

# The Importance of Being Earnest

Oscar Wilde

## The story step by step

1 Listen to Act 1 (from 'Lane, have you made...' to 'Well, thank you, Lane.'). Answer the questions. The first one is an example.

a Whose tea has Lane prepared?

Lady Bracknell's.

b What kind of sandwiches has he made?

\_\_\_\_\_

c Where does Algernon read about the number of champagne bottles drunk?

\_\_\_\_\_

d How many bottles were actually drunk at dinner?

\_\_\_\_\_

e When did this dinner take place?

\_\_\_\_\_

f Who was dining with Algernon that evening?

\_\_\_\_\_

g Why does Algernon think marriage might be depressing?

\_\_\_\_\_

h Has Lane ever been married?

\_\_\_\_\_

2 Listen to Act 1 (from 'How are you, my dear Ernest?' to 'It is very romantic to be in love.'). Decide if the following sentences are true (T) or false (F). The first one is an example.

a Jack believes that you should never go anywhere simply for pleasure. F

b Jack is surprised to see Algernon eating. \_\_\_\_\_

c Algernon thinks that it is usual to have five o'clock tea in 'good society'. \_\_\_\_\_

d Jack has been in town since Thursday. \_\_\_\_\_

e Jack finds being in the country exciting. \_\_\_\_\_

f Jack likes all his neighbours. \_\_\_\_\_

g Jack is pleased to hear that Gwendolen is coming to tea. \_\_\_\_\_

h Aunt Augusta approves of Jack's flirtation with her daughter, Gwendolen. \_\_\_\_\_

i Algernon does not consider marriage proposals pleasant. \_\_\_\_\_

j Jack doesn't think Algernon is very romantic. \_\_\_\_\_

3 Listen to Act 1 (from 'Lane, bring me the cigarette case...' to '...don't know anyone called Cecily.') Complete the sentences from the Act with the correct form of the verbs below. Check your answers on p.15 of the book or in the answer key.

be   find   ~~have~~   not discuss   not know   offer x 2   say   see   tell   write

- a Have you had my cigarette case all this time?
- b I wish you \_\_\_\_\_ me.
- c I \_\_\_\_\_ letters to the police about it.
- d I nearly \_\_\_\_\_ a large reward.
- e Well, I wish you \_\_\_\_\_ a large reward.
- f I \_\_\_\_\_ very poor at the moment.
- g There is no point in offering a large reward now that you \_\_\_\_\_ it.
- h You \_\_\_\_\_ me with it a hundred times.
- i I \_\_\_\_\_ modern culture.
- j You \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ anyone called Cecily.

4 Listen to Act 1 (from 'That is nothing...' to '...Bunburyists I know.'). Underline the nine correct forms of the words you hear. The first one is an example. Check your answers on p.17 of the book or in the answer key.

Noun	Adjective	Adverb
honesty	honest	<u>honestly</u>
seriousness	serious	seriously
responsibility	responsible	responsibly
goodness	good	well
health	healthy	healthily
happiness	happy	happily
terribleness	terrible	terrible
truth	true	truly

5 Listen to Act 1 (from 'Yes, Mr Worthing?' to ' Wait in the carriage, ...'. Underline 'going to' or 'will' according to what you hear. Check your answers on p.24 of the book or in the answer key.

- a What are you going to/will you say to me?
- b You know what I am going to/will say to you.
- c Gwendolen, are you going to/will you marry me?
- d Yes, of course I'm going to/will.
- e I hope you are always going to/will always look at me like that.
- f When you are engaged to someone, I, or your father, are going to/will inform you of the fact.
- g You, Gwendolen, are going to/will wait for me in the carriage.

6 Listen to Act 1 (from 'I must tell you...' to '...make Gwendolen happy'). Complete Lady Bracknell's notes about Jack's eligibility to marry Gwendolen. Check your answers on pp.25–27 of the book or in the answer key.

