

“AN INSPECTOR CALLS” BY J B PRIESTLEY

Look at the following slides
Write one word that you associate
with them



How does this image make you feel?

WORKHOUSE WOMEN



ROYALTY



PUBLIC SCHOOL BOYS



SECONDARY SCHOOL BOYS



THE BRITISH CLASS SYSTEM



Frost - the
class system





Women in headscarves



**Working class
couple**



Upper class couple



ROYALTY

(Birthright)

Group Discussion

Individual vs. social responsibility



"We don't live alone. We are members of one body"

Q) What makes a **fair society**? Should it be every man for himself, or should we help the poor?



ENGLISH LITERATURE: ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

- ◉ **A01**
- ◉ Read, understand and respond to texts: maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response; use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.
- ◉ Paper 2: 25%
- ◉ **A02**
- ◉ Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate
- ◉ Paper 2: 25%
- ◉ **A03**
- ◉ Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written
- ◉ Paper 2: 7.5%
- ◉ **A04**
- ◉ Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation
- ◉ Paper 2: 2.5%

SHORT FILM ON CONTEXT OF THE PLAY

- ◉ Part one:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Svz8_dyhok

- ◉ Part two:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J70HthxcR1c>

AN INSPECTOR CALLS FORM: A 'WELL-MADE' PLAY

“An Inspector Calls” is often classified as a well-made play. Such plays have the following features:

1. Exposition - the opening is designed to provide a gentle introduction to the story, introducing characters and setting the scene.
2. Entrances & Exits - these are timed carefully in a well-made play so that they heighten the tension and drama.
3. The Obligatory Scene - A well-made play will contain a scene or scenes where a secret is revealed. This also adds to the tension and drama.
4. The Climactic Curtain - acts and/or scenes will end on a cliffhanger, a point when things are particularly tense or dramatic.

AN INSPECTOR CALLS FORM: A 'WELL-MADE' PLAY

- ◉ 5. Mistaken Identity - the well-made play often features mistaken identity or issues surrounding identity.
- ◉ 6. Plot - the plot focuses on one story-line. There are no real sub-plots or deviations from the primary focus.
- ◉ 7. The Dénouement - the ending of a well-made play is both logical and plausible. Is this true of 'An Inspector Calls'? Why might Priestley have broken away from the criteria at this point? Why would he undermine his audience's expectations in this way? Does the ending shock or surprise the audience? Does the ending leave the audience questioning the play's meaning more?

Act One

Listen out
for these
words...

Well-made play
Unity of time
Morality Play
Whodunit

Characters List

An Inspector Calls

Characters

Arthur Birling - *an old and rich businessman*

Sybil Birling - *his wife*

Sheila Birling - *his daughter*

Eric Birling - *his son*

Edna - *the maid*

Gerald Croft - *engaged to Sheila*

Inspector Goole

How does Priestley show the audience that the Birlings are Middle Class (are rich)?



Key Words: Social types, stage directions

OPENING STAGE

DIRECTIONS

The dining room 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.

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 is downstage, and SHEILA and GERALD seated upstage. EDNA, the parlourmaid, is just clearing the table, which has no cloth, of dessert plates and champagne glasses etc and then replacing them with a 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.

OPENING STAGE DIRECTIONS: WHAT DO WE LEARN?

The dining room 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.

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 is downstage, and SHEILA and GERALD seated upstage. EDNA, the parlourmaid, is just clearing the table, which has no cloth, of dessert plates and champagne glasses etc and then replacing them with a 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.

Family
are
wealthy

Seating
reflects
hierarchy
within
family

Objects of
wealth
and
decadence.

House isn't
'homely',
reflects the
family's
Relationships.

Maid presented
solely
through her
function,
not considered as a
person.

Dressed too formally - trying to hard?

OPENING STAGE DIRECTIONS

ARTHUR BIRLING is a heavy-looking, rather portentous man in his middle fifties with fairly easy manners but rather provincial in his 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 easy 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.

OPENING STAGE DIRECTIONS: WHAT DO WE LEARN?

ARTHUR BIRLING is a heavy-looking, rather portentous man in his middle fifties with fairly easy manners but rather provincial in his 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 easy 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.

Has a slight accent: not as 'posh' as he makes out?

Thinks a lot of herself.

