

An Inspector Calls

Revision Guide



The Story

SUMMARY

ACT 1

The Birling family is celebrating the engagement of Sheila to Gerald Croft, the son of Lord and Lady Croft, who comes from 'an old country family – landed people'. Arthur Birling is in a good mood and makes a number of speeches giving his views about the state of the world, technology and industrial relations. One of his main themes is about everyone being responsible for themselves; he doesn't believe that anyone has a responsibility to others apart from his family.

When Inspector Goole is announced, Birling and Gerald make a joke about Eric who shows his guilty conscience by reacting strongly to this.

The inspector informs Birling about the death of a young woman who has committed suicide by drinking disinfectant. It emerges that Birling had sacked the girl, Eva Smith, two years earlier after she had been one of the ring-leaders in a strike and demanding higher wages.

Sheila Birling is also connected to the girl, having had her sacked from her new job at Milwards. She is horrified by what she did and is genuinely remorseful.

The inspector seems to know details of the family's involvement before they speak and when he tells them that the girl changed her name to Daisy Renton, Gerald's reaction tells us that he, too, knew the girl. When they are temporarily left alone, Sheila warns Gerald not to try to hide anything from the inspector.

By the end of the first act, the audience is expecting the inspector to reveal further connections with members of the Birling family.

ACT 2

Although Gerald tries to get Sheila to leave the room, she insists on staying; Gerald admits to having had an affair with Eva Smith, the girl he knew as Daisy Renton, the previous summer. Sheila is hurt and disappointed in Gerald who had told her he was busy at the works at that time. After Gerald broke off the affair, Eva/Daisy had left Brumley for a few months. After Sheila has returned her engagement ring to him, Gerald goes out, seemingly genuinely affected by the news of the girl's death.

Despite Sheila's warnings Mrs Birling tries to intimidate the inspector, believing that she could have no possible connection to the girl. When the inspector reminds her of the pregnant girl she turned away from the charity organisation she chaired, Mrs Birling concedes but felt herself to be justified because the girl had lied to her about her name [calling herself Mrs Birling]. She also disbelieved the girl's claim that she had refused the offer of help from the father of her baby because she believed that he had stolen the money. Mrs Birling digs herself deeper into a hole by insisting that the father of the baby should be made to pay.

Eric has been out during this exchange but re-enters right at the end of the scene to expectant faces; we are expecting Eric to be the father of the baby.

ACT 3

Eric immediately realises that they all know and tells them of how he met Eva and of her subsequent pregnancy. Questioned closely by the inspector, he also reveals that he had tried

to support the girl by giving her money but he had stolen it from his father's business. The Birlings seem more horrified by this than his responsibility for the girl's condition. Having done his job, the inspector makes a speech about social responsibility and leaves the Birlings to examine their behaviour.

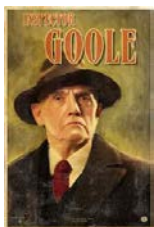
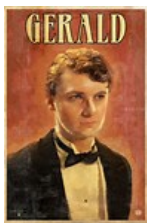
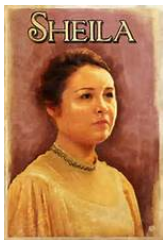
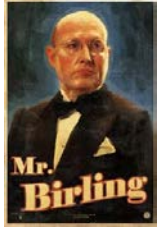
When Gerald re-enters he has news that there is no Inspector Goole employed by the local police. Birling and Gerald now set about disproving the inspector's case although Sheila and Eric feel that that is not the point. When Gerald confirms that no girl has died of drinking disinfectant by telephoning the infirmary, The Birlings and Gerald are delighted and their mood of jollity and good-humour of the beginning of Act 1 returns.

Sheila and Eric do not feel the same way, continuing to feel guilt for what they have done and are appalled at the behaviour of Gerald and their parents. When Birling suggests that Sheila take back her engagement ring from Gerald, Sheila remarks that it is too soon.

Just at the point where Birling is teasing them for their lack of a sense of humour, the telephone rings and Birling is obviously stunned by what he hears: a girl has died in the infirmary and a police inspector is on his way to ask them some questions.

The Characters

Who is the character? How are they related to other characters? What part do they play in the story? **What part did each of these characters play in the death of Eva Smith?**



Explain how this picture is important when you think about the story and Priestley's message.



