***The Importance of Being Ernest*** Name***\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

**Reading Guide**

**ACT 1**

1. Who are Algernon and Lane?
2. Why does “Jack” come to visit Algernon?
3. How does Algernon feel about love and marriage?
4. Who is Cecily?
5. Describe the story behind “Jack’s” two names?
6. Explain what Algernon means by “Bunburying.”
7. Who are Lady Bracknell and Gwendolen?
8. Gwendolen would not love “Ernest” if…
9. How does Lady Bracknell feel about Gwendolen and Ernest’s engagement?
10. What do you think Wilde is trying to say about Lady Bracknell and Gwendolen’s point of view about marriage?

**ACT II**

1. How would you characterize Cecily and Miss Prisim, and how do they differ, if at all, from character’s we’ve already met?
2. How would you characterize Canon Chausuble and his relationship with Miss Prisim?
3. Examine the /first meeting of Cecily and Algernon. What happens? How do they interact with watch other? How is it similar or different from the scene in Act 1 with Jack and Gwendolen?
4. Look at the scene when Jack finally arrives at Manor House. How does he interact with Prisim and Chasuble? Cecily? Algernon? Why do the characters come on stage in this order?
5. What goes on in the second scene with Cecily and Algernon?
6. Describe the first meeting of Cecily and Gwendolen. What do they talk about? How would you characterize their initial impression of each other?
7. Compare and contrast the tea scene with Cecily and Gwendolen and the muffin scene between Algernon and Jack.

**ACT III**

1. Why do Gwendolen and Cecily finally accept Jack and Algernon?
2. What is Lady Bracknell’s main concern about Cecily? (In other words, what finally makes Lady Bracknell consent to Cecily and Algernon’s marriage?)
3. What does Lady Bracknell realize about Miss Prisim? How does that change things?
4. How does Wilde poke fun at the aristocracy throughout the play? Give at least 3 examples.
5. In the last line of the play, Jack says, “I’ve now realized for the first time in my life the vital importance of being Ernest,” which is also the title of the play. Explain the dual meaning of this comment/title.