***The Importance of Being Earnest***

***A Trivial Comedy for Serious People***

By Oscar Wilde

**Act 3 Discussion Questions**

*He has nothing, but looks everything. What more can one desire --- Lady Bracknell*

1. How do Gwendolen and Cecily react to Jack's and Algernon's plan to be christened as Ernest? What do they all think about Christening, or baptism, on the one hand, and the name Ernest on the other?
2. What does Lady Bracknell's inquiry about Cecily reveal about the former? What is the most important thing that makes her agree with Cecily's marriage with Algernon?
3. Explain Jack’s statement that he has finally realized, “the vital Importance of Being Earnest”.
4. At the end of the play all of the “lies” have become truths. Jack is really Ernest, and Algernon truly is his mischievous younger brother. If the lies are all true, what are we supposed to learn from the supposed truths in the play?
5. Throughout the entire play Wilde makes comments about marriage. Each character holds a different view about the purpose of marriage. What do you think is Wilde’s overall opinion on marriage during the Victorian period?

**The Play as a Whole**

1. The characters in the play are paired.  Compare and contrast Jack and Algernon, Gwendolen and Cecily, Lady Bracknell and Mr. Prism.
2. The Importance of Being Earnest is considered a “comedy of manners”. Explain how it is a comedy of manners. (What are the main themes? What are the characters' foibles? What do they value most? How are they--the themes, the foibles, and the values--treated?)