*Importance of Being Earnest* Act I Questions

1. Why do Jack and Algernon need Ernest and Bunbury, respectively?

2. Keep your eye on the status of the females in this play. What do you think of the fact that Cecily Cardew is Jack's ward and that Gwendolen Fairfax is the closely guarded, yet salable, daughter of Lady Bracknell? Consider Miss Prism and Lady Bracknell, too.

3. Why does Gwendolen want to marry an "Ernest?"

4. Put Gwendolen's "ideals" together with Lady Bracknell's requirements for her suitor and try to explain the importance of marriage in this play.

5. Play around with the account Jack gives of his birth. What is significant about his having been discovered in an ordinary handbag lost in the cloakroom of a railroad car?

6. Jack claims at one point that he is tired of living in a society of wits. What do you think is the function of all the witty paradoxes and epigrams in this play?