Over serious in order to Impress.

A wealthier background than her husband.

'dandy': a man overly concerned with looking stylish

'pleased with themselves': family are smug

Social vs Individual responsibility

Learning Intentions

Planners out
Equipment out
Ready to learn

To be able to form my own opinion on what makes a fair society

To analyse the key differences between social and individual responsibility

Starter: What do you associate with these words?

Society

Community



HOW ARE YOU ASSESSED?

- ◉ 2 English Literature Exams
- ◉ Modern Drama is Section A of Unit 1 (Paper 1)
External Examination
- ◉ 20% of final GCSE grade
- ◉ 45 minutes
- ◉ 30 marks available
- ◉ 4 marks for SPaG

WHAT ARE WE STUDYING?

- ◉ Modern drama
- ◉ 'An Inspector Calls' by J. B. Priestley

WHAT ARE THE EXAM QUESTIONS LIKE?

- ◉ Characters- close analysis
- ◉ Themes- relating to wider -play
- ◉ Language
- ◉ Structure
- ◉ Personal response
- ◉ Audience reactions

AN INSPECTOR CALLS-
THE CONTEXT/WRITER

The social and historical context

J.B Priestley-born in Bradford!
(1894-1948)

At the time I was writing plays,
my work and ideas were ground
breaking and **controversial**. I liked to write
about **social inequalities** and was interested in
politics in Britain



Why set the play in the past?

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 encouraged people to seize the opportunity the end of the war had given them to build a better, more caring society.



Context

An Inspector Calls is set in Pre-war England **1912**, but it was written post-war **1945**, at the end of WW2



Society:

Pre-war 1912

Post-war 1945

Sort the following statements into the correct columns

The ruling classes saw no need to change the status quo.

As a result of the wars, women had earned a more valued place in society.

There were strong distinctions between the upper and lower classes

Sinking of the Titanic

Class distinctions had been greatly reduced as a result of two world wars.

There was a great desire for social change.

1912 OR 1945?

Women were subservient to men. All a well off woman could do was get married; a poor woman was seen as cheap labour.



Why might the second world war have helped women in society?

Why may it also have helped break down class barriers???

EDWARDIAN ENGLAND



EDWARDIAN ENGLAND



EDWARDIAN ENGLAND



EDWARDIAN ENGLAND



EDWARDIAN ENGLAND



EDWARDIAN ENGLAND



LEARNING INTENTION:

- ◉ To understand how a set used to present characters in a drama?

READ THE REST OF THE OPENING STAGE DIRECTIONS

- ◉ What do we learn about the characters?
- ◉ You should make notes.

ACT ONE

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Can you match the term to it's definition
Write them down.

not fashionable or sophisticated:

Portentous

Provincial

Dandy

A man unduly devoted to style,
neatness, and fashion in dress and
appearance.

Done in a pompously or overly
solemn manner.



In his fifties, dressed
in a plain darkish suit
...speaks carefully

A heavy-looking, rather
portentous man in his
middle fifties

Very pleased
with life

**Who is
this?**

Not quite at ease,
half-shy, half-
assertive

Very much the easy
well-bred young
man-about-town

A rather cold woman

- ◉ Who are the characters being described?

What do the quotes tell us about the character?

