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. Pick the things that seem to be most popular and notable - especially focus on 1895. 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. You don't need to include a lot about this, but make mention of some of the habits of society. Victorian Etiquette Here's an overview of events featured in Illustrated London News in 1895.

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!
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?