian," though Algernon's may be
the more realistic.

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8. When we first meet Lady Bracknell, what is the first thing she asks her nephew, Algernon? What does this tell us about both people?
- She wants to know if he is behaving well. Given what we already know of Algernon,
it seems a fair question. It suggests that Algernon often misbehaves and that his aunt
disapproves of his misbehavior.
9. Algernon, upon seeing Gwendolen, says, "Dear me, you are smart!" She responds, "I am always smart!" Why might Wilde have chosen the word *smart* rather than *stylish* or *fashionable*?
- It's a way to have another pun, as *smart* also means intelligent, and it allows
Gwendolen to suggest she is always both intelligent and fashionable.
10. Algernon reacts as if in horror that there are no cucumber sandwiches for his aunt. Why does he do this? What does this reveal about his character?
- Algernon's character—or lack thereof—is pretty clear by now. And his dramatic, false
reaction is very funny to watch, unless you are Lady Bracknell, perhaps. It really is
funny from the detached view of the audience and would have been funny to the very
people Wilde is actually spoofing here.

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2.1
CONTINUED ACTIVITY PAGE

11. Lady Bracknell has quite a lot to say about Mr. Bunbury at the end of page 70 through the top of page 72. What is her main concern regarding this ill man? What does this tell us about her character?
- Her main concern is expressed after her scolding statements that Mr. Bunbury is
essentially to blame for his own ill health. It is important to her that he does not have a
relapse on Saturday, because she is counting on Algernon to be there to arrange music
for a party she is having. Her comments reveal her to be shallow and self-centered.
12. Why is Lady Bracknell's speech about Mr. Bunbury so funny?
- To use the cliché, it's funny because it's true. It reveals her character as shallow and
self-centered, the very thing that was supposed to remain hidden under a pretense of
concern. Her sudden and utter lack of even fake concern over her nephew's supposed
friend is over the top. It's funny because we expect she would at least pretend to care
and she doesn't.

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2.2 TAKE-HOME

Writing Prompt 1 for *The Importance of Being Earnest*

A comedy of manners is a type of play that satirizes the vanities, hypocrisies, and weaknesses of a certain group of people. In the space below, argue whether or not The Importance of Being Earnest could be classified as a comedy of manners. Provide support for your position.

Accept reasonable answers. Most students will identify the play as a comedy of manners
because it makes fun of a Victorian-era society that gives more importance to appearance
and outward behavior than true moral characteristics.

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2.3 ACTIVITY PAGE

Guided Questions for *The Importance of Being Earnest* (pages 74–112)

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Gwendolen says that she has always wanted to marry a man named Ernest and insists that she will settle for no other. She also says that she is passionately in love with Jack. How is this an example of dramatic irony? How does the difference in the perspectives of Gwendolen and the audience create humor?

This is an example of dramatic irony because she does not know (though the audience does) that Jack's name is not actually Ernest. Gwendolen's perspective is that she has finally found her ideal man: someone named Ernest. This creates humor because the audience knows she has *not* found such a man.

2. What are some ways Wilde indicates that Gwendolen is vain and thinks highly of herself?

Possible answer: She says that she is never wrong (page 74), is "quite aware" that Jack/Ernest is smitten with her (page 76), and hopes Jack/Ernest will always look at her lovingly "especially when there are other people present" (page 82).

3. What is the main reason Gwendolen is attracted to Jack/Ernest? How does this help develop some of the play's themes?

Gwendolen likes Jack/Ernest mainly because of his name—she has always been infatuated with the name Ernest. Themes of love/marriage, identity, and deception are developed by Gwendolen's unusual preference.

4. Gwendolen says that men, like her brother Gerald, often "propose for practice." What point is Wilde making about marriage here?

Possible answer: If Gerald proposes to all of Gwendolen's girlfriends, then he must not take marriage seriously. This is not how a proper Victorian would be expected to feel about marriage.

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2.3 ACTIVITY PAGE
CONTINUED

5. Find some examples in the text that develop the themes of identity, social roles, and respectability.

Students' responses will vary. Many will focus on Lady Bracknell's views toward Jack, particularly when she learns that he is adopted and not necessarily from a "respectable" family. She also strongly believes that she and her husband should select Gwendolen's husband and that marriage is strictly a business deal between social equals. Jack's identity is also called into question in this section. Is he Jack or Ernest? Is he a good man or not? Wilde seems to be asking how much of Jack's identity is tied to his birth and how much should be.

6. Contrast Lady Bracknell's view of a good husband with Gwendolen's. Do either seem likely to produce a good, satisfying marriage? Explain.

