

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

from

The Importance of Being Earnest

by Oscar Wilde

CHARACTERS:

LADY BRACKNELL- She is an elderly English woman. Her ideas about what makes a suitable husband are extremely rigid.

JACK- Jack Worthing is superficial, flippant, flirtatious, dishonest, witty, charming, and entirely self-serving.

SETTING- a fashionable apartment in London

- 1 LADY BRACKNELL:** Now to minor matters. Are your parents living?
- 2 JACK:** I have lost both my parents.
- 3 LADY BRACKNELL:** To lose one parent, Mr. Worthing, may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness. Who was your father? He was evidently a man of some wealth. Was he born in what the Radical papers call the purple of commerce, or did he rise from the ranks of aristocracy?
- 4 JACK:** I am afraid I really don't know. The fact is Lady Bracknell, I said I had lost my parents. It would be nearer the truth to say that my parents seem to have lost me...I don't actually know who I am by birth. I was...well, I was found.
- 5 LADY BRACKNELL:** Found!
- 6 JACK:** The late Mr. Thomas Cardew, an old gentleman of a very charitable and kindly disposition, found me, and gave me the name Worthing, because he happened to have a first-class ticket for Worthing in his pocket at the time. Worthing is a place in Sussex. It is a seaside resort.
- 7 LADY BRACKNELL:** Where did the charitable gentleman who had a first-class ticket for this seaside resort find you?
- 8 JACK:** [*Gravely.*] In a handbag.
- 9 LADY BRACKNELL:** A handbag?

10 JACK: [*Very seriously.*] Yes, Lady Bracknell. I was in a handbag—a somewhat large, black leather handbag, with handles to it—an ordinary handbag, in fact.

11 LADY BRACKNELL: In what locality did this Mr. James, or Thomas, Cardew come across this ordinary handbag?

12 JACK: In the cloakroom at Victoria Station. It was given to him in mistake for his own.

13 LADY BRACKNELL: The cloakroom at Victoria Station?

14 JACK: Yes. The Brighton line.

15 LADY BRACKNELL: The line is immaterial. Mr. Worthing, I confess I feel somewhat bewildered by what you have just told me. To be born, or at any rate bred, in a handbag, whether it had handles or not, seems to me to display a contempt for the ordinary decencies of family life that remind one of the worst excesses of the French Revolution. And I presume you know what that unfortunate movement led to? As for the particular locality in which the handbag was found, a cloakroom at a railway station might serve to conceal a social indiscretion—has probably, indeed, been used for that purpose before now—but, it could hardly be regarded as an assured basis for a recognized position in good society.

16 JACK: May I ask you then what you would advise me to do? I need hardly say I would do anything in the world to ensure Gwendolen's happiness.

17 LADY BRACKNELL: I would strongly advise you, Mr. Worthing, to try and acquire some relations as soon as possible, and make a definite effort to produce at any rate one parent, of either sex, before the season is quite over.

18 JACK: Well, I don't see how I could possibly manage to do that. I can produce the handbag at any moment. It is in my dressing room at home. I really think that should satisfy you, Lady Bracknell.

19 LADY BRACKNELL: Me, sir! What has it to do with me? You can hardly imagine that I and Lord Bracknell would dream of allowing our daughter—a girl brought up with the utmost care—to marry into a cloakroom, and form an alliance with a parcel? Good morning, Mr. Worthing! [*Lady Bracknell sweeps out in majestic indignation.*]

20 JACK: Good morning!

PSJA-ISD

English I

STAAR-LITERATURE

Use "*from* The Importance of Being Earnest" to answer questions 10-15.

1B [analyze textual context to distinguish between denotation and connotative meanings of words]

1 In paragraph 15, the word *presume* means —

- A** suppose
- B** venture
- C** doubt
- D** dispute

4A [explain how dramatic conventions enhance dramatic text]

2 The stage directions in paragraph 19 emphasize Lady Bracknell's —

- F** compassionate nature
- G** contempt
- H** feelings of righteous anger
- J** unpleasant character

4/Fig 19B [understand inference and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of drama]

3 The dialogue in paragraphs 18 and 19 establishes that the relationship between Jack and Lady Bracknell is most similar to —

- A the relationship between a teacher and a student
- B** a partnership between equals
- C the relationship between a parent and child
- D the relationship between a master and his subordinate

4A [explain how dramatic conventions enhance dramatic text]

4 Which line of dialogue provides the best evidence that Lady Bracknell views herself in high regard?

- F** *To lose one parent, Mr. Worthing, may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness.*
- G** *Where did the charitable gentleman who had a first-class ticket for this seaside resort find you?*
- H** *I would strongly advise you, Mr. Worthing, to try and acquire some relations as soon as possible, and make a definite effort to produce at any rate one parent, of either sex, before the season is quite over.*
- J** *You can hardly imagine that I and Lord Bracknell would dream of allowing our daughter—a girl brought up with the utmost care—to marry into a cloakroom, and form an alliance with a parcel?*

4/Fig 19B [understand inference and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of drama]

5 The reader can infer that Lady Bracknell is using the fact that Jack was “born in a handbag” —

A to convince Jack to marry her daughter

B as an excuse to not allow her daughter to marry

C to judge his family

D is a way to convince herself of his sincerity

4A [explain how dramatic conventions enhance dramatic text]

6 The stage directions in paragraph 8 provide evidence that for Jack, being found in a handbag was —

F a joke

G senseless

H distressing

J a miracle