SOCIAL, HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND HOW THIS IS REFLECTED IN 'AN INSPECTOR CALLS'

<p><u>STRIKES AND SOCIAL UNREST</u></p> <p>STRIKES WERE OCCURRING ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. IN THE SUMMER OF 1911, THE MINERS' UNION TOOK ACTION IN FAVOUR OF A MINIMUM WAGE LEADING TO VIOLENT RIOTS.</p> <p>STRIKES CONTINUED RIGHT THROUGH THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1912 TO 1945 – E.G. THE GENERAL STRIKE IN 1926.</p>	<p>“Last month, just because the miners came on strike, <u>there’s lots of wild talk about possible labour trouble in the near future. Don’t worry. We’ve passed the worst of it.</u>” Mr B</p> <p><u>Mr B says: “It’s my duty to keep labour costs down.”</u></p> <p><u>Eric defends the strike: “Why shouldn’t they try for higher wages? We try for the highest possible prices.”</u></p>
<p><u>TROUBLED FUTURE – 1912 - 1945</u></p> <p>BIRLING THINKS THE FUTURE LOOKS GOOD – PRIESTLEY IS DELIBERATELY PRESENTING HIM AS FOOLISH TO AN AUDIENCE THAT HAS SEEN TWO WORLD WARS, SOCIAL UNREST AND A WIDENING GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR.</p>	<p>“There’s a good deal of silly talk about these days – but – and I speak as a hard-headed business man, who has to take risks and know what he’s about – I say, you can ignore all this silly pessimistic talk. <u>When you marry you’ll be marrying at a very good time.</u> Yes, a very good time – and soon it’ll be an even better time.” Mr B</p>
<p><u>AUSTERITY + RICH versus POOR</u></p> <p>AGAIN, THE AUDIENCE WILL KNOW THAT EVERYTHING BIRLING IS SAYING IS WRONG. THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1912 AND 1945 WAS A TIME OF AUSTERITY: WWI, FOR EXAMPLE, MEANT THAT INCOME TAX WAS DOUBLED, MEANING LESS IN WAGES FOR WORKERS.</p> <p>THE 1930S SAW THE GREAT DEPRESSION WITH VERY HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT.</p> <p><i><u>"Here in a country rich beyond description there are people poor beyond description" said by Will Crooks, a Labour MP in 1908</u></i></p>	<p>“We employers at last are coming together to see that our interests – and the interests of Capital – are properly protected. <u>And we’re in for a time of steadily increasing prosperity.</u>” <u>Mr B</u></p>
<p><u>TWO WORLD WARS</u></p> <p>TWO WORLD WARS THAT SAW THE GREATEST LOSS OF LIFE DUE TO MODERN KILLING</p>	<p>“...you’ll hear some people say that war’s inevitable. And to that I say – fiddlesticks! The Germans don’t want war. <u>Nobody wants war...</u> And why? ... Everything to lose and nothing to</p>