Students' responses will vary. Lady Bracknell takes a businesslike approach to marriage, while Gwendolen takes a romantic view. Students may suggest that neither approach is likely to produce a good, lasting, and satisfying marriage.

7. Algernon says that he loves hearing his relations abused. Would a "proper" Victorian feel this way? Explain.

A "proper" Victorian would feel a deep responsibility toward their family. At least that is what they are *supposed* to feel—particularly if one is from the upper class. Wilde suggests that not everyone actually feels this sense of responsibility—that what should be is not necessarily what is.

8. Analyze some ways the theme of truth/deception is developed in this section.

Students will likely focus on the predicament Jack has gotten himself into by pretending to be someone called Ernest. They should also cite Jack's notion that "the truth isn't quite the sort of thing one tells to a nice, sweet, refined girl."

9. Why do you think Jack tells Algernon that he will make sure Algernon never meets Cecily? How might this be related to the theme of respectability?

Jack is afraid Algernon will take advantage of Cecily and use her for his own amusement. A respectable man would not do such a thing. Algernon is not necessarily respectable, at least by Victorian standards.

Activity Book Answer Key

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2.3 ACTIVITY PAGE
CONTINUED

10. At the bottom of page 110, Jack tells Algernon that his friend Bunbury might get him into serious trouble one day. Is this comment related to one of the play's themes? How might this be an example of foreshadowing?

Foreshadowing is a literary device in which a writer gives a hint of what is to come later in the story. Jack's comment is related to the themes of identity and truth vs. fiction and might suggest that Algernon's (or his own!) double life might indeed cause a problem later in the play.

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2.4 TAKE-HOME

Writing Prompt 2 for *The Importance of Being Earnest*

*Something that is witty involves clever verbal humor; something that is funny causes laughter or amusement. A witty remark may not cause laughter; a funny remark or situation usually does. In the space below, explain if you think *The Importance of Being Earnest* is witty, funny, both, or neither. Explain your answer.*

Accept reasonable answers. Many students will answer that the play is witty because the humor is entirely verbal, not physical. Other students may simply say the play is funny because it makes them laugh. Some may say it is both. A few may not be enjoying the play at all. All answers should be supported logically.

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3.1 ACTIVITY PAGE

Guided Questions for *The Importance of Being Earnest* (pages 114–162)

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. What is amusing about Cecily's first comment on page 122? What kind of literary device is Wilde using here?

Cecily's comment is amusing because it reveals a bit about her vanity—she is afraid of looking “plain” after her German lesson. Even if she doesn't enjoy German, studying it for a bit won't make her look unattractive. Cecily is engaging in a bit of hyperbole or melodrama here.

2. A *double entendre* is a word or phrase that is open to two interpretations, one of which is usually somewhat risqué. Find an example of a double entendre spoken by Mr. Chasuble on page 130. What does this tell us about him?

Mr. Chasuble says that he would hang upon Miss Prism's lips. Not only does the phrase mean that he gives Miss Prism his attention, but it also suggests that he would like to kiss her. He is quite obviously attracted to her.

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3. Find at least one example of dramatic irony in the opening pages of Act Two.

Students' responses will vary but should focus on something that the audience knows but the characters do not. Many students will remark on the characters' various comments about Jack's brother Ernest, who we know does not exist.

4. Do you believe Cecily is really frightened by the prospect of meeting Ernest? Why or why not?

She is not frightened in the least. She has expressed a great deal of interest in him and shows no fear at all as she begins to speak to Algernon (posing as Ernest).

5. Why does Cecily think it is “quixotic” of Algernon/Ernest to try to reform? What kind of literary device is this?

Cecily doesn't think Algernon/Ernest can succeed in reforming. This is an allusion to *Don Quixote*, a novel about a man who imagined he was a brave knight performing heroic deeds. In one scene, he thought he was a knight fighting giants, when he was really trying to fight windmills. The allusion is funny because we (the audience) know that Algernon may think he can reform in a day, but he is fooling himself. We suspect that Cecily doesn't really want him to “reform” either. She seems to be intrigued by “bad boys.”

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3.1
CONTINUED

ACTIVITY PAGE

6. How might Miss Prism's comment at the bottom of page 146 be an example of foreshadowing?

Miss Prism says that "as a man sows, so shall he reap." In other words, people will eventually get what is coming to them. This could foreshadow that Jack and/or Algernon will eventually suffer some consequences for their deceit.

7. Why is it humorously ironic for Jack to call Algernon a liar?

Jack himself is quite a liar. It is ridiculous and hypocritical for him to label Algernon as such.

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8. Algernon says, "My duty as a gentleman has never interfered with my pleasures in the smallest degree." Why might a Victorian audience in particular have found this line funny?

