



English Literature

Paper 2 Modern Text Section A

Name: _____

Class: _____

Assessment objectives:

AO1: Read, understand and respond to texts.

Students should be able to:

- Maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response.
- Use textual evidence, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.

AO2: Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

AO3: Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.

AO4: Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

What can you remember?

1. Who wrote the play?
2. When is the play set?
3. When was it written?
4. Who is described as:
 - a) 'a rather cold woman, and her husband's social superior'?
 - b) 'very pleased with life and rather excited'?
 - c) 'half shy, half assertive'?
 - d) 'easy well bred man about town'?
 - e) 'rather provincial in his speech'?

Social and historical context: copy key details from the powerpoint.

SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Although *An Inspector Calls* is set in 1912 it was written in 1944/45 and produced in London for the first time in 1946; it is as much about post-war Britain as it is about the Edwardian period. Audiences at the end of the war would have appreciated the irony of Birling's predictions for the future. Setting the play before the First World War enabled Priestley to make the most of class division and social hierarchy. There are many references to social position: Birling's compared to his wife's, the Birlings compared to Gerald's family, the workers at Birling's factory and the destitute women who go to the Brumley Women's Charity Organisation for help. Birling constantly name drops, talking of Alderman Meggarty and the Chief Constable as well as his own time as Lord Mayor. He tries to impress Gerald with talk of the possibility of his being knighted. Social position is clearly important to him and Priestley uses Birling to represent the capitalist viewpoint. Birling is concerned about money and what other people think; the possibility of scandal horrifies him.

You may also notice the different attitudes to women in the play. Sheila is seen as someone who needs protecting from the harsh realities of life; both Gerald and Birling try to get her out of the room when Gerald is being questioned. They have a different attitude to women of the town, and to Eva Smith. Mrs Birling adds to this by implying that Eva Smith had ideas above her station. Although both Gerald and Eric see that Eva was different from the usual women in the Palace bar, they are still both prepared to use her in a way which would be unthinkable in a girl of their own social standing.

Socialism:

Capitalism:

What kind of people would benefit most from the class system in place in 1912?

Play set in 1912	Play written in 1945	
The First World War would start in two years. Birling's optimistic view that there would not be a war is completely wrong.	The Second World War ended on 8 May 1945. People were recovering from nearly six years of warfare, danger and uncertainty.	
There were strong distinctions between the upper and lower classes.	Class distinctions had been greatly reduced as a result of two world wars.	
Women were subservient to men. All a well off woman could do was get married; a poor woman was seen as cheap labour.	As a result of the wars, women had earned a more valued place in society.	
The ruling classes saw no need to change the status quo.	There was a great desire for social change. Immediately after The Second World War, Clement Attlee's Labour Party won a landslide victory over Winston Churchill and the Conservatives.	

CONTEXT

To understand the context of the play, it's helpful to know a little about J B Priestley's life and his political views during the early 20th century - a time of great global change. He wrote *An Inspector Calls* after the Second World War and like much of his work it contains controversial, politically charged messages. Keen to pioneer a new 'morality' in politics, Priestley's chief concerns involved social inequality in Britain and the need for nuclear disarmament. The characters we see as the curtain rises are not the same as those at the play's conclusion. The events of the evening change everyone, as well as their expectations of the future. Inspector Goole is instrumental in disturbing the harmony; a purposeful, mysterious character who forces the characters to confront each other's social responsibility, snobbery and guilt. But is the Inspector as genuine as he seems? All these changes take place because of the visit of Inspector Goole. But who is Inspector Goole? And who is the girl whose suicide he is apparently investigating?

Priestley deliberately **set his play in 1912** because the date represented an era when all was very different from the time he was writing. In 1912, rigid class and gender boundaries seemed to ensure that nothing would change. Yet by **1945**, most of those class and gender divisions had been breached. Priestley wanted to make the most of these changes. Through this play, he encourages people to seize the opportunity the end of the war had given them to build a better, more caring society.

AN INSPECTOR CALLS

TIMELINE

YEAR AND MONTH	WHAT HAPPENS	PERSON INVOLVED
September 1910	Eva sacked by Birling & Co.	MR BIRLING
December 1910	Eva employed by Milwards.	
Late January 1911	Eva sacked by Milwards.	SHEILA BIRLING
March 1911	Eva (calling herself Daisy Renton) becomes Gerald's mistress.	GERALD CROFT
Early September 1911	Gerald breaks off the affair.	GERALD CROFT
Eva leaves Brumley for two months.		
November 1911	Eric meets Eva.	ERIC BIRLING
December 1911/January 1912	Eva finds she is pregnant.	ERIC BIRLING
Late March 1912	Mrs. Birling turns down Eva's application for help.	MRS BIRLING
Early April 1912	Eva's suicide/the Inspector calls	ALL

Act One: a family affair in 1912

Arthur Birling, a wealthy businessman, and his family are celebrating the engagement of his daughter Sheila. The play begins with the idea that all is well at the Birling household. Arthur gives a speech to Gerald and Eric about business. He says that every man should look after himself. The doorbell rings and they receive a visit from an Inspector, Inspector Goole, who has come to inform them that a young working class girl called Eva Smith has committed suicide by drinking disinfectant and that he is there to investigate her sudden suicide. It turns out that Arthur Birling sacked Eva Smith from his factory and Sheila Birling asked for Eva Smith to be sacked from Millwards (a clothing shop) last year. The Inspector explains that Eva Smith changed her name to Daisy Renton. Gerald appears shocked and Eric leaves.

Act Two: the Inspector's investigation continues

The family are, in turn, interrogated by the Inspector, and evident cracks appear in their relationships with one another. Under the pressure of the Inspector's interrogation, every member of the family turn out to have a shameful secret linking them with Eva's death. Gerald is forced to confess he spent last summer with Daisy Renton, who was his mistress. Sheila returns his engagement ring and Gerald leaves. Sybil Birling (who sits on the Woman's Charity Organisation) confesses to having rejected Eva/Daisy's appeal for help. Sybil blames the father of Eva/Daisy's unborn child for her death. Sheila guess that Eric is the father of the child.

Act Three: who is responsible?

Eric returns and confesses to being the father of Eva/Daisy's unborn child. He describes how he drunkenly forced her to have sex with him, got her pregnant and then stole money from his father's office to support her. Eva/Daisy rejected the money and went to Sybil's charity for help. Eric blames his mother, Sybil, for having murdered her own grandchild. The Inspector reminds everyone that they have all been responsible for the death of Eva/Daisy. He warns the Birling's that everyone must look after one another. The Inspector leaves.

Act Three: the big reveal

Gerald returns and announces that there is no 'Inspector Goole' at Brumley police station. Arthur Birling confirms this when he calls the station. Gerald then calls the infirmary and no one has committed suicide. Mr Birling, Sybil and Gerald all believe it was hoax and begin to relax. Sheila and Eric argue that they are all still guilty and must take responsibility. The phone then rings, informing the family that a young woman has been found dead after drinking disinfectant and a Police Inspector is to visit them that evening. *The curtain falls*

Act 1: Opening stage directions

The dining room is of a fairly large suburban house, belonging to a prosperous manufacturer. It has good solid furniture of the period. The general effect is substantial and heavily comfortable but not cosy and homelike. (If a realistic set is used, then it should be swung back, as it was in the production at the new theatre. By doing this, you can have the dining table centre downstage during act one, when it is needed there, and then swinging back, can reveal the fireplace for act two, and then for act three can show a small table with a telephone on it, downstage of the fireplace; and by this time the dining-table and chairs have moved well upstage. Producers who wish to avoid this tricky business would be well advised to dispense with an ordinary realistic set if only because the dining-table becomes a nuisance. (The lighting should be pink and intimate until the Inspector arrives and then it should be brighter and harder.)