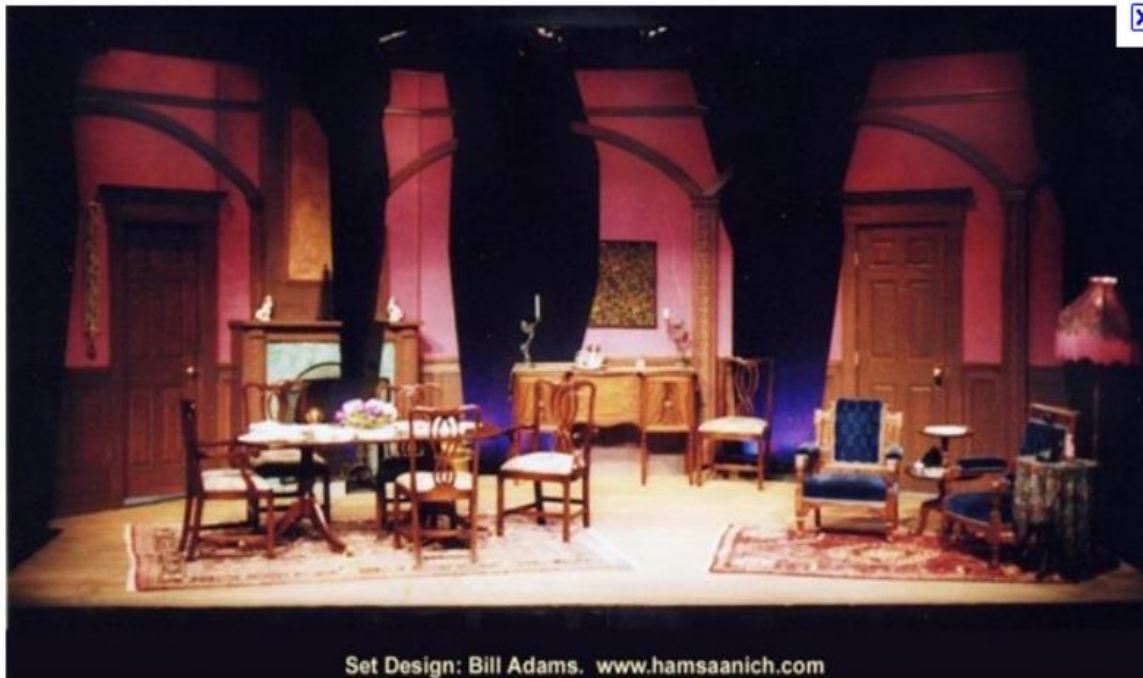
Stagecraft

- "fairly large suburban house"
- "not cosy and homelike"
- "heavily comfortable"
- dining table centre-stage

significance of
set...

the set

the light



the props

costumes

Make a rough sketch in your book of the set..

What do you immediately think of when you see these images?

- Can you explain why they might be symbolic in the play??



ACT ONE- UP TO PAGE 10

○ Pupils to read

○ Mr Birling

○ Mrs Birling

○ Edna

○ Sheila

○ Eric

○ Gerald

ACT ONE: KEY EVENTS

- ◉ The Birlings are celebrating the engagement of their daughter, Sheila, to Gerald Croft, the son of the very wealthy Lord and Lady Croft.
- ◉ Mr Birling makes a speech in which he makes a series of predictions about the future.
- ◉ An inspector arrives and states a girl has died in an infirmary after drinking bleach and the family are all involved.
- ◉ Birling is interrogated.
- ◉ Sheila is interrogated.

Close character analysis

- ◉ In pairs, choose a character we have now met.
- ◉ You are going to make notes on the key things we have discovered about that character using **textual evidence**




CHARACTER ANALYSIS

- ◉ Bell work:
- ◉ In your books, create a page per character. We will be adding key quotes/ideas, as we read on.
- ◉ Today's intention:
How can a dramatist create a character?

How do dramatic techniques/conventions establish a sense of tension?

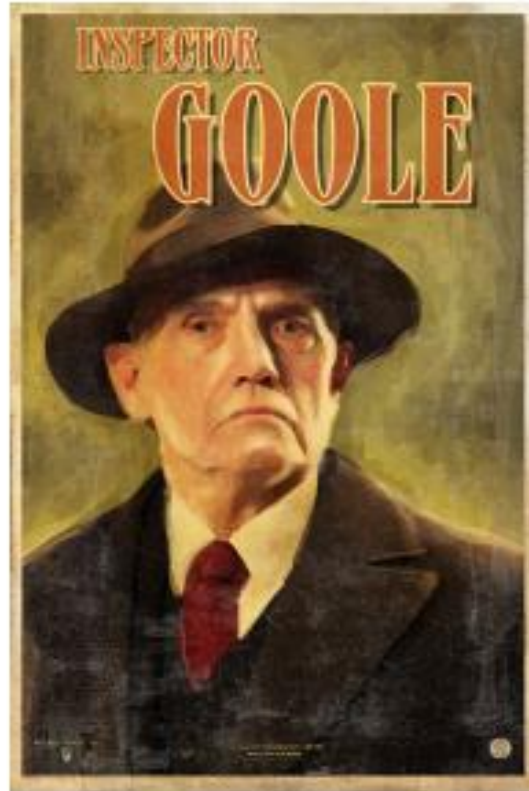
FEEDBACK ON CHARACTER ANALYSIS

- ◉ Last lesson you focused on one character in pairs- be prepared to feedback what you have already found out to the class



Add ideas to your character profile pages in the back of your book.

