

An Anticipation Guide

for *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Purpose

An anticipation guide is a prereading assignment designed to help prepare students for messages in the book they are about to read. It also helps to build their curiosity so that perhaps they will be more excited about reading! Students will use their own background knowledge and experience to consider their opinions about statements made by characters in *The Importance of Being Earnest* so that they are ready to build on that schema as they read the play.



Directions

1. Pass out the anticipation guide to the students, explaining that there are no right or wrong answers but that this is a sort of opinion survey. Put a copy on the overhead and go over the directions with them.
2. Allow the students 3-4 minutes to complete the survey on their own. When they are finished, have them get into groups of 3-4 to talk about what they thought.
3. After letting the groups talk for a few minutes, have some groups share what they thought. Discuss each point on the anticipation guide and have the students decide whether each statement is always true, never true, or sometimes true and if so, in what situations. Discuss why some of the statements strike us as being absurd and even funny.
4. Explain that every statement on the anticipation guide came directly from a character's line in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Have the class predict a few things about the play such as its tone and a few of its themes, including marriage and what should be taken seriously.

Assessment:

Have the students keep the anticipation guide in their notebooks. Throughout the unit, return to some of the points off the anticipation guide as they read them in order to discuss them in context. At the end of the unit, have the students pull out the anticipation guide again to review their initial opinions. Discuss whether their opinions have changed and why.

Anticipation Guide

Directions: Read through the statements below. If you agree with the statement, put a “+” on the line; if you disagree, put a “-”. If you neither agree nor disagree, put “+/-” or some other mark.

- _____ Girls never marry the men they flirt with.
- _____ It is absurd to have a hard-and-fast rule about what one should read and what one shouldn't.
- _____ Once a week is quite enough to dine with one's own relations.
- _____ Health is the primary duty of life.
- _____ An engagement should come on a young girl as a surprise.
- _____ I don't like novels that end happily.
- _____ It is not a really serious engagement if it hasn't been broken off at least once.
- _____ I am very fond of being looked at.
- _____ In matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity, is the vital thing.
- _____ No woman should ever be quite accurate about her age.

📖 Nikki Mantyla, BYU, 2003 📖



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