At rise of curtain, the four Birlings and Gerald are seated at the table, with Arthur Birling at one end, his wife at the other, Eric downstage and Sheila and Gerald seated upstage. Edna, the parlourmaid, is just clearing the table, which has no cloth, of the dessert plates and champagne glasses, etc., and then replacing them with decanter of port, cigar box and cigarettes. Port glasses are already on the table. All five are in evening dress of the period, the men in tails and white ties, not dinner-jackets. Arthur Birling is a heavy looking, rather portentous man in his middle fifties with fairly easy manners but rather provincial in this speech. His wife is about fifty, a rather cold woman and her husband's social superior. Sheila is a pretty girl in her early twenties, very pleased with life and rather excited. Gerald Croft is an attractive chap about thirty, rather too manly to be a dandy but very much the well-bred young man-about-town. Eric is in his early twenties, not quite at ease, half shy, half assertive. At the moment they have all had a good dinner, are celebrating a special occasion, and are pleased with themselves.

What do we learn about the Birlings?

1. What does 'prosperous manufacturer' teach us about Mr Birling?
2. Underline the stage direction about the lighting. What does it show us about how the Birlings feel at the start?
3. Which objects do the Birlings own which show they are wealthy?
 -
 -
 -
 -
4. Who is Edna and what does her role suggest about the Birling family?

Find a word or phrase to describe each character:

- Arthur Birling -
- Sybil Birling -
- Sheila -
- Eric -
- Gerald –

Act One: Consolidation

Summary: fill in the gaps!

The Birling family live in _____. It is described as an _____ city in the North Midlands and would likely to have had factories and housing for the thousands of workers. When the play opens the Birling family are celebrating the _____ of Sheila and Gerald _____. The mood seems to be _____, friendly and happy. Arthur Birling hopes that the marriage will help his _____. The ladies retire to the _____ and leave the men to drink their _____ and have a 'man to man' chat. Birling's social aspirations become apparent when he tells Gerald that he might be in line for a _____. He says that 'a man has to make his _____' and not worry about _____. As he is telling them this the _____ rings and an impressive and serious man enters.

How is Mr Birling presented in Act One?

Mr Birling
Quotes

Titanic Microcosm

- It was seen as indestructible.
- It was expensive.
- It was seen as symbol of prosperity, strength and wealth.
- The sinking could have been prevented.
- Both rich and poor died as a result.
- The rich were more likely to survive as they were nearest to the life rafts.

How is Mr Birling presented in Act One?

Write at least one paragraph to answer this question – include:

P – A clear point about how Mr Birling is presented: choose a good adjective

E – Use a short, embedded quotation

T/A - Explore the purpose of key words and ensure you have used some terminology

L – Include something about Priestley's message and try to link this to a contextual point about Capitalism. For example: Priestley wanted to undermine Birling to show...

Priestley felt the Capitalist views of the time were harmful and saw 1945 as the perfect time to help people to change these views because ...

Explain how Priestley has used **dramatic irony** to present his ideas to the audience:

WAGOLL (What a good one looks like)

Dramatic irony is used to make Mr Birling look arrogant. For example, he describes the Titanic as 'unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable'. His repetition of the adjective 'unsinkable' suggests he is utterly convinced that he is always right and perhaps shows how he thinks he is untouchable too, as a wealthy powerful man. The adverb 'absolutely' underlines this, showing the extent of his overconfidence. The audience though, understands that the Titanic will sink and start to consider Mr Birling to be a foolish character; we understand that we should start to question all of his views. Priestley is keen to undermine the position capitalists held in society, hoping that the desire for change, brought about after WW2, could be seized upon in a positive way to create a fairer and more equal society.

In your book write your own.

Label PETAL

Arthur Birling

- He is described at the start as a "heavy-looking, rather portentous man in his middle fifties but rather provincial in his speech."
- He has worked his way up in the world and is proud of his achievements. He boasts about having been Mayor and tries (and fails) to impress the Inspector with his local standing and his influential friends.
- However, he is aware of people who are his social superiors, which is why he shows off about the port to Gerald: "it's exactly the same port your father gets." He is proud that he is likely to be knighted, as that would move him even higher in social circles.
- He claims the party "is one of the happiest nights of my life." This is not only because Sheila will be happy, but because a merger with Crofts Limited will be good for his business.
- He is optimistic for the future and confident that there will not be a war. As the audience knows there will be a war, we begin to doubt Mr Birling's judgement. (If he is wrong about the war, what else will he be wrong about?)
- He is extremely selfish:
 - He wants to protect himself and his family. He believes that socialist ideas that stress the importance of the community are "nonsense" and that "a man has to make his own way."
 - He wants to protect Birling and Co. He cannot see that he did anything wrong when he fired Eva Smith - he was just looking after his business interests.
 - He wants to protect his reputation. As the Inspector's investigations continue, his selfishness gets the better of him: he is worried about how the press will view the story in Act II, and accuses Sheila of disloyalty at the start of Act III. He wants to hide the fact that Eric stole money: "I've got to cover this up as soon as I can."
 - Yet he hasn't learnt the lesson of the play: he is unable to admit his responsibility for his part in Eva's death.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| A. Birling's speech | H. Gerald goes for a walk | L. Inspector's final speech |
| B. Sheila's interrogation | I. Who accepts responsibility? | M. Engagement over! |
| C. The phone rings! | J. Celebrating the engagement | N. Eric is the father! |
| D. Eric's interrogation | K. Inspector's arrival (doorbell rings!) | O. Gerald's interrogation |
| E. Mrs Birling's interrogation | | P. Gerald debunks the Inspector |
| F. Gerald has had an affair! | | |
| G. Birling's interrogation | | |

Label correct order

The **arrival of the Inspector is a key moment** in the play. Can you remember which dramatic devices Priestley uses to add drama to this moment? Re read this section to remind you of this moment.

BIRLING: (solemnly) But this is the point. I don't want to lecture you two young fellows again. But what so many of you don't seem to understand now, when things are so much easier, is that a man has to make his own way –has to look after himself – and his family too, of course, when he has one –and so long as he does that, he won't come to much harm. But the way some of these cranks talk and write now, you'd think everybody has to look after everybody else, as if we were all mixed up together like bees in a hive –community and all that nonsense. But take my word for it, you youngsters –and I've learnt in the good hard school of experience –that a man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own –and –

We hear the sharp ring of a door bell. Birling stops to listen.

Annotate the text for standout techniques.

Can you remember which **dramatic devices** Priestley uses to add drama to this moment? Write down three.

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-
-

Act One: Consolidation

Summary: fill in the gaps!

Inspector Goole arrives immediately after this and announces that he is investigating the suicide of a girl named _____ who killed herself by swallowing _____. He says that she left a diary and a _____. With the arrival of the Inspector a note of _____ and menace is introduced, and the audience expects the complacency of the Birlings to be _____.

The Inspector shows Birling a photograph and he then recognises her as the girl he _____ after a dispute over wages. The inspector soon adopts a very _____ tone which continues throughout the play. Birling tries to defend himself by referring to his friendship with _____.

The Inspector

1. The Inspector uses lots of short sentences: this shows his confidence. He doesn't need to keep talking like Mr Birling does. Find an example of a short sentence he uses which shows control and confidence.
2. The Inspector 'interposes himself between them and the photograph'
 - What does 'interpose' mean?
 - Why does he do this?
3. The Inspector says to Mr Birling 'it's better to ask for the earth than to take it.'
 - What does this mean?
 - Which political view does this link to?