Information about Jack	Lady Bracknell's opinion
He smokes.	This is <u>good</u> because it means he has an <u>occupation</u> .
Aged ____.	A very ____ age to ____.
He knows _____.	She approves of _____. She doesn't approve of _____.
He has an income of between _____ and _____ a _____. His income comes from _____ not _____.	That is _____ because owning land is neither _____ nor _____.
He owns a _____ and a _____ in Belgrave Square, but it is _____ to Lady Bloxham who is very ____.	She doesn't _____ Lady Bloxham, who is not necessarily _____ even if she is _____.
The house is number ____ Belgrave Square.	That is the _____ side of the _____.
He has _____ both his _____.	To _____ one _____ is _____; to _____ both seems like _____.
He doesn't _____ who his _____ was. He was _____ by Mr Thomas Cardew and given the name _____ because he had a train _____ for _____ in this _____. He was _____ in a large, _____ handbag – an _____ handbag with _____. The handbag was in the _____ at _____ in _____.	She is _____ by this news. She doesn't think it's _____ to be _____ in a handbag even if it has _____. It is _____ the _____ to _____ a _____ with a _____ position in _____.

7 Listen to Act 2 (from 'Cecily! Cecily!' to 'Horrid German!'). Complete the table with information relating to different characters. Check your answers on pp.34–36 of the book or in the answer key.

People	Details
<i>Cecily</i>	<i>doesn't like German</i>
<i>Jack</i>	<i>is very serious</i>
<i>Ernest</i>	<i>unfortunate young man</i>
<i>Miss Prism</i>	<i>knows German and geology and ...</i>

8 Listen to Act 2 (from 'Yes, Miss.' To '...but in London'). List all the adjectives you hear. Check your answers on p.37 of the book or in the answer key.

*wicked* \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

9 Listen to Act 2 (from 'Dear Mr Worthing', to 'Charity, dear Miss Prism...'). Put the sentences from the conversation between Canon Chasuble, Jack and Miss Prism in the correct order. The first and last have been done as examples. Check your answers on p.40 of the book or in the answer key.

- a A bad cold, it seems. 14
- b Dead! \_\_\_\_\_
- c Dear Mr Worthing, I hope these black clothes do not mean that something dreadful has happened? 1
- d Did the telegram mention the cause of death? \_\_\_\_\_
- e Is he still leading his wicked life? \_\_\_\_\_
- f More shameful debts and bad behaviour? \_\_\_\_\_
- g Mr Worthing, I offer you my sincere condolences. At least you know that you have always been most generous and forgiving to him. \_\_\_\_\_
- h My brother. \_\_\_\_\_
- i No. He died abroad; in Paris, in fact. I had a telegram last night from the manager of the Grand Hotel in Paris. \_\_\_\_\_
- j Poor Ernest! He had many faults, but it is very, very sad. \_\_\_\_\_
- k Quite dead. \_\_\_\_\_

- 18 Listen to Act 3 (from 'My dear Mr Worthing, ...' to 'It must be the same person.'). Write the direct speech you hear under the reported sentences below. Check your answers on pp.72–73 of the book or in the answer key. The first one is an example.
- a Lady Bracknell begged Jack to think again about his decision.  
*'I beg of you to think again about your decision.'*  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b Jack replied that the decision was entirely in Lady Bracknell's own hands.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c Jack explained that when Lady Bracknell consented to his marriage to Gwendolen, he would gladly consent to her nephew's marriage with his ward.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- d Lady Bracknell exclaimed that he must know that his marriage with her daughter was not possible.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- e Lady Bracknell told him that she could not agree to Gwendolen never getting married.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- f She told Gwendolen to go with her as they had already missed five, if not six, trains.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- g Lady Bracknell advised Algernon that her husband, Lord Bracknell would be very displeased to hear that he was wasting his time and money in that way.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- h Canon Chasuble asked whether he understood them correctly.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- i Lady Bracknell demanded to know whether Miss Prism was a rather ugly female who was remotely connected with education.  
\_\_\_\_\_

- l Very sad indeed. Were you with him at the end? \_\_\_\_\_
- m What a lesson for him! I hope he will learn from this. \_\_\_\_\_
- n Your brother Ernest is dead? \_\_\_\_\_

10 Listen to Act 2 (from 'Uncle Jack!' to 'I feel very happy.'). You will hear the words in the box. One sound of each word is underlined. Put the words in the correct column according to the underlined sound. There are five words for each sound. The first four have been done for you: 'Jack' /æ/; 'half' /ɑ:/; 'change' /eɪ/; and 'arrived' /ə/. Check your answers in the answer key.