<p>TECHNOLOGY AND (IN WWII IN PARTICULAR) PLANES BOMBING CITIES.</p>	<p>gain by war.” Mr B</p> <p>VERSUS</p> <p><u>“fire, blood and anguish”</u> (which was what the two world wars created) The Inspector</p>
<p><u>SHIPS, PLANES AND AUTO-MOBILES!</u></p> <p>BIRLING WAS RIGHT IN THE SENSE THAT TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS WAS BEING MADE – CARS, AIRPLANES, SHIPS ETC.</p> <p>HOWEVER, MUCH OF THIS PROGRESS WAS DESTRUCTIVE/TRAGIC – E.G. THE SINKING OF THE TITANIC, AIRPLANES / TANKS ETC. BEING USED AS KILLING MACHINES IN WARS.</p>	<p>“Look at the progress we’re making. In a year or two we’ll have aeroplanes that will be able to go anywhere. And look at the way the auto-mobile’s making headway – bigger and faster all the time. And then ships. Why, a friend of mine went over this new liner last week – the Titanic – she sails next week – forty-six thousand eight hundred tons - forty-six thousand eight hundred – New York in five days – and every luxury – <u>and unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable.</u>” Mr B</p>
<p><u>SOCIALISM VERSUS CAPITALISM</u></p> <p>BIRLING DID NOT BELIEVE IN SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY. HIS VIEWS WERE ENTIRELY CAPITALIST WHICH ENTAILS THAT WEALTH REMAINS IN THE HANDS OF THE FEW – THE WEALTH IS NOT SHARED. IT BENEFITS THE RICH OVER THE POOR.</p> <p>THE INSPECTOR (AND SHEILA AND ERIC) ARE MORE SOCIALIST IN THEIR OUTLOOK. E.G. ERIC THOUGH IT WAS VERY UNFAIR THAT EVA SMITH WAS SACKED FROM HER JOB. SOCIALISM IS THE BELIEF THAT AS A SOCIETY, WE HAVE TO LOOK AFTER ONE ANOTHER. IN PARTICULAR, SOCIALISTS BELIEVE THAT THE RICH HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO LOOK AFTER THE POOR.</p> <p>PRIESTELY HIMSELF WAS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN BRITAIN. HE SET UP A NEW POLITICAL PARTY, THE COMMON WEALTH PARTY, WHICH ARGUED FOR PUBLIC OWNERSHIP</p>	<p><u>“But the way some of these cranks talk and write now, you’d think everybody has to look after everybody else,</u> as if we were all mixed up together like bees in a hive – community and all that nonsense.” Mr B</p> <p><u>“...a man has to make is own way – has to look after himself</u> – and his family too of course, when he has one – and so long as he does that he won’t come to much harm.” Mr B</p> <p>Versus</p> <p><u>“We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other.” – The Inspector</u></p> <p><u>“...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...”</u> The Inspector</p>

<p>OF LAND, GREATER DEMOCRACY AND A NEW MORALITY IN POLITICS.</p>	
<p><u>THE WELFARE STATE</u></p> <p>THE WELFARE STATE ENTAILED THE CREATION OF THE NHS, BENEFITS FOR THE UNEMPLOYED, STATE PENSIONS ETC. IT MEANT THAT THE VULNERABLE IN SOCIETY WOULD BE OFFERED SOME PROTECTION. <u>IT WAS NOT CREATED UNTIL 1945.</u> PRIESTLEY WAS INFLUENTIAL IN DEVELOPING THE IDEA.</p> <p><u>PRIOR TO THIS, CHARITY ORGANISATIONS WERE THE ONLY HELP AVAILABLE.</u> WHEN EVA SMITH FINDS HERSELF UNEMPLOYED, PREGNANT AND PENNILESS, A CHARITY ORGANISATION SUCH AS THE 'BRUMLEY WOMEN'S CHARITY ORGANISATION' WAS THE ONLY PLACE SHE COULD TURN TO FOR HELP. HOWEVER, <u>THIS LEFT HER AT THE MERCY OF WOMEN LIKE MRS BIRLING who could decide whether to help her or not.</u></p>	<p>"I think it was a piece of gross impertinence...and naturally that was <u>one of the things that prejudiced me against her case.</u>"</p> <p><u>"...I used my influence to have it [Eva's case] refused."</u></p>
<p>DRAMATIC IRONY</p>	<p>"In twenty or thirty years' time – lets say, in 1940 – you may be giving a little party like this – your son or daughter might be getting engaged – and I tell you, by that time you'll be living in a world that will have forgotten all these Capital versus Labour agitations and <u>all these silly little war scares. There'll be peace and prosperity and rapid progress everywhere.</u>"</p>
<p>ROLE OF WOMEN</p> <p>AT THE TIME THE PLAY WAS SET, WOMEN HAD FEWER RIGHTS. THEY WERE CONSIDERED TO BE INFERIOR TO MEN. RICH, MIDDLE CLASS WOMEN WERE EXPECTED TO GET MARRIED. POOR WOMEN WERE USED AS CHEAP LABOUR.</p> <p>BY 1945, HOWEVER, WOMEN HAD EARNED THE VOTE AND A MORE EQUAL PLACE IN SOCIETY.</p>	<p>Mr and Mrs Birling continually try to get Sheila to leave as they feel that it is not appropriate for a young woman to hear difficult truths. Priestley wants us to question their patronising attitude.</p> <p>Mr Birling, when Sheila asks why the Inspector is here: <u>"Nothing to do with you Sheila. Run along."</u></p> <p>Mrs Birling in Act 2: <u>"I think you ought to go to bed – and forget about this absurd business."</u></p> <p>Mr Birling, as Gerald is confessing his affair with</p>

