# The Importance of Being Earnest

**WebQuest Description:** Getting to know 1895 society  
**Grade Level:** 9-12  
**Curriculum:** English / Language Arts  
**Keywords:**  
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## Introduction

We are preparing to go see The Importance of Being Earnest. We are going to research the era of the play.

## Tasks

You are the London correspondent for a New York Newspaper in 1895, the year Oscar Wilde's play The Importance of Being Earnest was published. You must write an article for the Style section about the fashion, entertainment and wealthy lifestyle for curious New Yorkers. Your editor is depending on you to entice his upper-class readers with your up-to-the minute correspondence and detailed observations.

## Process

Jot down notes on everything you see and learn for your article. View the fashions of the times. Remember, you will have to use your powers of descriptive language to evoke the images. Focus on 1895. Discuss women AND men.  
**Fashion Era**  
**1890s Costume History from the Costumer's Manifesto**  
**Articles on 1890s Fashion**  
**Who wore what in Britain?**  
**Now, research the entertainments for upper class individuals.**  
**Eras of Elegance - general**  
**Eras of Elegance - scroll down for info on the music hall**  
**Victorian Entertainment from Victorian Web**  
**The Importance of Being Earnest - premiere in London**  
**Now research etiquette for the time.**  
**Victorian Etiquette**

Here's an overview of events featured in Illustrated London News in 1895.

Now write your article. You can be a little gossipy, but maintain a 3rd person point of view. Offer lots of detail, organize each paragraph by one topic (ladies' fashion, men's fashion, music, etc.), and wrap it up nicely. Good luck!

## Evaluation

Now write your article. You can be a little gossipy, but maintain a 3rd person point of view. Offer lots of detail, organize each paragraph by one topic (ladies' fashion, men's fashion, music, etc.), and wrap it up nicely. Good luck!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category and Score</th>
<th>A - Exemplary</th>
<th>B - Very Good</th>
<th>C - Developing</th>
<th>D - Beginning</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voice/Tone</td>
<td>Point of view is 3rd person, does not shift, and the voice/tone is appropriate. A consistent tense is used.</td>
<td>The author strives for an appropriate voice and tone. Aims for 3rd person, but may shift. Tense is almost always consistent.</td>
<td>An effort to use a consistent and appropriate point of view and tone. A few shifts in tense or voice.</td>
<td>Inconsistent or inappropriate point of view and tone. Tense is inconsistent or inappropriate for the task.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>Information is accurate and specific and shows solid research.</td>
<td>Information is mostly accurate, with only a few errors or mistakes. Good research.</td>
<td>Information includes several inaccuracies or mistakes. Some good research, but perhaps more time is needed.</td>
<td>Many inaccuracies in information.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Detail</td>
<td>Excellent use of detail and specific information.</td>
<td>Good use of detail and specific information. A few more details would help.</td>
<td>Some good details, but tends to rely on generalization.</td>
<td>Lack of details.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usage/Mechanics</td>
<td>Virtually no errors in usage or mechanics.</td>
<td>Only a few errors in usage or mechanics.</td>
<td>Several errors in usage or mechanics that do not interfere with understanding.</td>
<td>Many errors in usage or mechanics that interfere with understanding.</td>
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<thead>
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<th>Total Score</th>
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By now you should have a sense of what life would have been like in 1895 for a fancy Londoner. Are you ready to see the show?