Victorians—particularly those in the upper classes—were supposed to put duty and "doing the right thing" ahead of everything else. Algernon's statement exposes the hypocrisy of this sentiment. Many upper-class Victorians no doubt put pleasure above duty, even though they were not supposed to do so. Victorian audiences would have been amused by hearing Algernon say so out loud.

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3.2
TAKE-HOME

Writing Prompt 3 for *The Importance of Being Earnest*

The Importance of Being Earnest was well received by upper-class Victorian audiences in 1895, despite the fact that it pokes fun at them. Why do you think the play was popular with the very people it was satirizing?

Accept reasonable answers. One possible reason would be that the audience understood that the Victorian moral code of the day did not accurately represent how people behaved. The audience likely saw something of themselves—or at least of people they knew—in the characters and recognized the hypocrisy of outwardly conforming to a code they did not really believe in.

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3.3
ACTIVITY PAGE

Guided Questions for *The Importance of Being Earnest* (pages 162–210)

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. At the end of page 166, there's a sudden change in Algernon's plans. What just happened?

After Algernon's impassioned plea with a very young and immature woman he just met, he is planning to stay another week as a houseguest, despite Jack's insistence that he leave right away.

2. Algernon just basically invited himself to stay, and the butler seems to have let him. Is that what happened, or was it something else?

The play is set in the home of very wealthy Jack and the young Cecily, supposedly in his care. Cecily is easily able to get around Jack, however, by merely letting the butler glance at her for either permission or disapproval as to what she wishes. She shows no disapproval after Algernon says of the carriage driver and the carriage, "Tell it to come round next week, at the same hour." It's ridiculous and funny by merely exaggerating Victorian manners of the upper classes.

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Activity Book Answer Key

3. Cecily says she fell in love with Ernest, sight unseen, on what basis?

He was much talked about and, in fact, "the chief topic of conversation between myself and Miss Prism," as Cecily puts it. She says, "And of course a man who is much talked about is always very attractive."

4. Cecily is talking nonsense about her engagement to Algernon, but he goes along with it. Why?

He is infatuated or pretending to be. They just met! We already know that Algernon is bored and doesn't understand marriage as a serious commitment on his part. He says early on in the play, "If ever I get married, I'll certainly try to forget the fact." He likely does want to marry her and not worry about what might come next.

5. Do Cecily and Algernon seem to understand more might be needed in a marriage than only being in love?

Cecily and Algernon have grown up in a setting that encourages romantic love and marriage without considering other factors—except the importance of money. There seems to be little expectation of any possible happiness within marriage, as it is often more of a business arrangement.

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3.3
CONTINUED

ACTIVITY PAGE

6. Upon meeting Cecily, Gwendolen says, "Something tells me that we are going to be great friends. I like you already more than I can say. My first impressions of people are never wrong." How does her dialogue reflect the customs and manners of the time?

Again, Oscar Wilde is merely exaggerating the manners and speech of the upper class in the Victorian era.

7. Gwendolen makes the statement about how much she already likes Cecily after Cecily says, "I suppose [you are] one of the many good elderly women who are associated with Uncle Jack in some of his philanthropic work in London." Why would she say this?

Cecily is very young. From her point of view, Gwendolen might seem middle-aged, though she is clearly not elderly, as we know she is young enough to be engaged to Jack. So it's outrageous and meant to be insulting to an unmarried older woman in that setting. It also suggests that Jack has been falsely filling Cecily's head with stories about "philanthropic work in London" when the audience knows better.

8. How does Gwendolen initially react when she learns that Cecily has no mother and Jack has never mentioned having a young, pretty ward?

She thinks it was a pretty serious omission on Jack's part ("How secretive of him!"). She also implies that Cecily is a threat to her own relationship with Jack.

9. How does the dialogue between Gwendolen and Cecily reflect the setting and manners of upper-class Victorian society?

The women clearly do not like each other, after they have come under the impression that they are both engaged to the same "Ernest." However, their dialogue is—on the surface, at least—nominally polite. Upper-class Victorians were not supposed to show rudeness or anger toward one another—at least not directly.

10. Trading witty insults has become insufficient for both Cecily and Gwendolen by page 190. Who is the first to break the standoff with an action?

Cecily is the first to break the standoff. She puts four lumps of sugar into Gwendolen's tea after Gwendolen had declined sugar in her tea.

11. What two actions together finally cause Gwendolen to suggest that Cecily "may go too far" and distress Gwendolen's supposed "gentleness" of disposition?

In addition to the overly sweetened tea, Cecily has the butler hand Gwendolen a slice of cake when Gwendolen had asked for bread and butter.