	<p>Eva: "I protest against the way my daughter, a young unmarried girl, is being dragged into this –".</p> <p>Sheila replies: <u>"I'm not a child, don't forget."</u></p> <p>Mr Birling to Sheila at the end of the play: <u>"You'd better ask Gerald for that ring you gave back to him, hadn't you? Then you'll feel better."</u></p>
<p>CLASS HIERARCHY</p> <p>IN 1912 THERE WERE STRONGER CLASS DIVISIONS. THE RULING (WEALTHY) CLASS SAW NO NEED TO CHANGE THE WAY THINGS WERE. WE CAN SEE CLASS PREJUDICE IN CHARACTERS LIKE MR AND MRS BIRLING.</p> <p>BY 1945, THERE WAS A GREAT DESIRE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE: PEOPLE WANTED MORE EQUALITY BETWEEN CLASSES. IMMEDIATELY AFTER WORLD WAR 2, THE LABOUR PARTY WON A LANDSLIDE VICTORY.</p>	<p>Mr Birling is focused on his social status: "I might find my way into the next Honours list. Just a knighthood, of course."</p> <p>Mrs Birling is prejudiced against Eva because she is working class: <u>"...a girl of that sort..."</u></p> <p><u>Mrs B "She was giving herself ridiculous airs..."</u></p> <p>YET Eva is portrayed as a very moral character – e.g. she refuses to accept stolen money. Priestley wants the audience to question the class prejudices of 1912.</p>
<p>EXTENSION: TIME THEORIES</p> <p>PRIESTLEY WAS INTERESTED IN THEORIES OF TIME. ONE INFLUENCE ON PRIESTLEY WAS A RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHER, ROUSSSEAU, WHO BELIEVED THAT TIME CONTINUED TO RECUR, OR REPEAT ITSELF AND THAT INDIVIDUALS MUST LEARN TO STOP REPEATING THE SAME MISTAKES. 'AN INSPECTOR CALLS' IS ONE OF PRIESTLEY'S 'TIME PLAYS' – PLAYS THAT ARE INTERESTED IN HOW TIME WORKS.</p>	<p>You could argue that the Inspector comes from the future or from some place outside of time to offer the Birlings an opportunity to change – an opportunity they don't take. In the end they have learned nothing and so will have to go through it all over again.</p>

DRAMATIC DEVICES IN 'AN INSPECTOR CALLS'