Jack    change    matter    happy    toothache    arrived    about    half    haven't  
 behaved    badly    past    heartless    shake    have    disgraceful    agree    last    task

/æ/	/ɑ:/	/eɪ/	/ə/
<i>J<u>a</u>ck</i>	<i>h<u>a</u>lf</i>	<i>ch<u>a</u>nge</i>	<i><u>a</u>rrived</i>

11 Listen to Act 2 (from 'I don't like it.' to '...success for you.'). Underline the stressed words in each line. The first one has been done as an example. Check your answers in the answer key.

**Algernon:** *Well, I don't like your clothes.* You look perfectly ridiculous in them. Why don't you go upstairs and change? It is perfectly childish to be wearing black clothes for a man who is going to stay in your house for a whole week as a guest.

**Jack:** You are certainly not staying with me for a whole week. You have got to leave ... by the four o'clock train.

**Algernon:** I certainly won't leave you while you are in black clothes. That would be very unfriendly.

**Jack:** Well, will you go if I change my clothes?

**Algernon:** Yes, if you are not too long. I never saw anybody else who took so long to get dressed, and with such uninteresting results.

**Jack:** Well, at least that is better than always being overdressed like you.

**Algernon:** If I am occasionally overdressed, I make up for it by being extremely overeducated.

**Jack:** Your vanity is silly, your behaviour is outrageous and your presence in my garden is ridiculous.

- 12 Listen to Act 2 (from 'The carriage is...' to '...proposal in my diary.'). List all the references to time and dates that you hear. Check your answers on pp.46–51 of the book or in the answer key.

*five minutes* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 13 Listen to Act 2 (from 'Let me introduce...' to 'Oh no! I live here.'). Match the beginnings of the sentences you hear (1–8) with the endings (A–H). Check your answers on p.52 of the book or in the answer key.

1	I think we are going	A	are never wrong.
2	I like you already	B	to be the proper place for a man.
3	My first impressions of people	C	it makes him very attractive.
4	How nice of you to like me so much	D	to tell you who I am.
5	Perhaps this is a good opportunity	E	more than I can say.
6	The home seems to me	F	me looking at you through my glasses?
7	Certainly once a man begins to neglect his duties at home,	G	when we have known each other for such a short time.
8	So do you mind	H	to be great friends.

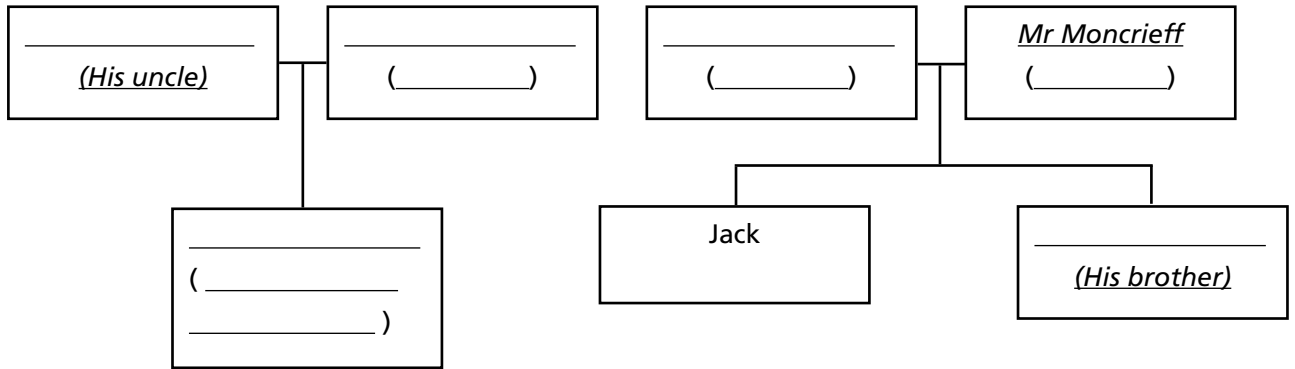
- 14 Listen to Act 2 (from '...speak candidly...' to 'Ernest! My own Ernest!'). Cecily and Gwendolen move between being polite and friendly to being defensive and offensive very quickly. List examples of each that you hear. Check your answers on pp.53–57 or in the answer key.