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3.3
CONTINUED

ACTIVITY PAGE

12. What is the first thing Gwendolen and Cecily do when they find out they have been deceived by Algernon and Jack?

They turn to one another in sisterly solidarity and begin to question Algernon and Jack.

13. Jack is the first of the two men forced to confess that he invented a brother named Ernest. Does he seem truly remorseful? Compare his behavior to Algernon's.

Possible answer: Jack does seem a bit remorseful, as he confesses his lie "slowly and hesitatingly." After the young women go into the house, he turns to Algernon and declares the situation "ghastly." Algernon, in response, seems to think the whole thing a great joke—he says this is the most wonderful Bunbury he has ever had in his life.

14. Jack and Algernon basically have the same problem. How are they handling it so far?

Jack and Algernon are handling their problems badly, by accusing the other one of exactly what each of them has done, being irritable, and eating.

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Answer Key

8. Why does Jack tell Lady Bracknell about Cecily's background in a "cold" voice? Why is her background so important? How might this help set up the ending of the play?

His voice is "cold" (i.e., unfriendly) because he knows Lady Bracknell puts great stock in the social station of potential marriage partners for her family and holds her in contempt for this. Cecily has the "high birth" that Jack seemingly lacks. Social class has been a recurring theme throughout the play, so it seems likely that this issue would be a part of the play's climax.

9. Do you think Wilde agrees with Lady Bracknell's observation about society at the bottom of page 230? Why or why not?

Given that Wilde has been disrespectful of society throughout the play, Wilde likely would not agree with Lady Bracknell.

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4.2 TAKE-HOME

Writing Prompt 5 for *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Who do you think has the more realistic view of marriage: Jack or Algernon? Explain.

Students' responses will vary. Some students may argue that Algernon has a more realistic view because he seems skeptical about the happiness of couples in marriage and seems unsure about monogamy. Others may think that Jack's more traditional view of love and marriage is more realistic. Accept all reasonable responses.

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4.3 ACTIVITY PAGE

Guided Questions for *The Importance of Being Earnest* (pages 232–260)

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

- What does Jack reveal about Cecily that creates a potential problem regarding her marriage to Algernon?
He reveals that she will not receive her fortune until she is thirty-five years old.
Though Algernon says he is willing to wait, Lady Bracknell seems to have her doubts.
- Why does Lady Bracknell react with alarm when Dr. Chasuble tells her that both Jack and Algernon want to be baptized? How do multiple perspectives and dramatic irony make her reaction funny?
Lady Bracknell does not know anything about the "Ernest" situation and is therefore appalled to think that two grown men have not yet been baptized. The audience knows the real reason why the christenings have been scheduled. The contrast between Lady Bracknell's perspective on the situation and the audience's perspective make her reaction funny.
- Summarize the events that Lady Bracknell and Miss Prism discuss on pages 244–246.
Twenty-eight years earlier, Miss Prism took a baby from Lord and Lady Bracknell's house for a walk in a stroller. Neither she nor the baby ever returned. Weeks later, the stroller was found containing the manuscript of a novel . . . but no baby. Miss Prism explains that she had a handbag with her and absentmindedly placed the baby in the

handbag and the manuscript in the stroller.

- What does the audience know about Jack and a handbag and a three-volume novel that the other characters present don't know?
Jack was adopted after being left in a handbag at Victoria Station (pages 92–94). And we also know of Miss Prism's failed "novel," as she revealed that to Cecily (pages 126–128). Of course, Lady Bracknell knows about Jack and the handbag, but as she confronts Miss Prism and all becomes clear, the audience sees Jack and Algernon (who know full well) anxiously attempting to shield Cecily and Gwendolen from the events. Dr. Chasuble "starts back in horror." This is another example of dramatic irony as the audience knows considerably more than most of the characters.
- As soon as Miss Prism admits she left a baby boy in a handbag at Victoria Station (the Brighton line), Jack runs off "to [his] room for a moment." What's that all about?
Some students may blurt out that Jack has figured out that he is the baby Miss Prism dropped off and that that's how he came to be adopted. Other students may be so caught up in the humor of it all that they miss this clue.

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4.3

CONTINUED

ACTIVITY PAGE

6. Jack warmly embraces Miss Prism as his mother. How does she react?
She recoils and tells him she is unmarried. The implication is that she is not his
mother or possibly that she is but doesn't want to admit that she had a child when she
was unmarried—but she doesn't say that.