- **stage directions** are used at the beginning of the play to **give information about the set**; it tells us that the Birlings are well off and middle class [it is 'a fairly solid suburban house' with 'good solid furniture' which is 'substantial and heavily comfortable' rather than cosy]
- stage directions are used at the beginning of the play to **give information about characters**; Priestley tells us not only about their appearance but also about their character [Birling is 'heavy-looking' and 'rather portentous' (it means self-important or pompous); Mrs Birling is 'rather cold', Sheila is a 'pretty girl...very pleased with life and rather excited'; Gerald is an 'attractive chap' whilst Eric is 'not quite at ease, half shy, half assertive'; when the inspector enters, we are told that he 'has a disconcerting habit of looking hard at the person he addresses before actually speaking']
- stage directions are widely used to give information about the feelings or actions of the characters which would help the actors playing the characters ['bitterly', 'distressed', 'after a pause, with a touch of impatience', 'massively taking charge']
- **lighting** is used to create effect – at the beginning the lighting is described as 'pink and intimate'; after the inspector enters there is a reference to his moving 'nearer a light – perhaps a standard lamp'. This suggests that the inspector is shining a harsh light on the Birlings and Gerald Croft
- sparing use of **sound effects** help to enhance the drama – the doorbell in the first act and the ringing of the telephone in the final moments of the play are both highly significant
- Priestley frequently makes use of the **dash** – to show a character's emotional state; the dash represents the fact that the character is speaking in a disjointed rather than a flowing and articulate way [see Sheila's speech on page 29 and Eric's on p.55]
- not all the characters are on stage all the time; **exits and entrances** are cleverly used to create **dramatic tension** [see separate notes about this]with some characters being unaware of what has happened whilst they were out of the room [examples include; the entrance of the inspector shortly after Birling has made his pompous speeches; Mrs Birling's not knowing that the inspector is implicating everyone with his clever questioning techniques and Eric's re-appearance at the end of Act 2 just at the moment when the audience and the characters on stage realise that Eric is the father of Eva Smith's baby]
- **dramatic irony** – this is particularly evident in Birling's speeches at the beginning of the play when he makes pronouncements about war, the state of the nation in 30 years' time and, more immediately, the unsinkable nature of the Titanic; compare this apparent foolishness with the inspector's talk of 'blood and anguish'. An audience seeing this immediately after the second world war with knowledge of the first war would think of Birling as a fool and the inspector as a prophet
- the **major dramatic device** used by Priestley is that of the Inspector himself. He is used to good effect to **move the plot along, controlling the pace of events and deciding in which order the characters are questioned**. He is also used to **voice Priestley's socialist views and opinions**
- **contrast** between characters is another effective dramatic device - the **juxtaposition** of Birling and the inspector provides an effective contrast of beliefs; the attitudes of Sheila and her father to the fate of Eva Smith also provides effective contrast
- **symbolism** is a further dramatic device used by Priestley: Birling **represents capitalism** whilst the inspector as a mouthpiece for Priestley himself **represents socialism**. Mr and Mrs Birling and Gerald Croft represent the old order of things whilst Sheila and Eric are **symbolic of hope** for the future
- **cliff-hangers** – Priestley uses this device several times to make the audience wait in anticipation for what they know will happen: The end of Act 1 and beginning of Act 2 begin with the inspector saying 'Well?' to Gerald; the beginning of Act 3 is 'exactly as at the end of Act 2'

Use this sheet to gather one or more examples of each of these dramatic devices used by Priestley

STAGE DIRECTIONS

THE INSPECTOR

PUNCTUATION

DRAMATIC TENSION

CONTRAST

EXITS & ENTRANCES

SOUND EFFECTS



DRAMATIC IRONY

USE OF LIGHTING

CLIFFHANGERS

SYMBOLISM

QUOTES TO LEARN/MEMORISE- Choose those to use for each essay area

Possible Essay Areas:

1. Eva Smith
2. Any of the members of the family including Gerald Croft
3. The Inspector
4. Social Responsibility
5. Social Class/Inequality/Prejudice
6. Love - parental/romantic
7. Society

Opening:

'large suburban house' P1

'Edna, the parlour maid, is just clearing the table, which has no cloth of dessert plates and champagne glasses' P1

'all five are in evening dress of the period' P1

'It's one of the happiest nights of my life'

"nobody wants war" P7

"there's a lot of wild talk about possible labour trouble in the future" P4

"unsinkable" P7

'hardheaded practical man of business'

'We're not all mixed up like bees in a hive'

"a man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own-and-"(door bell rings) P10

"(rather impatiently) Yes, yes. Horrid business. But I don't understand why you should come here, inspector" P12

"a good worker too...the foreman told me he was ready to promote her'

"It's my duty to keep labour costs down" P15

"How do you get on with our Chief Constable"

"She'd had a lot to say, far too much"

'I was quite justified' P17

“public scandal”

‘I’d give thousands” P56

“We’ve been had, that’s all”

Sheila

“It’s a rotten shame” P19

“But these girls aren’t cheap labour they’re people” P19

‘I told my father-he didn’t seem to think it amounted to much’ P23

‘you were jealous of her’

“ and I’d persuade mother to close our account with them”

‘very impertinent’(rude)

“So I’m really responsible” P23

“I’ll never do it again to anybody” P24

“if I could help her now I would” P24

“You’re just beginning to pretend all over again”

“Well, he inspected us alright”

‘Fire and blood and anguish. And it frightens me the way you talk, and I can’t listen to any more of it’ P71

Gerald

‘(distressed) Sorry-I –well. I’ve suddenly realised-taken it in properly-that she’s dead’ P35

‘So I went across and told Joe Meggarty some nonsense’ P35

“I didn’t feel about her as she felt about me” P37

“I’m rather more upset by this business than I probably appear to be” P39

“I’d like to be alone for a while” P39

“There isn’t any such inspector. We’ve been had.”