Inspector Goole

- He is described on his entrance as creating "an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness.' He is a man in his fifties, dressed in a plain darkish suit. He speaks carefully, weightily, and has a disconcerting habit of looking hard at the person he addresses before actually speaking. "
- He works very systematically; he likes to deal with "one person and one line of enquiry at a time." His method is to confront a suspect with a piece of information and then make them talk - or, as Sheila puts it, "he's giving us the rope - so that we'll hang ourselves."
- He is a figure of authority. He deals with each member of the family very firmly and several times we see him "massively taking charge as disputes erupt between them." He is not impressed when he hears about Mr Birling's influential friends and he cuts through Mrs Birling's obstructiveness.
- He seems to know and understand an extraordinary amount.
- He knows the history of Eva Smith and the Birlings' involvement in it, even though she died only hours ago. Sheila tells Gerald: "Of course he knows."
- He knows things are going to happen - He says "I'm waiting...To do my duty" just before Eric's return, as if he expected Eric to reappear at exactly that moment.
 - He is obviously in a great hurry towards the end of the play: he stresses "I haven't much time." Does he know that the real inspector is shortly going to arrive?
- His final speech is like a sermon or a politician's. He leaves the family with the message "We are responsible for each other" and warns them of the "fire and blood and anguish" that will result if they do not pay attention to what he has taught them.

Who/what is the Inspector?

- An enigma?
- Priestley's mouthpiece?
- The voice of our conscience?

What is the Function of the Inspector in 'An Inspector Calls'?

Function	Quotation	Exploration
To maintain an aloof professionalism.	Birling: ... I know the Brumley police officers pretty well – and I thought I'd never seen you before. The Inspector: Quite so.	He doesn't appear very friendly and is not impressed by Mr. Birling's credentials, showing that he is solely here to uncover the truth. He does not believe that social status and reputation put you above the law, therefore is not intimidated by Birling's suggestions that he has friends in high places.
To control speech and movement on stage.	Birling: But I don't understand why you should come here, Inspector- Inspector: <i>(cutting through, massively)</i>	
To create moments of tension and intrigue.	Gerald: Any particular reason why I shouldn't see this girl's photograph, Inspector? Inspector: <i>(cooly, looking hard at him)</i> There might be.	
To show the characters and audience that all our lives are linked; to act as a vehicle for Priestley's moral message;	'Because what happened to her then may have determined what happened to her afterwards...'	
To force the characters to reveal their involvement in Eva's suicide.	Inspector: I think you remember Eva Smith now, don't you, Mr Birling?	
To shock the characters, and the audience, with the consequences of their involvement in Eva Smith's life.	Inspector: She wasn't pretty when I saw her today, but she had been pretty – very pretty.	

Exam type question: What do you think is the importance of Inspector Goole and how does Priestley present him?

Sheila

BIRLING: (abruptly) There's nothing else, y'know. I've just told you that.

SHEILA: What's all this about?

BIRLING: Nothing to do with you, Sheila. Run along.

INSPECTOR: No, wait a minute, Miss Birling.

BIRLING: (angrily) Look here, Inspector, I consider this uncalled-for and officious. I've half a mind to report you. I've told you all I know – and it doesn't seem to me very important – and now there isn't the slightest reason why my daughter should be dragged into this unpleasant business.

SHEILA: (coming farther in) What business? What's happening?

INSPECTOR: (impressively) I'm a police Inspector, Miss Birling. This afternoon a young woman drank some disinfectant, and died, after several hours of agony, tonight in the infirmary.

SHEILA: Oh – how horrible! Was it an accident?

INSPECTOR: No. She wanted to end her life. She felt she couldn't go

1. How does Mr Birling treat Sheila at this point?
2. How does Sheila react to the news of Eva Smith's death?
3. How does the Inspector treat Sheila? How is this different to her father?

Key quotations – what do these quotations show about the views of Sheila and Eric, the younger generation?

"But these girls aren't cheap labour – they're people" – Sheila

"Why shouldn't they try for higher wages?" – Eric

How does Sheila change and develop as the play progresses?

1. Why is it surprising that Sheila begins to stand up to Gerald? (Patriarchal)
2. Why is it important that Sheila feels remorse for what she has done?
3. How does the fact that Sheila is changing tie in with Priestley's message?
4. What does it show about Sheila's personality when she warns her mother?
5. Is Sheila representing socialism or capitalism? How do you know?

How far does Priestley present Sheila as a likeable character?

Add an adjective to the point	Evidence	Terminology/ Analysis	Context	Audience reaction/ Priestley's message
At the beginning Sheila is presented as ...	"is it the one you wanted me to have?"			
When Sheila learns about Eva's death she appears....	"Oh – how horrible – was it an accident?"			
When Sheila learns of her role in Eva's death she appears...	"And I'll never, never do it again to anybody."			
Finally, Sheila is presented as....	"A wall"			

Exam type question: How does Priestley present the change in Sheila?

Complete in book.

Write a summary about the change in Sheila. Include:

- How she is presented at the beginning – use a quotation
 - How she is treated by her father and by the Inspector – use evidence
 - How and why she begins to stand up for herself – think about what she says to Gerald
 - How she reacts to her part in Eva's death – use evidence
 - How she begins to sound more like the Inspector – use evidence.
-
- Extension – How is Sheila's character used by Priestley as a device?

Example PETAL:

When Sheila first learns about Eva's death in Act 1, she seems self-centred, so we don't feel very positive towards her. She says, "Oh – how horrible – was it an accident?" The dashes create a pause in her speech and show that she does care about the death and finds the idea upsetting. However, the fact that she asks this question suggests that she has is naïve and has led a very sheltered life, as she cannot imagine circumstances desperate enough to lead a young woman to take her own life. The phrase 'how horrible' suggests that she is more focused on her own feelings and perhaps that is why she wants it to have been 'an accident'. Here, Priestley wants to highlight the divide between the social classes in the Edwardian era; because Sheila is an upper middle-class woman, she has been protected from harsh realities of life experienced by the working-class, especially women. The audience feels limited connection with Sheila at this point, because she is not yet showing any real compassion for Eva Smith or for women like her.

Act One: Consolidation

Summary: fill in the gaps!

Sheila is the next to be interrogated. She admits _____ to the manager at Milwards because she thought Eva was _____ at her when she tried on a dress. As a result of this, Eva, or Daisy Renton was _____. Sheila feels very _____ about her behaviour and feels _____ towards Eva Smith. She is open and _____ about her involvement with the girl.

When Gerald hears the name Daisy Renton he reacts so _____ that his own involvement with the girl is _____. At the end of Act I he admits to _____ that he was having an _____ with Daisy Renton over the _____.