INSPECTOR GOOLE



Write down your first impressions
Be prepared to justify with a quote!



What's in a name?

Look again at the description of his entrance.

Why does Priestley describe him in this way?
What do we as an audience learn?

In what way could his name be symbolic or have multiple meanings?

KEY QUESTIONS:

- ◉ 1) What are your initial thoughts about the relationship between Eric and Birling?
- ◉ How is Eric behaving?
- ◉ Why does Birling tell Eric to stop drinking p.13?
- ◉ What do the stage directions tell us about how Eric should speak?
- ◉ Does Eric agree with his father's actions towards Eva?
- ◉ Answer these questions providing textual evidence

DRAMATIC DEVICES

- ◉ Learning intention:

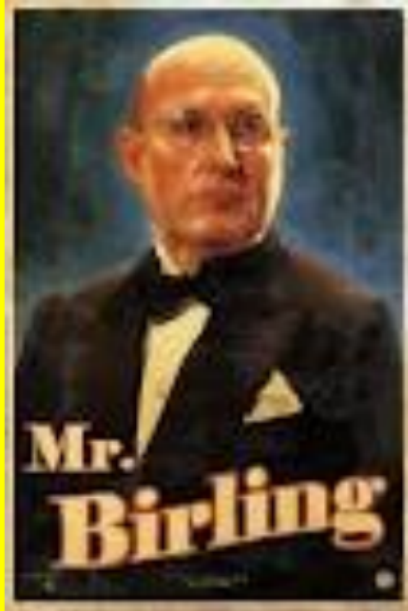
To explore the way dramatic irony alters the audience's perceptions of characters and understand why Priestley uses this technique

Dramatic irony

What do we know about the Titanic?



Can you find something Mr Birling says about the Titanic in Act One?



Now can you work out what dramatic irony could be?

Look back at Act One, can you identify any other examples of dramatic irony? And why do you think it is used??

DRAMATIC IRONY & SETTING in *An Inspector Calls*

One of the reasons for setting the play in the past is evident quite early on in the first act: it allows Priestley to make a complete fool of Mr Birling through his incorrect historical predictions, and show him to be wrong in his whole outlook on the world:

1) **He claims there is no chance of war**

(in 1912 the first rumblings of war were being heard)

Quotation

Explanation

- 2) **He firmly believes in progress & praises the Titanic as the 'unsinkable' ship** (which was to sink on its maiden voyage on 15th April 1912, a week after the action of the play takes place)



Quotation

Explanation

- 3) **He foresees ever-increasing prosperity and peace in the next couple of decades.** (but two world wars followed, countries have been at war around the world ever since as well as economic depressions, strikes and labour disputes and wide-spread poverty.)

Quotation

Explanation



Tension steadily builds throughout the scene

ACT ONE

11

BIRLING (*sharply, staring at him*) What's the matter with you?
ERIC (*defiantly*) Nothing.
EDNA (*opening door, and announcing*) Inspector Goole.
The INSPECTOR enters, and EDNA goes, closing door after her. The INSPECTOR need not be a big man but he creates at once an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness. 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.
INSPECTOR Mr Birling?
BIRLING Yes. Sit down, Inspector.
INSPECTOR (*sitting*) Thank you, sir.
BIRLING Have a glass of port – or a little whisky?
INSPECTOR No, thank you, Mr Birling. I'm on duty.
BIRLING You're new, aren't you?
INSPECTOR Yes, sir. Only recently transferred.
BIRLING I thought you must be. I was an alderman for years – and Lord Mayor two years ago – and I'm still on the Bench – so I know the Brumley police officers pretty well – and I thought I'd never seen you before.
INSPECTOR Quite so.
BIRLING Well, what can I do for you? Some trouble about a warrant?
INSPECTOR No, Mr Birling.
BIRLING (*after a pause, with a touch of impatience*) Well, what is it then?
INSPECTOR I'd like some information, if you don't mind, Mr Birling. Two hours ago a young woman died in the Infirmary. She'd been taken there this afternoon because she'd swallowed a lot of strong disinfectant. Burnt her inside out, of course.
ERIC (*involuntarily*) My God!
INSPECTOR Yes, she was in great agony. They did everything they could for her at the Infirmary, but she died. Suicide, of course.