“But how do you know it’s the same girl?”

"Everything's all right now Sheila"

Mrs Birling

'I don't think that we can help you much'

"She called herself Mrs Birling-"

"She only has herself to blame"

"I didn't like her manner"

"I did nothing I'm ashamed of"

Insp: 'You admit about being prejudiced against her case'

Mrs B: 'Yes'

"a girl in her position"

"I accept no blame"

"a girl of that class"

"I don't believe it. *I won't* believe it!" P49

"I was the only one who didn't give into him"

Eric

"Well, I think that it's a damn shame' P16

'He could have kept her, instead of throwing her out' P15

"I was in that state when a chap easily turns nasty"

"I wasn't in love with her or anything"

You're not the kind of father a chap could go to"

"You killed her"

"He was our inspector alright"

"we all helped to kill her"

The Inspector

“creates at once an impression of massiveness”

“she was in great agony”

‘no work, no money coming in, and living in lodgings, with no relatives to help her, lonely, half starved, she was feeling desperate’ P19

‘young women counting their pennies in their dingy little back rooms’

“one line of inquiry at a time”

‘ a pretty, lively sort of girl who never did anybody any harm”

“each of you helped to kill her”

‘We often do on the young ones. They’re more impressionable” P30

“Public men , Mr Birling, have responsibilities as well as privileges”

“Millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths” P56

“ with their lives, their hopes and fears, their chance of happiness, all intertwined with our lives” P56

“we are responsible for each other” P56

“ will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish”

How does Priestley present the Inspector in *An Inspector Calls*?

Point (device)	
Evidence	Quotation
Explanation	Meaning
	Language/Dramatic Device and what it shows
	Effect on the reader's understanding

“no thank you sir I am on duty” (page 11)
“he is a man in his fifties dressed in a plain darkish suit of the period. He speaks carefully ,weightily and has a disconcerting habit of looking hard at the person he addresses before actually speaking”
“(taking charge masterfully) stop ” orange”
“(cutting through, massively”)

Priestley presents the inspector as a powerful commanding character in 'An Inspector Call' by using stage directions. On Page 12 Priestley states, “He speaks carefully ,weightily and has a disconcerting habit of looking hard at the person he addresses before actually speaking” . This means that The Inspector is judging The Birling family carefully and not by his first impression of thinking they think they maybe more “superior” than working class and the unemployed. This suggests that the inspector is using his analytical skills to gain a more advanced first impression of the Birling family however an alternate suggestion would be that he is being intimidating because by not communicating orally he is building up a silence which increases the amount of stress and tension in the room. The phrase “looking hard” implies that he is challenging the authority and having them believe that their title doesn't excuse them from the situation. Priestley is very careful of the structure of his words when he writes “Carefully, Weightily” because he is trying to discover the truth by seeing their natural reaction instead of being intimidating. The effect on the audience is that they would feel supportive towards the inspector as they recognise he is trying to fulfil his duty. They understand that this is someone they can trust and so are more willing to listen to his message.

Paper 2 Section A: Modern Prose/Drama

Students will select one question from a choice of two.

Each question assesses AO1, AO2, AO3 and AO4.

There are 12 marks available for AO1

There are 12 marks available for AO2

There are 6 marks available for AO3

There are 4 marks available for AO4

How does Priestley explore²⁴ responsibility²⁵ in *An Inspector Calls*²⁶?

Write about²⁷:

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

Exemplar response

Priestley explores ideas about responsibility through the way the Birlings behave towards Eva Smith. Arthur Birling explains the family's philosophy when he says 'a man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own' which suggests that he feels that he only has responsibility for his own family and himself²⁸. This is reinforced by the way the Birlings treat Eva Smith. First of all Arthur fires her from his factory to make an example of her because she asks for higher wages and dares to take responsibility for others by speaking up on their behalf²⁹. Arthur's prime motive is to keep wages down so that he could make more profits. Priestley reinforces this through Arthur's constant repetition of 'hard headed man of business', to remind the audience that he is representative of capitalism and the damage it causes. Priestley is showing the audience that a blind belief that generating profits and prosperity for the good of everyone is fundamentally wrong as it causes innocent people to suffer tragic consequences³⁰.

