

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.

DOK 1-In order to understand the interaction between the two characters, one must have an understanding of them. What do you picture from the description of Lady Bracknell? What do picture from the description of Jack?

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? DOK 2-Lady B says that losing both parents is careless (on the part of Jack). Why is this idea ridiculous?

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. **DOK 3-Why does Lady B tell Jack to "acquire" relations as soon as possible? What purpose would it serve?**

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!

Possible DOK Answers

DOK 1-In order to understand the interaction between the two characters, one must have an idea of who they are. What do you picture from the description of Lady Bracknell? What do picture from the description of Jack?

- Lady Bracknell -very proper, rich, used to getting her way.
- Jack -everything he does is to help him get ahead in life, no matter what he has to do to get it.

DOK 2-Lady B says that losing both parents is careless (on the part of Jack). Why is this idea ridiculous?

- Jack couldn't have prevented his parents' deaths. He was not careless.

DOK 3-Why does Lady B tell Jack to "acquire" relations as soon as possible? What purpose would it serve?

- The only way he can marry the girl he wants to marry is if he comes from a "good" family. He will have to ask people to stand in for parents, and make up a history about his family.

PSJA-ISD

English I

STAAR-LITERATURE

Genre: Drama Text: **The Importance of Being Earnest**

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

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

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

4A [explain how dramatic conventions enhance dramatic text]

11 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]

12 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]

13 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]

14 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** as a way to convince herself of his sincerity

4A [explain how dramatic conventions enhance dramatic text]

15 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

Genre: Drama Text: **"The Importance of Being Earnest"**

| Item # | SE | Answer |
|--------|------------|--------|
| 10 | 1B | A |
| 11 | 4A | H |
| 12 | 4 Fig. 19B | D |
| 13 | 4A | J |
| 14 | 4 Fig. 19B | B |
| 15 | 4A | H |