How?

Appearance?
Manner?
Positioning?
Dialogue?

ACT ONE

- ◉ What have we learnt so far?
- ◉ What would you say are the 3 key moments of tension and why?

- 1) In what way is Birling partially responsible for Eva's death?
- 2) How does Sheila and Eric's reaction to the Inspector differ from Birling and Gerald's. Is this significant? Find a quote to back up your answer

Starter:

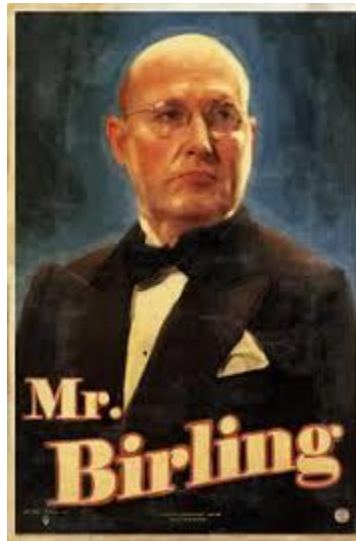


RESPONSIBILITY- A KEY THEME!

- ◉ In what ways is Mr Birling responsible for Eva Smith's death?

How does he react to the Inspector?

Find a quote to support your idea?



How does his character create interest for the audience?

SHEILA BIRLING

- ◉ How does Sheila react to the Inspector?



- ◉ How does her reaction differ to that of Mr Birling and what could that symbolise?

CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM

- ◉ Bell work:
- ◉ The Inspector says:
- ◉ “We don’t live alone. We are members of one body”
- ◉ What does this reveal about his political/moral values? Could the Inspector be the voice for Priestley?
- ◉ How does he contrast with certain members of the family?

LEARNING INTENTION:

- ◉ To analyse and evaluate Priestley's use of language
- ◉ To explore Priestley's political and social values and how these are presented in the play

In 1912-when the play is set, society prioritised individual responsibility (every man for himself!)

Which is which?

This is an economic system based on social ownership and co-operation.

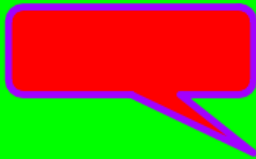
Capitalism

Socialism

This is a social system built on individual rights and private ownership for individual profit

Class and Capitalism

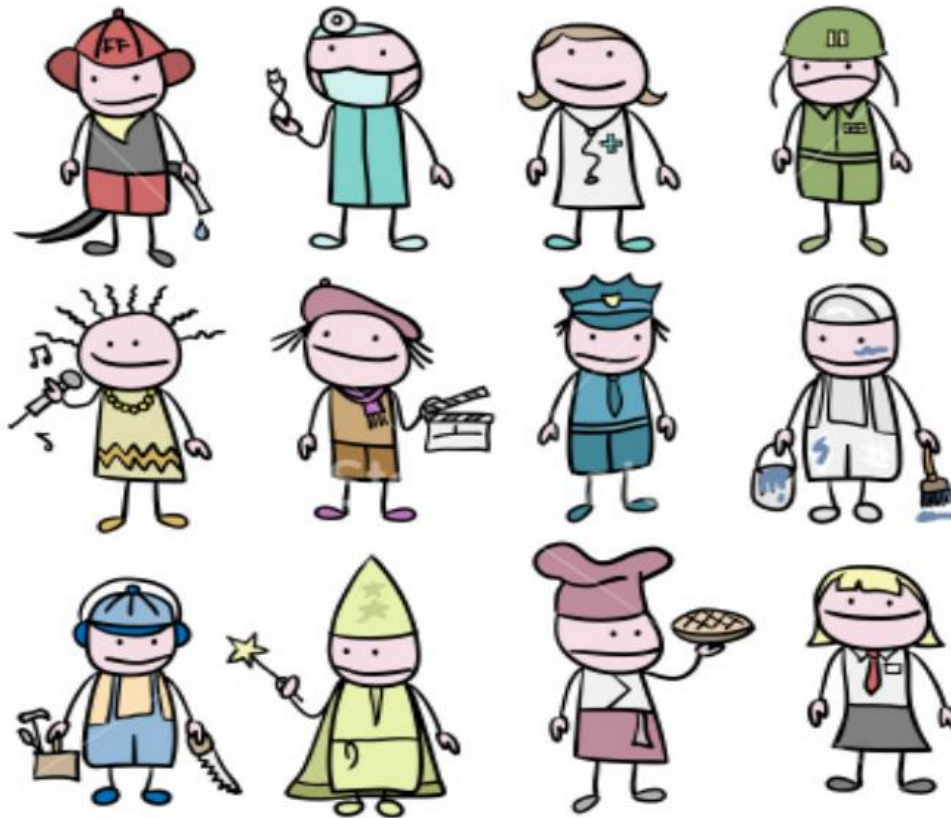
The characters in the play represent different social classes