Gerald Croft

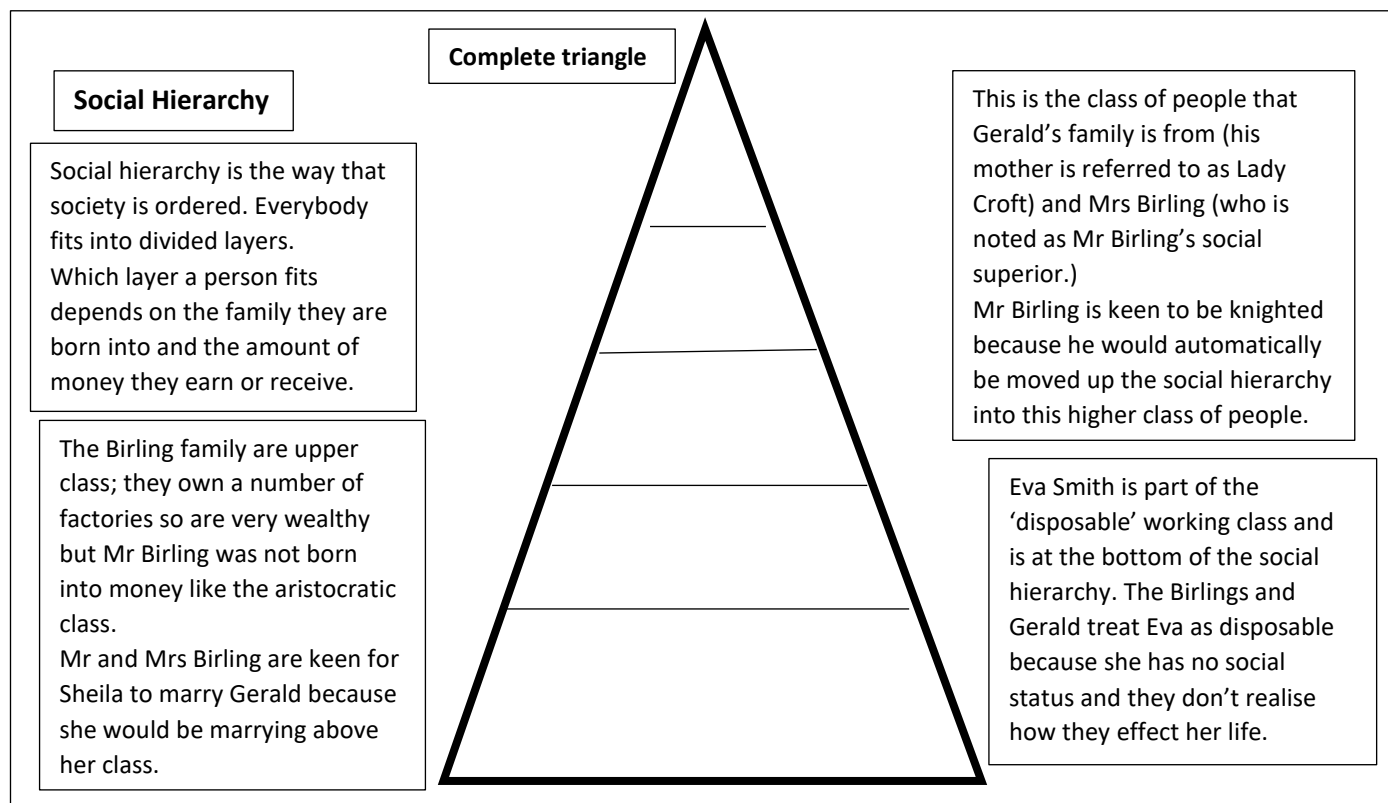
1. Why do you think Gerald cheats on Sheila?
2. How does Sheila react when she finds out?
3. Do you think Gerald really cared for Daisy? Comment on each of the following quotations:
 - "I didn't ask for anything in return"
 - "She told me that she'd been happier than she'd ever been before"
 - "I'm rather more – upset – by this business than I probably appear to be." Comment on the use of dashes.

Context: Men and Women in 1912

In 1912, all a well-off woman could do was get married; a poor woman was seen as cheap labour.

Women had no rights. They were not allowed to vote, own property or even work outside the home if they were married.

The **Edwardian era** covers the period of time from the mid-1890s to the outbreak of WW1 in 1914. During the early 1900s there were significant political shifts in society. Where previously common labourers and women were excluded from society they became increasingly politicised. The Edwardian period maintained a rigid class system, however the changing economic system creating more social mobility. This included an increased interest in socialism, attention to the plight of the poor and the issue of women's suffrage. As industry rapidly increased, so did economic opportunities.



1. What is social hierarchy?
2. Which titles are people given who are referred to as aristocracy?
3. Who, in the play, is from the aristocracy?
4. What is one financial difference between the aristocracy and the upper classes?
5. Why are Mr and Mrs Birling so keen for Sheila to marry Gerald?
6. Which class is at the bottom of the social hierarchy?
7. How did (do) some members of the upper classes view the lower classes?

'he's a notorious womaniser as well as being one of the worst sots and rogues in Brumley'

Quick analysis in books:

1. Why are the Birlings shocked to hear Gerald say this?
2. What Edwardian value does this contradict and what does it suggest about the society they live in?
3. Why did people accept this behaviour from upper class men?

Act Two: Consolidation

Summary: fill in the gaps!

Gerald knows that the inspector's questions will _____ his involvement with Daisy Renton. He wants _____ to leave but she insists on staying. Mrs. Birling enters and meets the inspector for the first time. She tries to make light of the situation which she refers to as 'this _____ business.' Sheila realises that her mother's _____ and uncaring attitude will eventually be turned against her and tries to _____ her. We realise that the family really know very _____ about each other. At this point, for example, Mrs. Birling discovers that Eric has been _____ heavily for years.

The inspector questions Gerald who admits that he knew Daisy Renton. He met her at the _____ at the Palace Variety Theatre in Brumley. Gerald explains that Alderman Meggarty was _____ Daisy and he _____ her. He set her up as his _____ until _____ when the affair came to an end. He seems genuinely _____ about the girl's death, particularly as Eva was very _____ when he broke off the relationship. Sheila then gives Gerald back her _____.

Exam style question: How is Gerald presented as a stereotypical man of his time?

Sybil Birling

Exam style question: How does Priestley present the character of Mrs Birling in 'An Inspector Calls'?

Write your introduction – you have 3 minutes

What to include in your introduction:

- When the play was written
- What the main purpose was

A line to address the question – try to use some excellent adjectives to describe Mrs Birling

Like this:

Priestley's didactic play 'An Inspector Calls' was written in 1945 to challenge the outdated and harmful ideas of the Edwardian era. In the play, Mrs Birling is a symbol for these ideas; she is shown to be prejudiced, unsympathetic and incapable of change.

Write a short paragraph to explain why Mrs Birling might have volunteered for the Brumley's Women's charity. Is it because she cared about the poorest people, or might there be another reason?

Fill in this grid to start gathering your ideas on **Mrs Birling**

Add an adjective to make your point	Evidence	Terminology/ analysis	Context	Audience reaction/ Priestley's message
At the beginning Mrs Birling is presented as ...	Exits the room with Sheila after dinner Or: <i>"When you're married, you'll realise that men with important work to do"</i>			
When the Inspector interrogates Mrs B in Act 2 she is	<i>"Girls of that class"</i>			
At the end of Act 2, Mrs B is shown to be...	<i>"I accept no blame for it at all"</i>			
Finally, Mrs B is presented as	<i>(Triumphantly)</i> <i>"they're over tired"</i>			

How does Priestley present the character of Mrs Birling in 'An Inspector Calls'?

Write the perfect PETAL

Analysis of dialogue/language

- Key words/phrases
- Pauses
- Other language features (repetition, emotive language, euphemisms, etc.)

Analysis of dramatic devices

- dramatic irony
- foreshadowing
- stage directions
- entrances and exits
- props
- lighting and sound

Remember you don't need to cover all of these but you need a range of devices and analysis in your essay. You do need the last three and ideally context twice.

Audience reaction

Priestley's message

Context

Example

At the end of the play, Priestley presents Mrs Birling as a character who has learnt nothing and is also determined not to learn; she is intransigent. We see this when she dismisses Sheila and Eric as being "over tired". This adjective makes it sound as though they are very young children who are past their bedtime. Here, Mrs Birling is showing a lack of respect for them, as they are in their early twenties, but also for their new opinions about equality and social responsibility. She symbolises the older generation, who think they have nothing to learn, especially from young people. The use of the stage direction 'triumphantly' reinforces this, as she seems smug and self-satisfied in her interactions with her children and belittles their opinions. Priestley wants us to dislike her, even be angered by her, in this moment, because he wants to remind the 1945 audience that change is essential. They mustn't ignore the lesson, like Mrs Birling: they must work together to build a fairer, more equal society.

Conclusion:

- **For me,** (now include a *personal reflection* of Mrs B's overall significance or her most important moment in relation to the question).

And/or

- Priestley's message through Mrs Birling is...
- I believe Priestley's message is still relevant today because

Sybil

- She is described at the start as "about fifty, a rather cold woman and her husband's social superior."
- She is a snob, very aware of the differences between social classes. She is irritated when Mr Birling makes the social gaffe of praising the cook in front of Gerald and later is very dismissive of Eva, saying "Girls of that class."
- She has the least respect for the Inspector of all the characters. She tries - unsuccessfully - to intimidate him and force him to leave, then lies to him when she claims that she does not recognise the photograph that he shows her.
- She sees Sheila and Eric still as "children" and speaks patronisingly to them.
- She tries to deny things that she doesn't want to believe: Eric's drinking, Gerald's affair with Eva, and the fact that a working-class girl would refuse money even if it was stolen, claiming "She was giving herself ridiculous airs."
- She admits she was "prejudiced" against the girl who applied to her committee for help and saw it as her "duty" to refuse to help her. Her narrow sense of morality dictates that the father of a child should be responsible for its welfare, regardless of circumstances.
- At the end of the play, she has had to come to terms with the fact that her son is a heavy drinker who got a girl pregnant and stole money to support her, her daughter will not marry a good social 'catch' and that her own reputation within the town will be sullied. Yet, like her husband, she refuses to believe that she did anything wrong and doesn't accept responsibility for her part in Eva's death.