Polite and friendly	Defensive and offensive
<i>Please do!</i>	<i>Are you calling me an entanglement, Miss Cardew?</i>

- 15 Listen to Act 2 (from 'None!' to 'Dead, in fact.'). Write the question tags that you hear. Check your answers on pp.60–61 or in the answer key.
- It is not a very pleasant position for a young girl suddenly to find herself in, *is it?*
  - They will not follow us into the house, \_\_\_\_\_?
  - No, men are so cowardly, \_\_\_\_\_?
  - I suppose that this awful business is what you call Bunburying, \_\_\_\_\_?
  - Your brother isn't very well, \_\_\_\_\_, Jack?
- 16 Listen to Act 3 (from 'They have not followed...' to 'Darling!'). Underline the correct alternative. Check your answers on pp.64–66 of the book or in the answer key.
- When they see the boys eating, the girls think they must feel
    - afraid
    - hungry
    - sorry
  - When the boys finally look at them, the girls are
    - annoyed
    - curious
    - pleased
  - The girls break the silence
    - first
    - second
    - at the same time as the boys
  - Cecily
    - believes Algernon
    - likes his answer
    - doesn't like his answer
  - Gwendolen doubts Jack's sincerity
    - and won't listen
    - but ignores this
    - so leaves him
  - The girls are ready to forgive the boys about
    - almost everything
    - everything
    - nothing
  - The girls think the boys are
    - as brave as them
    - braver than them
    - not as brave as them
- 17 Listen to Act 3 (from 'Cecily is the sweetest, ...' to 'I will not give my consent.'). Complete the sentences from the chapter with the correct prepositions. Check your answers on p.70 of the book or in the answer key.
- I don't care about her fitting into good society.
  - Do not be dismissive \_\_\_\_\_ good society, Algernon.
  - Only people who can't get \_\_\_\_\_ good society speak like that.
  - He has nothing but his debts to bring \_\_\_\_\_ a marriage.
  - But I do not approve \_\_\_\_\_ marrying \_\_\_\_\_ money.
  - I didn't allow that to stand \_\_\_\_\_ my way.
  - Well, I suppose I must give my consent \_\_\_\_\_ this marriage.
  - They give people a chance to find out \_\_\_\_\_ each other's character \_\_\_\_\_ marriage,
  - She cannot marry \_\_\_\_\_ my consent \_\_\_\_\_ she comes \_\_\_\_\_ age.



19 Listen to Act 3 (from 'I'm afraid that my news...' to 'I did my best.'). Complete the family tree in relation to Jack with the information you hear. Check your answers on p.77 of the book or in the answer key.



20 Listen to Act 3 (from 'Ernest! My own Ernest!' to '...the Importance of Being Earnest'). Complete the three wedding invitations with the information you hear. Check your answers on pp.78–80 of the book or in the answer key.

*Mr Ernest Moncrieff and Miss \_\_\_\_\_ Bracknell*  
*invite you to their wedding*

\* \* \*

Mr \_\_\_\_\_ Moncrieff  
and  
Miss \_\_\_\_\_ Cardew  
invite you to their wedding

\* \* \*

•••

Canon \_\_\_\_\_ Chasuble  
and Miss \_\_\_\_\_ Prism  
invite you to their wedding

•••