



The Importance of Being Earnest – Summer Reading 2017 AP 12 English Literature and Composition

STEP 1: Read Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Students are responsible for procuring a copy of the text. This play should be fairly easy to find, either in a bookstore or online. It is recommended that students purchase a copy of the book as this will provide an opportunity for thoughtful annotations (not required) and allow students to begin building their own libraries. Barnes and Noble booksellers at San Tan will have this text in stock. A digital copy of this text is also available on Ms. Duering and Mrs. Soelberg's websites.

STEP 2: Textual Support of Themes

During your reading locate fifteen direct quotes (5 from each of the 3 acts) that are meaningful sentences or phrases that support the following thematic subjects:

- the nature of marriage
- the constraints of morality
- the quest for truth and beauty
- hypocrisy
- the importance of not being "Earnest"
- elements of satire

Organize the quotes by theme. Within the theme type each quote, using quotation marks, and act and line number citations. Discuss how the quotes support the theme. Remember, theme is a statement about the universalities of the human condition. Theme is not one word or a phrase.

STEP 3: Write Two Essays

Choose TWO of the following AP College Board Question 3 prompts and write an essay regarding *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The essay should be at least 2 pages, typed, double-spaced, and follow all MLA guidelines. Within each analysis essay you must discuss the devices listed below and their impact on the text.

1. Satire
2. Allusion
3. Motif
4. Hyperbole
5. Tone
6. Symbolism
7. Personification
8. Understatement
9. Genre
10. Pun

Essay Prompt #1: “Many works of literature contain a character who intentionally deceives others. The character’s dishonesty may be intended either to help or to hurt. Such a character, for example, may choose to mislead others for personal safety, to spare someone’s feelings, or to carry out a crime. In a well-written essay about *The Importance of Being Ernest*, analyze the motives for a character’s deception and discuss how the deception contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

Essay Prompt #2: The significance of a title such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is so easy to discover. However, in other works (for example, *Measure for Measure*) the full significance of the title becomes apparent to the reader only gradually. Show how the significance of *The Importance of Being Ernest* is developed through the authors’ use of devices such as contrast, repetition, allusion, and point of view.

Essay Prompt #3: “The true test of comedy is that it shall awaken thoughtful laughter.” Choose a novel, play, or long poem in which a scene or character awakens “thoughtful laughter” in the reader. Write an essay in which you show why this laughter is “thoughtful” and how it contributes to the meaning of the work.

Essay Prompt #4: Novels and plays often depict characters caught between colliding cultures -- national, regional, ethnic, religious, institutional. Such collisions can call a character’s sense of identity into question. Select a novel or play in which a character responds to such a cultural collision. Then write a well-organized essay in which you describe the character’s response and explain its relevance to the work as a whole.

Note: When answering the above prompts you must use the summer read, *The Importance of Being Ernest*, in your response.

Questions? Seniors - Feel free to email us! Please place your last name and “summer reading” in the subject line.

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Due Date:

All items will also need to be submitted to TII.com as one document the third week of school.

We look forward to having you in AP 12 next year. Have a wonderful summer!