Although all the Birlings are responsible for Eva's mistreatment and death in some way, they react differently when they find this out from the Inspector. Mr and Mrs Birling do not change and are only concerned about their reputation the possible 'scandal' or Arthur's 'knighthood'³¹. However, Sheila and Eric do recognise that they have behaved badly by the end of the play³² and therefore Priestley is suggesting that it is the younger generation that have the responsibility for adopting more socialist principles. Through their attitudes Priestley suggests that socialism is the modern way and that it is young people who will change society for the better³³.

Commentary

This is a considered, developed response to ideas. The student has used some direct references to support their interpretation of the ways Priestley explores ideas about responsibility. There is clear understanding of the context of the play, and the student addresses AO2 through their comments on structural development and characterisation.

24. Focus on writer in order to remind students to think about the text as a conscious construct and thereby address AO2.

25. Addresses AO3 by focusing on the key social ideas in the play.

26. The task as a whole assesses AO1 in terms of students presenting a considered 'response' to the task and the text.

Comments

27. Bullets provide scaffold and a reminder of the focus of the question.

28. AO1: clear focus on task, relevant example with good use of direct reference.

29. AO1/AO3: understanding of central idea in the task, linked to contextual ideas.

30. AO1/AO2/AO3: focus on writer's craft, use of direct reference and understanding of the contextual influence.

31. AO1: further direct references integrated into comment.

32. AO2: structural comment.

33. AO1/AO2/AO3: thoughtful and developed response to task and text, focus on writer's use of character and contextual factors.

Planning Tool for 'An Inspector Calls'

Paragraph	Quotations from the whole novel to answer the question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reader's response to the quotations • Links to historical context.
<p>Notes</p>	<p><i>Identify quotations from the novel as a whole which link to the quotations from the extract in the last column.</i></p> <p><i>Identify any techniques being used.</i></p>	<p><i>Try to identify at least 4 <u>different</u> points to analyse the quotations.</i></p> <p><i>What does the reader feel/see/hear/imagine/ learn from the quotes?</i></p> <p><i>What do we understand about key themes or ideas?</i></p> <p><i>What would the Victorian reader have understood? What were their views about the world or themes/ideas identified?</i></p>
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Differences between how the older and younger generation react to the Inspector

Evidence (and who says it and at which point)	The Old (Mr and Mrs Birling)	The Young (Sheila and Eric)	Evidence (and who says it and at which point)
	The old are set in their ways. They are utterly confident that they are right and they see the young as _____.	The young are open to new _____. This is first seen early in Act 1 when both Eric and Sheila express sympathy for the strikers - an idea which horrifies Birling, who can only think of production costs and ignores the human side of the issue.	
	The old will do anything to protect themselves: Mrs Birling lies to the Inspector when he first shows her the photograph; Mr Birling wants to cover up a potential _____.	The young are _____ and admit their faults. Eric refuses to try to cover his part up, saying:	<i>"the fact remains that I did what I did."</i>
	They have never been forced to examine their consciences before and find they _____ do it now - as the saying goes, 'you can't teach an old dog new tricks.'	Sheila and Eric see the human side of Eva's story and are very troubled by their part in it. They do examine their _____.	
	Mr and Mrs Birling have much to fear from the visit of the 'real' _____ because they know they will lose everything.	Sheila and Eric have nothing to fear from the visit of the 'real' inspector because they have already admitted what they have done wrong, and will.	
<p>Gerald Croft is caught in the middle, being neither very young nor old. In the end he sides with the older generation, perhaps because his aristocratic roots influence him to want to keep the status quo and protect his own interests.</p> <p>Ultimately, we can be optimistic that the young - those who will shape future society - are able to take on board the Inspector's message.</p>			

Consciences	foolish	cannot	inspector	change	scandal	honest	ideas
-------------	---------	--------	-----------	--------	---------	--------	-------

Old versus young

Match the themes with the quotes:

