

HIGH SCHOOL | BLUE VALLEY DISTRICT NOVEL RATIONALE

## ***The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde**

### **English Language Arts, 12th Grade**

#### WHAT'S THE STORY?

Jack Worthing, the play's protagonist, is an upstanding member of the community in Hertfordshire, where he is guardian to Cecily Cardew, the pretty, eighteen-year-old granddaughter of the late Thomas Cardew, who found and adopted Jack when he was a baby. In Hertfordshire, Jack is a major landowner, with tenants, farmers, and a number of servants and other employees dependent on him. For years, he has also pretended to have an irresponsible black-sheep brother named Ernest who leads a scandalous life in pursuit of pleasure and is always getting into trouble of a sort that requires Jack to rush grimly off to his assistance. In fact, Ernest is merely Jack's alibi, an alter ego that allows him to disappear for days at a time and do as he likes. No one but Jack knows that he himself is Ernest. Ernest is the name Jack goes by in London, which is where he really goes on these occasions—probably to pursue the very sort of behavior he pretends to disapprove of in his imaginary brother.

#### CONNECTIONS TO CURRICULUM\*

*The following are some, but not all, of the connections to curriculum for this novel.*

- **Unit 3: Personal Responsibility**
  - Essential Question: "How does personal responsibility affect not only the individual but also the world as a whole?"

#### KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. W.12.5
- Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information. W.12.6
- Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text. RL.12.2
- Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging. RL.12.5