

The importance of being earnest setting analysis essay sample



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Oscar Wilde adds a unique style to his play *The Importance of Being Ernest* by contrasting the play's different settings. The setting of a play can be a fundamental element in developing the plot. *The Importance of Being Ernest* is set in the late 1800s in the bustling city of London. The background of the play contrasts the differences in the characters Jack and Algernon as well as further developing the plot line.

The Importance of Being Ernest is developed within two contrasting places. The setting that opens the play takes place in the city of London. London is described throughout the play is a busy city full of aristocratic city dwellers. The setting in the first act mainly focuses on Algernon's mansion complete with butlers, silver services, high end food and wine and the formality that these elements create.

The second setting in Act 2 is set in the countryside of Hertfordshire where Jack presides. His house is surrounded by nature giving the area a more tranquil feel. Both settings are necessary because without it there would be no plot. Both characters utilize the settings for an escape of their realities. Both men use alter egos. Jack's alter ego is named Ernest and he is described as a troublesome city dweller that enjoys the hustle and bustle of the city. On the other hand Algernon's alter ego Bunbury is described as a man who lives in a simplified life in the countryside and gets sick often. The contrasting places allow these two men to temporarily get away from their lives.

The contrasting settings also develop the plot further by building the climax. The two places clash when Algernon decides to come visit Jack in the country

posing as Ernest. He then proposes to Cecily, Jack's niece, under the name Ernest. This creates a problem when Gwendolyn also comes to see Jack thinking his name is Ernest as well. Gwendolyn and Cecily both think that they are engaged to a man named Ernest. This ultimately unravels Jack's alter ego. Without the different settings they wouldn't be able to create their alter egos.

The contrasting settings allowed the two characters to have an outlet away from their lives but also contributing to a plot by creating conflict and also contrasts the differences in the characters. Setting can be just as important as the plot because it sets the stage of the storyline.