<p>a. The Inspector tells Mrs Birling that his work makes more of an impact on the young. We go on to see how Sheila and Eric are conscience-struck by their actions while Mr and Mrs Birling try to absolve themselves of blame. The young are flexible enough to change, the old aren't. This gives the audience hope that future generations will learn from the mistakes of the past.</p>	<p>b. Mr Birling is so full of his success and his future knighthood that he tries to brush away his responsibilities: the Inspector reminds him of his duties. Mr Birling has forgotten that without the labour of the working classes - whom he now tries to brush aside - his business would have gone nowhere. He has been dependent on people he now ignores.</p>
<p>c. Mrs Birling is proud to display her prejudice against Eva when she called herself 'Mrs Birling' in front of the committee. Mrs Birling's position, as an upper class influential lady in the town, put her in a position of power above Eva: she had no conscience about punishing what she saw as rudeness on the part of Eva by denying her money.</p>	<p>d. This is the main message of the play. The Inspector, the moral mouthpiece, speaks to the Birling family just before he leaves, hammering his point home by repeating We to re-iterate that all of us are involved. Priestley wants the audience to go away with this lesson.</p>

- 1 "I think it was simply a piece of gross impertinence - quite deliberate - and naturally that was one of the things that prejudiced me against her case."
2. "We often do [make an impression] on the young ones. They're more impressionable."
3. "We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other."
4. "Public men, Mr Birling, have responsibilities as well as privileges."

Quotation showing generational conflict	What does this reveal about the character and the difference between the generations?
<p>'Now you three young people, just listen to this ... by that time you'll be living in a world that'll have forgotten all these Capital versus Labour agitations and these silly little war scares.' (Mr Birling, p.7)</p>	
<p>'You're the one I blame for this ...There'll be a public scandal ... I was almost certain for a knighthood ...' (Mr Birling to Eric, p.57)</p>	
<p>Mrs B: 'Eric, I'm absolutely ashamed of you.' Eric: 'Well, I don't blame you. But don't forget I'm ashamed of you as well - yes both of you.' (p.57)</p>	
<p>'I behaved badly too. I know I did. I'm ashamed of it. But now you're beginning all over again to pretend that nothing much has happened —' (Sheila, p.57)</p>	
<p>'You began to learn something. And now you've stopped ... it frightens me the way you talk, and I can't listen to any more of it.' (Sheila, p.71)</p>	
<p>'Now look at the pair of them - the famous younger generation who know it all. And they can't even take a joke—' (Mr Birling, p.72, interrupted by phone call)</p>	

How does Priestley present the opposing views of Mr Birling and the Inspector? Include reference to the social and historical context of the play. (30) + (4) SPG

1. Mr Birling is presented as a typical capitalist: selfish, greedy and interested in profit and social status.

2. Mr Birling's capitalist views are expressed in a speech just before the Inspector enters.

3. Mr Birling is presented as foolish and short sighted through his predictions about the future.

4. The Inspector's views are expressed through the way he exposes the selfish behaviour of the Birling family.

5. The Inspector's socialist views are given to the audience in his final speech.

6. Priestley uses the Inspector to express his own socialist beliefs in the hope of creating a better future.

An Inspector Calls Questions

Each question is worth 30 marks + 4 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar

1. How does Priestley present the Inspector in *An Inspector Calls*?
2. Write about the differences between Arthur Birling and Eric Birling in the play *An Inspector Calls*.
3. How does Priestley present Sybil Birling in *An Inspector Calls*?
4. How does Priestley present the family life of the Birlings in *An Inspector Calls*?
5. How does Priestley present Arthur Birling in *An Inspector Calls*?
6. In *An Inspector Calls* Eric and Sheila Birling are brother and sister. How are they alike and how are they different?
7. How does Priestley present the relationship between Sheila Birling and Gerald Croft in *An Inspector Calls*?
8. How does Priestley present the different attitudes of Mr Birling and the Inspector in *An Inspector Calls*?
9. How does Priestley present Eric Birling in *An Inspector Calls*?
10. Write about the differences between Sheila and Sybil Birling in the play *An Inspector Calls*.
11. How does Priestley present Gerald in *An Inspector Calls*?
12. What do you think Priestley is trying to tell us about responsibility in *An Inspector Calls*?
13. How does Priestley present Eva Smith in *An Inspector Calls*?
14. Write about two characters in *An Inspector Calls* who you think feel guilty.
15. How does Priestley present Sheila Birling in *An Inspector Calls*?
16. 'An inspector Calls is a play about being selfish.' Write about two characters in *An Inspector Calls* whom you think are selfish.