Act Two: Consolidation

Summary: fill in the gaps!

After some prompting Mrs. Birling admits that the girl had approached the _____ organisation which she is involved with. Eva, who was _____, had unfortunately called herself _____ when she first met the committee which _____ Mrs. Birling against her. Mrs. Birling _____ the committee not to help her and told her to go and look for the _____ of her _____. The inspector traps Mrs. Birling into stating that the man should be made an _____ of. Mrs. Birling is a _____ character who remains _____ throughout.

Eric

Exam style question: How does Priestley show the changes in Eric during the course of AIC?

Use the underlined bits for the E of your PETAL

1 What was Eric like at the beginning? How did he behave and how was he treated by his family?

Eric is in his early twenties, not quite at ease, half shy, half assertive

ERIC: Yes, I know – but still —

BIRLING: Just let me finish, Eric. You've a lot to learn yet.

BIRLING: Well it's my duty to keep labour costs down. ... We were paying the usual rates and if they didn't like those rates, they could go and work somewhere else. It's a free country, I told them.

ERIC: It isn't if you can't go and work somewhere else.

ERIC: No, I mean about this girl – Eva Smith. Why shouldn't they try for higher wages? We try for the highest possible prices. ...

BIRLING: (rather angrily) Unless you brighten your ideas, you'll never be in a position to let anybody stay or to tell anybody to go. It's about time you learnt to face a few responsibilities.

Write a PETAL in your books focusing on what Eric is like/how he is treated in **Act 1** .

PETAL 2: How does Eric treat Eva – recounted Act3?

ERIC: Yes, I insisted – it seems. I'm not very clear about it, but afterwards she told me she didn't want me to go in but that – well, I was in that state when a chap easily turns nasty – and I threatened to make a row.

INSPECTOR: So she let you in?

ERIC: Yes. And that's when it happened. And I didn't even remember – that's the hellish thing. Oh – my God! — how stupid it all is!

ERIC: No. And I couldn't remember her name or where she lived. It was all very vague. But I happened to see her again in the Palace bar

ERIC: Yes. I wasn't in love with her or anything – but I liked her – she was pretty and a good sport—

PETAL 3: How does Eric speak by the end? How has he changed?

BIRLING: Don't I? Well, you're quite wrong there. I've learnt plenty tonight. And you don't want me to tell you what I've learnt, I hope. When I look back on tonight – when I think of what I was feeling when the five of us sat down to dinner at that table—

ERIC: (cutting in) Yes, and do you remember what you said to Gerald and me after dinner, when you were feeling so pleased with yourself? You told us that a man has to make his own way, look after himself and mind his own business, and that we weren't to take any notice of these cranks who tell us that everybody has to look after everybody else, as if we were all mixed up together. Do you remember? Yes – and then one of those cranks walked in – the Inspector. (laughs bitterly.) I didn't notice you told him that it's every man for himself.

Comment on the amount Eric says as well as what he says. Think carefully about the highlighted stage direction too.

PETAL 4: What has Eric learnt? Try to comment on the sections underlined in your answer.

ERIC: (bursting out) What's the use of talking about behaving sensibly. You're beginning to pretend now that nothing's really happened at all.

SHEILA: (eagerly) That's just what I feel, Eric. And it's what they don't seem to understand.

ERIC: Whoever that chap was, the fact remains that I did what I did. And mother did what she did. And the rest of you did what you did to her. It's still the same rotten story whether it's been told to a police inspector or to somebody else. According to you, I ought to feel a lot better — (to Gerald) I stole some money, Gerald, you might as well know — (as Birling tries to interrupt) I don't care, let him know. The money's not the important thing. It's what happened to the girl and what we all did to her that matters. And I still feel the same about it, and that's why I don't feel like sitting down and having a nice cosy talk.

PETAL 5 What have the audience learnt through Eric? How does Priestley use Eric's character to help get his own message across?

Think about:

What Eric feels and believes at the end and why that is important to Priestley's message.

Maybe Eric had some socialist views at the start but he wasn't able to voice them. Why can he now?

How Eric treated Eva and what he learned through that?

Consider: Eric's behaviour is abhorrent. Why don't we find him as unsympathetic as his parents? Why do you think Priestley portrayed him like this?

Eric : 'you're not the kind of father a chap could go to when he's in trouble'

Birling: 'You're the one I blame' - first words spoken after the Inspector leaves.

Also, if Eric drinks too much, consider the cultural context of drinking and how often Mr Birling drinks/offers drink and the influence this example would have had on his son.

Act Three: Consolidation

Summary: fill in the gaps!

Eric seems _____ and awkward from the start of the play. It becomes clear to the audience (and the _____ that he is a hardened _____ although it takes his _____ longer to realise this. He is not intimidated by the Inspector's questioning and he feels _____ and frustrated with himself for his relationship with the girl. Eric is horrified that his thoughtless actions had such terrible _____. He had some _____, as although he got her pregnant he was concerned enough to give her money. He was obviously less worried about _____ from his father's office than he was about the girl's future. Eric is appalled by his _____ inability to admit their responsibility and tells them he is ashamed of them.

The Inspector's final speech: Annotate with:

- Technique
- Connotations
- What is the message? How does your quotation show this?

"But remember this. One Eva Smith has gone - but there are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths still left with us, with their lives, their hopes and fears, their suffering and chance of happiness, all intertwined with our lives, and what we think and say and do. We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other. And I tell you that the time will soon come when, if men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish. Good night."

- The Inspector uses a didactic tone.
- He feels morally responsible for ensuring the Birlings learn from their mistakes.
- His views are very much those of Priestley's. He is a liberal and a socialist, believing that we have a duty of care to others.
- The purpose of this speech is to shock and instruct.
- The message is as much for the audience as for the characters.
- Through the voice of the Inspector, Priestley is able to project his views on how we should lead our lives.
- He uses imperatives to assert his authority.

Consider

'Breaking the genre of the play':

- The Speech can be directed to both the Birlings and the audience (a lesson for a 1945 middle class audience)
It breaks from the expected play genre, Priestley pauses the play to teach us all.
- Detective dramas traditionally answer all significant questions an AIC does not:
 - So not just a 'safe' entertainment that ties up loose ends
 - So social order is not comfortably restored at end

Members of one body:

- Biblical metaphor
- Parts of a body depend on each other for the body to be healthy
- Amputated parts die
- But rest of body also maimed if parts are injured / lost
- Therefore: society is NOT just a collection of disconnected individuals

Fire and blood and anguish:

WW1 / WW2 / Atomic weapons

- i. Dramatic irony:
- ii. Makes Inspector's warning real / serious

Eva Smith

In your book: **Who is most responsible for her death?**

- Who, in your opinion, is (most) responsible for the death of Eva Smith? Why?
- Justify your opinion with reference to the text. You do not have to write in PETAL; just note down your thoughts, and include quotations if you can, to back up your ideas.

Eva's lack of voice:

1. How does the fact that Eva never actually speaks in the play symbolise her place in society?
2. Do you think that Eva Smith and Daisy Renton are the same person? Does it matter?
3. Which other female character only says a few words in the play? Why is this significant?

'We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other.'

What's the message of the play?

How are we supposed to think and feel at the end of the play?

Write a short paragraph to explain what you think the purpose of this play is. What is Priestley's message?