7. How do Jack's comments at the bottom of page 252 relate back to themes Wilde has put forth throughout the play, especially the theme of identity?
Again, it's funny because Jack always said exactly the opposite, stating that he had no
real brother, only the one he had dreamed up. But Algernon and Jack are clearly close
friends, like brothers, throughout the play. So they have created a bond, an identity,
through friendship. There is also a nod to the theme of self-awareness—or a lack of
it—as Jack suggests Algernon should have treated him a bit better, since Algernon
"never behaved" like a brother to him.

8. What was Jack's given name at birth?
Jack was (quite conveniently) given the name "Ernest" at birth.

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5.1

ACTIVITY PAGE

9. Why was Algernon never on speaking terms with his own father? How is this a pun?
Algernon's father died before he was a year old. The phrase "not on speaking terms"
usually means "not having a friendly relationship." The comment is a pun because
infants quite literally cannot speak. The dialogue is written, even here at the end, to
be witty.

10. Interpret the play's concluding line.
Students' answers may vary. Jack may be saying that, after all the tumult, he finally
understands that the truth is important. Others may note that the irony of the lies
Jack has been telling all along about his name were actually true—were actually "in
earnest." Accept all reasonable responses.

11. Do you think Wilde achieved his goal of writing a trivial play for serious people?
Student answers may vary. With relatively less life experience, some students may
be so caught up in the humor that they focus more on that. Students with more life
experience may want to discuss the themes Wilde addresses in the play.

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4.4

TAKE-HOME

Writing Prompt 6 for *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Explain how the conclusion of the play includes details and ideas foreshadowed earlier in the text.

Students' responses will vary. Students might mention that, for example, Jack's assertion
in Act One that Cecily and Gwendolen will become great friends and his admonition to
Algernon in Act Two that his friend Bunbury will get him into a serious scrape someday
both foreshadowed later events. (In the case of the young women, Jack's assertion was not
initially accurate.) These are just a few examples of many that students might give. Accept
all reasonable responses.

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5.1

ACTIVITY PAGE

Performances of *The Importance of Being Earnest*

*Answer the following questions to help you analyze the staged performances of scenes from *The Importance of Being Earnest*.*

1. How do the actors use movement and gesture to bring their lines to life?
Students' responses will vary but should comment on how movement and gesture can
change the mood or impact of certain lines. Accept all reasonable responses.

2. How do the actors vary the tone of their voices or their way of speaking to emphasize some aspect of their character?
Students' responses will vary but should comment on how tone and manner of speech
can make characters seem more or less likeable, more or less serious or silly, and so
on. Accept all reasonable responses.

3. How are costuming and lighting used to affect the mood of the scene?
Students' responses will vary but should comment on how costuming and lighting
affect mood. For example, darker lighting makes the mood more somber or
sad, fashionable or colorful clothing might make a scene livelier, etc. Accept all
reasonable responses.

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6.1 TAKE-HOME

Morphology: Word Roots *satis*, *sophos*, *sonus*, and *caput*

Fill in the blanks from the list of words using your knowledge of word roots and context clues.

| | | | |
|---------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| sophisticated | insatiable | philosophy | saturated |
| satisfactory | hypersonic | capitol | sophomoric |
| resounding | sonnet | decapitated | capsize |

- Another name for Washington Irving's headless horseman might be "the _____ decapitated _____ equestrian."
- The word _____ sophomoric _____ contains the same root found in the word *moron* and could be used to describe a wise fool.
- My puppy's curiosity about the world is _____ insatiable _____; she has to look into every corner.
- _____ Hypersonic _____ aircraft can fly faster than the speed of sound.
- A _____ satisfactory _____ performance is good enough but not extraordinary.
- The rhyme and rhythm of a _____ sonnet _____ give it a pleasing sound to the ear.
- When a ship _____ capsizes _____, it goes topsy-turvy in the water.
- After an hour in the rain, my coat was _____ saturated _____ with water.
- The _____ sophisticated _____ machinery inside the capsule suggested it had been created by a technologically advanced civilization.

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| | | | |
|---------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| sophisticated | insatiable | philosophy | saturated |
| satisfactory | hypersonic | capitol | sophomoric |
| resounding | sonnet | decapitated | capsize |

- _____ Philosophy _____ is the love and study of wisdom.
- After their win, the team enjoyed the _____ resounding _____ cheers of their fans.
- A _____ capitol _____ is the building where the heads of a state or national government meet.

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DATE: _____

6.3 TAKE-HOME

Grammar: Mood and Voice

For each sentence below, fill in the blank with the correct form (present indicative or present subjunctive) of the verb given at the end of the sentence.