Sample Paragraph: How does Priestley present ideas about the generation gap in 'An Inspector Calls'

Priestley portrays the difference in the thinking between the older and the younger generation through the use of sarcasm (AO2) when Mr Birling says 'the famous younger generation who know it all', (AO1) suggesting that he does not take his children seriously and thinks they are foolish. This is reinforced when Mrs Birling refers to Sheila and Eric still as "children" and speaks patronisingly to them. However, Priestley presents the younger generation as developing a social conscience as the play progresses. In contrast to their parents, both Sheila and Eric are presented as remorseful when they accept responsibility by stating that 'we are all to blame.' Through the use of the collective pronoun 'we', the theme of collective responsibility is explored (AO2). Furthermore, Eric admits, 'I'll never, never do it again'; however, he is appalled by his parents' inability to admit their own responsibility. He therefore tells them forcefully, 'I'm ashamed of you.' Through the use of the repetitive exclamation, 'I'll never, never do it again,' Priestley highlights Eric's resolve to make a change in himself (AO2). In 1912, family members were expected to know their roles and to listen unquestioningly to parents who were in charge. However, through Sheila and Eric, Priestley presents the younger generation as being a symbol of hope and social change for the future. (AO3)

Clearly, Priestley uses Mr. and Mrs. Birling to represent old-fashioned ideas. He discredits them, and what they represent, by making them look foolish and by catching them out at the end when he warns them of the "fire and blood and anguish" that will result if they do not pay attention to what he has taught them (AO1).

Responsibility

Priestley wrote the play in 1946 after WWII. Britain was undergoing a great period of change and many people were concerned for the wellbeing of the poor. Priestley was keen for his audience to recognise that each and every one of them had a social responsibility for the welfare of others.

What does Priestley believe will happen if we do not learn to take responsibility for each other?

Glossary:

Prejudiced

Irresponsible

Socialist

Equality

In An Inspector Calls, Priestley explores social responsibility through:

- the treatment of Eva Smith
- how each character does or doesn't take responsibility for their behaviour
- the Inspector's lessons

Mr Birling

He believes that community responsibility is:

"nonsense"

"awkward"

He is more interested in business than his worker's rights.

Mrs Birling

She believes they have no responsibility for the working class. She is *"ashamed"* of Eric for his involvement with Eva, yet she refuses to believe that her actions played a part in her death.

Sheila

She understands her actions towards Eva /Daisy were irresponsible and accepts that she is responsible.

"At least I'm trying to tell the truth."

Eric

He is presented as a selfish character who realises too late his actions in ruining Eva/Daisy's life chances.

"You lot may be letting yourselves out nicely, but I can't. Nor can mother. We did her in all right."

Act Three: Consolidation

Summary: fill in the gaps!

After the _____ leaves the Birling's are unsettled. Eric and _____ are the most shaken and are _____ to see their parents avoiding _____ for their actions. Gradually the family begin to think that the Inspector is a _____ and not a real police inspector after all. The _____ mood is almost restored until the _____ rings announcing that an Inspector is on his way to investigate a girl's _____.

Characters

One way of judging the characters is to look at the way they change, or don't change by the end of the play.

	At the start of the play this character was...	To this character Eva was...	Quotation to support this from the beginning of the play...	Have the character's attitudes changed? How do you know this?
Mr Birling	Keen to cement his social rise through Shelia's marriage. Insecure about his social status.	Simply cheap labour – he did not think of her as a person.		
Mrs Birling	Social superior to her husband who cares a lot about strict distinctions between the social classes.	A pregnant nobody who is not Mrs Birling's responsibility.		
Sheila	Happy taking advantage of the benefits of her social class – a selfish young woman who enjoys spending time in expensive shops.	Someone beneath her social status who deserved to be fired out of spite and because she was pretty.		
Gerald	Prepared to marry Shelia despite her lower social status and the disapproval of his mother.	A mistress to be used and discarded as he pleases.		
Eric	Feels awkward about the benefits from his social status.	A promiscuous girl to be enjoyed at the end of a drunken night out.		

The Features of a Play Script

Feature	Definition	Example
A play	Not a book or novel – Priestly wrote <i>An Inspector Calls</i> to be heard and performed on a stage.	
Stage Directions	Priestley uses stage directions to show how the play should look on stage. They include set changes, lighting and costumes. Stage directions are also used to convey the writer's message.	
Props	Significant items on stage that add to the plot. These items can be used to provide clues and create a sense of mystery and tension.	
Acts	A play is divided into Acts. Each Act develops the plot and contains elements of changing characters, action, climax and resolution	
Entrances and exits	How characters enter and exit the stage is significant to the plot. Sometimes they are accompanied with sound.	
Beginnings and ends of each act	Priestley uses the acts to create tension often 'freezing' the action to build suspense. He uses cliff-hangers to make the audience wait.	
Warning signs	Clues (props, stage directions, dialogue) that are present from the beginning – signs of problems that are presented to the audience.	
Dramatic Irony	When the audience knows more than the characters. Dramatic irony gives power to the audience. Priestly uses it to highlight character flaws.	
Dialogue/ Language	The character's language reveals information about them: mood and tone, emotions, social class, thoughts and feelings about events and other characters. Language is used to highlight social differences and changes in characters.	
Audience	The play is written for a group of people who will watch the performance. Everything that happens on stage is to create a reaction from the audience to convey the writer's message.	

Dramatic Devices (AO2)

Stage Directions and Setting

Act 1 - Priestley uses stage directions to set the scene and give us information about the Birling family before we even see them. The setting suggests that the Birlings are a comfortable and well – off middle to upper class family. We can also tell that they are all feeling relaxed and confident at the beginning of the play:

- set - *large suburban house*
- furniture - *'solid ...but not cosy and homelike'*
- props – suggests wealth *'champagne glasses', 'decanter of port'*
- costume *'evening dress of the period'* white tie and tails – a formal occasion
- lighting – *'pink and intimate'*

At the start of the play the Birling's are seated and relaxed. By the end all standing and shouting and crying.

Staging

All the action in 1 room – claustrophobic and intense. Suggests that the Birling's live in a closed, protected world, sheltered from reality. The Inspector and social responsibility is not welcome.

Cliff Hangers

- Act 1: The inspector returns at the end of the scene and asks his question 'Well?' This is a cliff-hanger – audience want to watch on to see how Gerald and Sheila react.
- Act 2: The front door slams, announcing Eric's return, but the audience have to wait until Act 2 for his confession.

(The front door bangs every time someone enters or leaves the house. The characters and audience can hear this, and wonder who enters the house-effective sound effect in creating tension)
- Act 3: Ends off with the telephone ringing sharply and disturbing the atmosphere that they have restored after the inspector leaves - builds up the tension

Dramatic Irony (when an audience knows more about the characters/action than the characters on stage).

Priestley uses dramatic irony to show how ridiculous and wrong Birling's opinions are. The dramatic irony makes the audience think Birling is foolish and lacking in knowledge about the future. It also makes his political opinions seem wrong. Priestley is also showing the audience his concern about such idiotic people and the degree of power they have in this society.

Birling says war won't happen 'I say there isn't a chance of war' but the audience knows there were two World Wars about to happen

Birling says that the Titanic won't sink – *'absolutely unsinkable'* – we know it did, later that year.

Birling thinks there'll be no tension between employers and employees *'you'll be living in a world that will have forgotten all these Capital versus Labour agitations'* but there were strikes in 1907-1912 because of poor conditions and the General Strike of 1926 (AO3)

Quotes

Dramatic Devices

The Entrance of the inspector

Sound Effect- The 'doorbell' Edna interrupts Birling in the middle of his speeches. The 'sharp' ring would startle the audience – and suggests that the Inspector may be a 'sharp' (as in intelligent and possibly aggressive) person. The ring also interrupts Birling suggesting that the Inspector will have power and control over Birling.

Change of lighting from pink and intimate' to 'brighter and harder' when the inspector arrives. This suggests again that the Inspector is a 'hard' character who will wreck the cosy world the Birlings live in.

His name 'Inspector Goole' also suggests something unpleasant/interesting about the inspector – e.g. 'ghoul' means ghost

The inspector is a dramatic device

- The Inspector 'inspects' or interrogates each person in turn. He shows a photo of Eva Smith to each character in turn that only they see. The audience is intrigued and wants to know what this is.
- The inspector '*creates at once an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness*'. He also speaks '*carefully, weightily*' and '*has a disconcerting habit of looking hard at the person he addresses before actually speaking*'. This interests an audience – we want to know why he is there and how people will react to his questioning.
- Inspector leaves the room, having introduced Eva Smith's change of name to Daisy Renton. Audience want to know why this has occurred – suspense and intrigue builds up.
- Interrogation of Birling. Birling feels uncomfortable and tries to threaten Goole with his friendship with Colonel Roberts- Goole is not afraid of the power and status that Mr Birling has.

Timing (Tension created through the timing)

Timing of entrances and exits is crucial.

- The Inspector arrives immediately after Birling has told Gerald about his impending knighthood and about how "a man has to look after himself and his own."
- Sheila runs off stage when she realises she is the reason Eva was sacked - creates intense atmosphere.
- Sheila and Gerald are left alone to discuss Daisy Renton- this draws information out for audience.
- Tension is further created by the way information is gradually revealed, one person at a time. The audience and characters are kept on

Tight Structure of Play

- Follows the rules of Greek Drama- the three unities of place, action and time are kept to in a realistic manner. i.e. The Drama all unfolds in one place- Birling's Dining room. Action all takes place in one evening, time passes in the same way as in real life. This makes the play realistic.
- The Inspector acts like a Greek chorus (Narrator). He sums up what has happened, and explains to both actors and the audience the lessons we must learn.
- Equally might be seen as a simple crime/ mystery play- 'Who dunnit?'
- Furthermore, The play has myth-like quality in that it carries a moral message that we should take better care of our fellow human beings, so in some ways is like a parable.
- The play has a didactic purpose

Advice from AQA to consider:

Answers should:

- be relevant – you don't need to write everything you know about the text, only the things that relate to the question
- be sufficiently detailed- it is better to give a lot of detail about a small part of the text than trying to cover lots of different points
- be well structured with a clear introduction which addresses the question and a clear conclusion that returns to the question
- use effective vocabulary including literary terms where relevant
- use well-chosen evidence/quotations to support points.

Good candidate: work will respond personally to the text, and will typically:

- explain the effects of writer's uses of language, structure and form, e.g. "The Inspector is powerful, which is shown by the way he uses language to give commands but usually in a controlled, calm way".
- use well-chosen quotations succinctly to support their points.
- make appropriate comments on ideas/themes/settings, e.g. "Mr and Mrs Birling show how snobbish and uncaring society could be at that time".

To gain a top mark, candidates should show an enthusiastic, critical and evaluative response. The best candidates concentrate on comment, not content, and the author's methods and achievements. Excellent responses are analytical and exploratory. This means that candidates 'write a lot about a little', considering the impact of individual words and sounds and often thinking about possible alternative interpretations.

For example:

Gerald is presented as a character who wants to align himself with Mr Birling – perhaps he is just on his best behaviour, or perhaps he is trying to show his similarities to Mr Birling, the successful business-man and head of the family? There is one moment when what Gerald says provides a hint of past conflict between him and Sheila: "And I've told you - I was awfully busy at the works". The use of "and" at the beginning of this statement suggests that this is not the first time he has had this disagreement with Sheila. Gerald is being presented as a character who is trying to fit in with the Birlings, but may have secrets that will come out. This establishes a sense of drama to be unfolded for the audience.

List of key terms to learn:

- Context
- Social class
- Staging/stage direction
- Dramatic irony
- Entrance and exit
- Euphemism
- Tension
- Edwardian patriarchy/misogyny
- Generation gap
- Characterisation
- Consolidate: social class
- Social responsibility
- Implications
- Adjectives (analysing speech)
- Conflict
- The Welfare State (1945-51)
- Cliff-hanger/climactic curtain
- Denouement
- Coup-de-theatre
- Catharsis
- Conventions of genre
- Cyclical structure
- Revise: dramatic devices
- The Unities (discretionary)
- The Well-Made Play

- Capitalism
- Conscience
- Generations
- Connotation/Denotation
- Manipulate
- Evasive
- Hypocritical
- Philanthropic
- Irresponsible
- Exposition
- Rising Action
- Falling Action
- Denouement
- Responsibility
- Climax
- Gender stereotypes
- **Sheila**
- **Priestley**

Characters		Plot
Inspector		Act 1
Mr Birling		Act 1
Mrs Birling		Act 1
Sheila		Act 1
Eric		Act 1
Gerald		Act 2
Eva Smith		Act 2
Key quotes		Act 3
Birling's confidence		Act 3
Birling on society		Act 3
Theatrical Stagecraft: Dramatic Devices		
Sheila's recognition		1.
Sheila's regret		2.
Sheila on the Inspector		3.
Sheila on Eric		4.
		5.
Inspector on guilt		Key concepts and context
Mrs Birling defends herself		
Eric explains		
The Inspector says		
Inspector's message		
Birling's confidence		

Plot			Character			Context				
Act 1			Inspector Goole	Priestley's mouthpiece; advocates social justice.	Describe – use adjectives:	1912				
			Arthur Birling	Businessman and capitalist who is against social equality. A self-made man (new money).						
			Sybil Birling	Husband's social superior; believes in personal responsibility.						
			Sheila Birling	Changes her views and pities Eva. Regrets her actions.						
			Eric Birling	Drinks too much; regrets his actions.						
			Gerald Croft	Businessman engage to Sheila and politically close to Birling.						
			Eva Smith	Comes to represent victims of social injustice.						
			Theatrical Stagecraft: Dramatic Devices							
			Dramatic Irony							
			Stage directions							
Act 2			Setting			1945				
			Three Unities or Classical Unities	Rules for drama derived from Aristotle's <i>Poetics</i> . Unity of action: a play should have one action. Unity of time: the action should occur over a period less than 24 hours. Unity of place: a play should exist in a single physical space.						
			Key Info							
			Written: First Performed:	Set: Structure: Genre:						
			Act 3							The Beveridge Report (published 1942) Proposed the creation of a Welfare State. Called for a dramatic turn in British social policy with provision for nationalized healthcare (NHS) and free education. The Labour Party adopted the report and offered a new comprehensive welfare policy reflecting a consensus that social changes were needed.
							1945			'Bernard Shaws and H.G. Wellises', Both the noted Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) and the father of science-fiction H.G. Wells (1866-1946) were well-known and outspoken socialists.