- My next-door neighbor suggested I _____ be _____ on the alert for burglars. (to be)
- You know that she _____ is _____ a good friend to you. (to be)
- The teacher requested that he _____ be _____ quieter in the hallway. (to be)
- I know for a fact that he _____ tries _____ his best at baseball. (to try)
- The cat demands that her owner _____ scratch _____ her behind the ears. (to scratch)
- The mom requested that her children _____ be _____ given additional time on the test. (to be)

Rewrite each sentence below to change it from passive voice to active voice or vice versa. Make any other necessary changes in the wording. (If a subject is suggested after the sentence, use it in your new sentence.)

- You make wintergreen by mixing acetic acid and ethyl alcohol.
Wintergreen is made by mixing acetic acid and ethyl alcohol.
- A lot of errors were made during our last extramural game. (Hint: The errors were made by our team.)
Our team made a lot of errors during our last extramural game.

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- Among her other achievements, someone gave Susan a civic leadership award.
Among her other achievements, Susan was given a civic leadership award.
- First, a cup of flour was measured and poured into a bowl. (Hint: We did that, because we were making a cake.)
First, we measured a cup of flour and poured it into a bowl.
- Something easily triggers migraine headaches.
Migraine headaches are easily triggered.
- Someone means pizza to be enjoyed hot and bubbling.
Pizza is meant to be enjoyed hot and bubbling.

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Answer Key

NAME: _____
DATE: _____

7.1 TAKE-HOME

Morphology: Word Roots *satis*, *sophos*, *sonus*, and *caput*

Fill in the blanks from the list of words using your knowledge of word roots and context clues.

| | | | |
|---------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| satiate | philosophy | saturation | resonate |
| sophisticated | sonar | sophistry | unsatisfactory |
| sonorous | capitulate | recap | capstone |

- Philanthropy is a love of humankind, and philosophy is a love of wisdom.
- Someone who is wise to the ways of the world could be described as sophisticated.
- When a material can hold no more of something, the material has reached a state of saturation.
- The work you have done is unsatisfactory; it does not fulfill the course requirements.
- The alloy is sonorous; it makes a deep, ringing sound and is good for making bells.
- It appears impossible to satiate the tyrant's lust for power.
- Sonar is the use of reflected sound waves to detect objects in air or water.
- Sophistry is subtly deceptive reasoning or reasoning that appears valid and wise but is not.

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| | | | |
|---------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| satiate | philosophy | saturation | resonate |
| sophisticated | sonar | sophistry | unsatisfactory |
| sonorous | capitulate | recap | capstone |

- A capstone is the highest stone in a work of masonry or the crowning achievement of a career.
- The word capitulate comes from the headings that would appear on documents associated with a formal surrender.
- To recap the news or other information is to go over the main headlines or headings.
- The final note of the organ resonated throughout the cathedral.

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Questions

- What is Eliza's initial impression on the guests? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
The guests are enchanted by Eliza. The text says that her appearance "produces an impression of such remarkable distinction and beauty as she enters that they all rise, quite flustered." Clara cannot take her eyes off of Eliza, and Freddy immediately begins to flirt with her.
- The phrase "them she lived with would have killed her for a hat-pin, let alone a hat" is an example of which literary device?
A. dramatic irony
B. metaphor
C. alliteration
D. hyperbole

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DATE: _____

8.1 ASSESSMENT CONTINUED

- Read lines 19–24.

ELIZA
[Darkly] My aunt died of influenza: so they said.
MRS. EYNSFORD HILL
[Clicks her tongue sympathetically]
ELIZA
[In the same tragic tone] But it's my belief they done the old woman in.
MRS. HIGGINS
[Puzzled] Done her in?
ELIZA
Y-e-e-e-es, Lord love you! Why should she die of influenza? She come through diphtheria right enough the year before. I saw her with my own eyes. Fairly blue with it, she was. They all thought she was dead; but my father he kept ladling gin down her throat til she came to so sudden that she bit the bowl off the spoon. . . .
MRS. EYNSFORD HILL
What does "doing her in" mean?

Part A: Why are Mrs. Higgins and Mrs. Eynsford Hill confused by Eliza's use of the phrase "done her in"?

- Mrs. Higgins and Mrs. Eynsford Hill are hard of hearing.
- It is a lower-class expression not heard in polite society.
- Mrs. Higgins and Mrs. Eynsford Hill are not well-educated.
- It is an expression usually used by younger people.

Part B: In the play, Eliza speaks these (and all the following) lines with perfect upper-class enunciation. Explain what these lines reveal about the three women. What does it reveal about Victorian society?

Possible answer: They emphasize the class differences between Eliza and the two older women, who do not understand Eliza's decidedly unsophisticated language. The guests' astonishment at Eliza's lines also shows that, in upper-class society, one does not

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talk about such things as excessive drinking or “doing a person in.”