Plot	Character	Context
Act 1 Set in April 1912, Brumley (Midlands). The Birling family and Gerald Croft are celebrating Sheila Birling's engagement to Gerald Croft with a dinner. Mr. Birling lectures his son, Eric Birling, and Gerald about the importance of every man looking out for himself if he wants to get on in life. Edna (the maid) announces that an inspector has arrived. Inspector Goole says that he is investigating the death of a young woman who committed suicide, Eva Smith. Mr. Birling is shown a photograph of Eva and, after initially denying recognising the woman in the photo, he remembers firing her in 1910 for organising a strike over workers' pay. Sheila recalls also having Eva sacked about her manner when served by her in an upmarket department store. The Inspector reveals that Eva Smith changed her name to Daisy Renton. Gerald reveals to Sheila he had an affair with Daisy Renton.	Inspector Goole	1912 Just before the sinking of the Titanic and a couple of years before WW1. British society was completely divided by class. Those with the most money had the most power. Only men who owned property could vote; women couldn't vote. There was not much government support which is why charities were so important. Things were beginning to change: there was miner's strike in 1912 (the largest the country had ever seen) and the Labour Party formed in 1906 to represent the interests of the working class.
	Arthur Birling	Righteous, powerful, unconventional, imposing, sardonic and mysterious. Arrogant, pompous, selfish, stubborn, prejudiced and overconfident.
	Sybil Birling	Women Women in 1912, regardless of social class, were seen as second-class citizens – a fact underlined by their lack of a right to vote. It was the deplorable state of working-class women's lives that prompted Emmeline Pankhurst to found the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903. It was a women-only organization that campaigned for the vote for women. Pankhurst believed the lack of the vote was the key factor underpinning the inferior status of women in Edwardian Britain. The suffragettes fought to bring equality for women.
	Sheila Birling	WW1 (1914-1918) WW1 was a watershed moment in European history. Survivors were disillusioned and felt betrayed by the men who sent them to war. Priestley described the war as a 'huge, murderous public folly' and felt that 'the British command specialized in throwing men away for nothing'. He fought in the war and lost many friends and cited the war as the cause for his prejudice against the ruling class.
	Eric Birling	WW1 proved to be a turning point for the campaign for women's right to vote. During the war, suffragettes effectively put on hold their campaign of civil direct action in the interests of national unity. As men went to the Western Front, women proved how indispensable they were in the fields and armaments factories. By 1918 women over 30 were given the right to vote.
Act 2 Gerald explains to the Inspector that he had an affair with Eva but hasn't seen her since he ended their relationship back in Autumn 1911. Sheila gives her engagement ring back to Gerald. The Inspector turns his attention to Mrs. Birling. She confesses that she also had contact with Eva but that Eva gave herself a different name. Eva approached a charity chaired by Mrs. Birling to ask for help. Eva was desperate and pregnant but help was refused by Mrs. Birling because she was offended by the girl calling herself Mrs. Birling. She tells Eva that the baby's father should be made entirely responsible. She also tells Inspector Goole that the father should be held entirely responsible and be made an example of.	Gerald Croft	The Great Depression / The Great Slump A period of national economic downturn in the 1930s which had its origins in the global Great Depression. By 1932 registered unemployed numbered 3.5 million.
	Eva Smith	The Beveridge Report (published 1942) Proposed the creation of a Welfare State. Called for a dramatic turn in British social policy with provision for nationalized healthcare (NHS) and free education. The Labour Party adopted the report and offered a new comprehensive welfare policy reflecting a consensus that social changes were needed.
	Theatrical Stagecraft: Dramatic Devices	
	Dramatic Irony	The audience knows what the characters don't.
	Stage directions	Instructions for the actors; often revealing.
Key Info Written: 1945 First Performed: Russia 1945 England 1946	Setting	1945 Following the end of WW2, the majority of the British people, and particularly the working class and returning servicemen and women, did not want a return to pre-war Conservative economic policies which they blamed for the hardship of the 1930s. There was a mood for widespread social change. At the 1945 general election, Winston Churchill was defeated by the Labour Party headed by Clement Attlee. Many of Beveridge's reforms were then implemented.
	Three Unities or Classical Unities	Constant throughout (the Birlings' Dining Room) but subtle changes e.g. lighting to reflect a change in mood. Rules for drama derived from Aristotle's <i>Poetics</i>. Unity of action: a play should have one action. Unity of time: the action should occur over a period less than 24 hours. Unity of place: a play should exist in a single physical space.
	Set: April 1912 (one evening) Structure: Three Act Play Genre: Drawing Room Play	'Bernard Shaws and H.G. Wells'. Both the noted Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) and the father of science-fiction H.G. Wells (1866-1946) were well-known and outspoken socialists.

Practice Questions

1. How does Priestley show different attitudes to women and girls in *An Inspector Calls* ?

You should write about

- ideas about attitudes towards women in *An Inspector Calls*
- how Priestley presents these ideas by the ways he writes.

[30 marks] AO4 [4 marks]

2. How does Priestley present different types of relationships in 'An Inspector Calls'.

You should write about

- Relationships that are presented in *An Inspector Calls*
- How Priestley presents these ideas by the way he writes

[30 marks] AO4 [4 marks]

3. How does Priestley present Mr Birling in his play 'An Inspector Calls'?

You should write about:

- What Mr Birling says and does in the play
- How Priestley presents Mr Birling by the way he writes

[30 marks] AO4 [4 marks]

4. How does Priestley create tension and suspense in 'An Inspector Calls'?

You should write about:

- What tension and suspense is created in the play
- How Priestley creates this by the way he writes.

5. How does Priestley present Mr Birling as a father?

Write about:

- What Mr Birling says and does and his relationship with his children
- How Priestley presents Mr Birling as a father by the way he writes.

[30 marks] AO4 [4 marks]

6. How does Priestley present prejudice in *An Inspector Calls*?

Write about:

- Ideas about prejudice in *An Inspector Calls*
- How Priestley presents these ideas by the ways he writes.

[30 marks] AO4 [4 marks]

7. How does Priestley explore ideas about power and control in *An Inspector Calls*?

Write about:

- Ideas of power and control
- How Priestley presents these ideas by the way he writes

[30 marks] AO4 [4 marks]

How do I plan for a theme question?

Example themes

Men and women
Young and old
Selfishness
Social responsibility
Family life
Social class
Judgement

Very short introduction

PETAL 1 – example of theme (from the start?)

PETAL 2 – example of theme (from the middle?)

PETAL 3 – example of theme (from the end?)

Short conclusion

Again, it's really important to show how the theme links to Priestley's intention.

Essay introduction

- Keep it short (the PETALS are where the marks are!)
- Don't tell the story.
- Try to include:
 - Who wrote it
 - 1945
 - didactic play
 - Priestley's intention (briefly)
 - A link to the question (briefly)

Like this:

Priestley's didactic play 'An Inspector Calls' was written in 1945 to challenge the outdated and harmful ideas of the Edwardian era. In the play, Mrs Birling is a symbol for these ideas; she is shown to be prejudiced, unsympathetic and incapable of change.

Ad Complete planning sheet on next page.

- Analysis of dialogue/language
 - Key words/phrases
 - Pauses
 - Other language features (repetition, emotive language, euphemisms, etc.)
- Analysis of dramatic devices
 - dramatic irony
 - foreshadowing
 - stage directions
 - entrances and exits
 - props
 - lighting and sound
- **Audience reaction**
- **Priestley's message**
- **Context**

Model:

Finally, in Act 3, Priestley uses the character of Inspector Goole to deliver his message about selfishness to the audience. This is evident when he sternly reminds the Birlings that 'We are members of one body'. He is saying that it isn't acceptable to just selfishly look after our own family, while ignoring the less fortunate, represented in the play by Eva/Daisy. The metaphor of a 'body' reinforces this responsibility, as it creates the impression that society is a living thing, and that every single part must be looked after, or it will fail, or die. The collective pronoun 'we' is important too, as it includes the audience as well as the Birlings. As a socialist, Priestley wants us all to consider our own behaviour and ensure that we are not selfishly ignoring the less fortunate; the 'brighter and harder' lighting is exposing the selfishness of the Birlings to make us think about our own actions and attitudes. Priestley's socialist message for his 1945 audience is clear here: they need to actively participate in the rebuilding of post-war Britain to create a fairer, more equal society.

How Does Priestley present ideas about selfishness in 'An Inspector Calls'?

Intro – Priestley's intention for the play and how this links to the theme of selfishness

PETAL 1 – Example of selfishness from the start

PETAL 2 – Example of selfishness or a character speaking against it

PETAL 3 – Example of selfishness or a character speaking against it

PETAL 4 – Finally, how Priestley shows us his views on selfishness

Conclusion – What is Priestley's message for the audience?

- Sometimes students will comment on why the play is still relevant today in their conclusion.
- What do you think? Does the play resonate with a modern audience as it would have done with a 1945 audience?

Priestley's message/
context

PETAL 1

PETAL 2

PETAL 3

PETAL 4