4. Which lines of Freddy’s indicate that he believes Eliza is putting on an act? Select **two** answers.

- ☒ A. “The new small talk. You do it so awfully well.”
☐ B. “Are you walking across the Park, Miss Doolittle?”
☐ C. “I’ve certainly had the pleasure.”
☒ D. “Ha! ha! how awfully funny!”

5. Based on the excerpt, what is the major theme of *Pygmalion*?

- ☐ A. honor and duty
☐ B. friendship
☐ C. love and marriage
☒ D. appearances and identity

6. Explain the use of dramatic irony in this scene.

The audience knows that Eliza is actually a lower-class flower girl who has been taught
how to behave like an upper-class woman. Mrs. Higgins’s guests do not know this.
When Eliza first arrives, her dress and manner fool them into believing that she is a
“duchess.” As she begins to describe her family, however, they think she is using “the
new small talk” (i.e., slang words). We, the audience, know this is how she actually
speaks. This disparity creates humor.

NAME: _____
 DATE: _____

8.1 ASSESSMENT
 CONTINUED

17. MRS. HIGGINS

[Rises with an impatient bounce, and returns to her work at the writing-table. She sweeps a litter of disarranged papers out of her way; snatches a sheet of paper from her stationery case; and tries resolutely to write. At the third line she gives it up; flings down her pen; grips the table angrily and exclaims.] Oh, men! men!! men!!!

Questions

7. What does Higgins mean when he asks his mother if Eliza is “presentable”?
- ☐ A. He is asking if his mother thinks he should marry Eliza.
☐ B. He is asking if Eliza’s clothes were clean and tidy.
☒ C. He is asking if Eliza appears to be an upper-class woman.
☐ D. He is asking if his mother enjoyed her visit with Eliza.
8. Read line 2.

MRS. HIGGINS

You silly boy, of course she’s not presentable. She’s a triumph of your art and of her dressmaker’s; but if you suppose for a moment that she doesn’t give herself away in every sentence she utters, you must be perfectly cracked about her . . . You certainly are a pretty pair of babies, playing with your live doll.

Part A: Underline a sentence in this passage that shows Mrs. Higgins believes Pickering and her son are dehumanizing Eliza.

Part B: What is the best definition of the word *cracked* in this line?

- ☒ A. delusional
☐ B. angry
☐ C. heartbroken
☐ D. sad

9. Why does Mrs. Higgins call her son and Pickering “stupid” in line 9?

- ☐ A. They think they have transformed Eliza into a high-society “lady.”
☐ B. They do not realize that Eliza is in love with Higgins.
☒ C. They do not understand how their bet will impact Eliza’s life.
☐ D. They have not done a good job teaching Eliza how to speak properly.

10. Read lines 11–14.

MRS. HIGGINS

The advantages of that poor woman who was here just now! The manners and habits that disqualify a fine lady from earning her own living without giving her a fine lady’s income! Is that what you mean?

PICKERING

[Indulgently, being rather bored.] Oh, that will be all right, Mrs. Higgins. [He rises to go.]

HIGGINS

[Rising also.] We’ll find her some light employment.

PICKERING

She’s happy enough. Don’t you worry about her. Good-bye. *[He shakes hands as if he were consoling a frightened child, and makes for the door.]*

Part A: Which major themes of *Pygmalion* are revealed by these lines of dialogue? Select **two** answers.

- ☒ A. social class
☒ B. gender roles
☐ C. bravery
☐ D. friendship

NAME: _____
 DATE: _____

8.1 ASSESSMENT
 CONTINUED

Part B: How is Mrs. Higgins’s perspective regarding Eliza different from her son’s and Pickering’s perspective?

Possible answer: Mrs. Higgins understands that teaching Eliza how to speak and
behave like “a lady” will likely mean she will have no way to earn an income. She is
not actually an upper-class woman, so she is not suitable for marriage to someone
from that class. Yet her newfound manners will make it hard for her to take on
traditional Victorian working class roles and employment. The two men seem not to
understand that—or not to care.

11. Read line 17.

MRS. HIGGINS

[Rises with an impatient bounce, and returns to her work at the writing-table. She sweeps a litter of disarranged papers out of her way; snatches a sheet of paper from her stationery case; and tries resolutely to write. At the third line she gives it up; flings down her pen; grips the table angrily and exclaims.] Oh, men! men!! men!!!

Which word best describes Mrs. Higgins’s feelings here?

- ☒ A. angry and frustrated
☐ B. confused and puzzled
☐ C. excited and eager
☐ D. satisfied and happy

Activity Book Answer Key

12. Traditional Victorian society regarded men as logical and reasonable and women as emotional and empty. How does this scene comment on those stereotypes?

Possible answer: Although she is frustrated by her son and Pickering, in this scene it is Mrs. Higgins who is logical and reasonable. She has a much better understanding than the men on how their experiment might impact Eliza. The men are presented as heartless and foolish boys. Their dominance of Eliza is ultimately shown as cruel.

Reading Comprehension Score: _____ of 12 points.

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8.1 ASSESSMENT
CONTINUED

Grammar

Fill in the blank in each sentence with the present subjunctive form of the verb in parentheses.

- Please suggest to your son that he refrain from putting his feet on the table. (refrain)
- My parents insist I be more studious from now on. (be)
- The chair of the committee asks that members arrive on time to the meeting. (arrive)
- The school requires that students attend class regularly. (attend)
- It is suggested that each member of the organization wear a name tag. (wear)
- The state department advises that travelers be cautious in certain areas of that country. (be)

Rewrite each sentence, changing the voice to make the sentence more logical and efficient.

- Several errors were made on my math test yesterday.
I made several errors on my math test yesterday.
- A good time was had by everyone at the party last night.
Everyone had a good time at the party last night.

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9. Imelda's backpack was brought by her to school that day.

Imelda brought her backpack to school that day.

10. During the night, someone or something had knocked over all the garbage bins on the block.

During the night, all the garbage bins on the block had been knocked over.

11. People best enjoy pumpkins pies warm and with whipped cream.

Pumpkin pies are best enjoyed warm and with whipped cream.

12. Her pencil was taken by her out of her bag and then used to write a letter.

She took her pencil out of her bag and wrote a letter.

Grammar Score: _____ of 12 points.

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NAME: _____
DATE: _____

8.1 ASSESSMENT
CONTINUED

Morphology

After each numbered word, fill in the letter of the correct definition or synonym.

| | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A. punishable by death | B. someone with only a little knowledge | C. deep, booming, bell-like | D. complete to an acceptable degree |
| E. building where government leaders meet | F. to fill completely | G. to ring or echo loudly | H. to turn upside down |
| I. having to do with sound | J. love of wisdom | K. pretentious or juvenile | L. incapable of getting enough |

- capsize H
- saturate F
- resound G
- sophomoric K
- sonic I
- insatiable L
- capital A
- sonorous C
- sophomore B
- satisfactory D

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11. capitol E
12. philosophy J

Morphology Score: _____ of 12 points.

Total Score for Unit Assessment: _____ of 40 points.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

PP.1 REMEDIATION

Grammar: Mood and Voice

The present subjunctive is a verb mood used with suggestions or commands. For each pair of sentences below, find and underline the verbs in the second sentence that change from those in the first.

- Joshua's mother knows that Joshua wears galoshes whenever it rains.
Joshua's mother suggests that Joshua wear galoshes whenever it rains.
- My best friend likes that I am honest about things that bother me.
My best friend requested that I be honest about things that bother me.
- I see that he comes prepared to every math tutorial.
I ask that he come prepared to every math tutorial.
- The teacher saw that the students were quieter when guests visited.
The teacher asked that the students be quieter when guests visited.
- Caleb hopes his mother avoids kissing him in public.
Caleb insists his mother avoid kissing him in public.
- The citizens appreciate that the mayor is available to meet with them.
The citizens demand that the mayor be available to meet with them.

Fill in the blank after each sentence below with A (active) if the subject at the beginning of the sentence performs the action named by the verb or P (passive) if the subject receives the action named by the verb.

- The karate student broke a board with his fist. A
- The board was broken by the fist of the karate student. P
- Wildflowers often grow on grassy mountaintops. A

- Wildflowers are often found growing on grassy mountaintops. P
- The house was painted a horrible shade of pink. P
- The new owner painted the house a beautiful shade of blue. A

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

PP.2 REMEDIATION

Morphology: Roots *satis*, *sophos*, *sonus*, and *caput*

Here are four word roots that are found in many modern English words:

satis: enough
sophos: wise
sonus: sound
caput: head

Underline the word in each sentence below that contains one of the roots listed above.

- I heard a sound coming from the closet.
- That dinner was very satisfying.
- I'm taking a course in philosophy.
- The capital of the United States is Washington, DC.
- We heard a sonic boom from a jet overhead.
- Her curiosity is insatiable.
- The device was technologically sophisticated.
- The submarine used sonar to locate the shipwreck.
- The U.S. capitol is a beautiful building of gleaming white marble.
- I will now recap the lecture that I attended yesterday.
- He will be a sophomore next year.
- My shirt was saturated with water from the storm.



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Unit 7

The Importance of Being Earnest

by Oscar Wilde

Teacher Guide

GRADE 8