2 minute discussion.

What do you know about class??

Rate these professions in order of wealth (salary) -If you are unsure-who do you think should be paid most>least?



Remember, it's your opinion!



Check up

Quick fire questions...

What have you learnt about
social/individual
responsibility?

Group Discussion



Individual vs. social responsibility

"We don't live alone. We are members of one body"

Q1) What does the Inspector mean by this?

Q2) How far do you agree that this is the overarching theme or message of the play? (A/B)

Write your answers on a post-it

capitalist

socialist-equality

"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."



Individual responsibility

What does this quote reveal about Birling's attitude towards helping others?

Plenary

Progress check!



In your books, write down a number, depending how much you agree with the following statement. Be prepared to justify!

1	agree	3	strongly
strongly	2	disagree	disagree
agree			4

A Capitalist society is better than a Socialist society

CHARACTERS AND THEMES

- ◎ Bell work:
- ◎ What names are significant and why?

Today's intention: To understand the themes that are explored in the play?

What's in a name?

Eva is similar to Eve, the first woman created by God in the Bible. Smith is the most common English surname. So, Eva Smith could represent every woman of her class.



WHO IS THE INSPECTOR?

THEMES:

- What are the key themes?

Social Responsibility

Class

Time

Role of Women/gender divide

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

- ◉ Revision video

PRIESTLEY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility is arguably the most important theme in the play. The words 'responsible' and 'responsibility' appear a considerable number of times.

- ◉ At the beginning of the play, Mr. Birling gives his interpretation of 'responsibility' in his speech. Towards the end of the play, the Inspector gives his alternative interpretation.
- ◉ These speeches reflect the opposing viewpoints in the play:
- ◉ Individual responsibility vs. collective responsibility
- ◉ Conservatism vs. Socialism
- ◉ Think about how Priestley makes it clear that he supports one view and opposes the other.

When thinking about this theme, consider:

- ◉ Personal responsibility - each character is forced to consider to what extent they are responsible for Eva's death;
- ◉ Towards the end of the play the Inspector tells the family that they can divide responsibility amongst themselves after he has left;
- ◉ The different generations respond differently to the Inspector's visit - who really takes responsibility for their actions?
- ◉ Mrs. Birling is part of a Charitable Organisation - is this because she wants to take responsibility or because it makes her look good?
- ◉ Eric tries to take responsibility for Eva and the baby but does it by stealing;
- ◉ The characters' failure to fully take responsibility leads to the second telephone call - would the telephone have rung if they'd learnt from their mistakes?
- ◉ Who else is supposed to learn to take responsibility?

i. TIME AND THE BIRLINGS

An awareness of time is central to the study of any play. As designer, Ian MacNeil points out: "I think that any play does in fact exist in many time zones - any piece of work does. The chances are it exists in three time zones. There is the time in which it was written; there is the time which it refers to consciously; and there is the time in which it is being read or watched."

An example would be Shakespeare's *Henry V* which was written in 1599, is set around 1415 and is still being performed today. A student or a director approaching the play today will have to ask why, at the end of the sixteenth century, Shakespeare was engaging with events from the beginning of the fifteenth century. The director will also have to examine what the play means to audiences watching it in the twenty-first century.

The same is true for *An Inspector Calls*. When first staging the play for the Royal National Theatre in 1992, director, Stephen Daldry, and his creative team had to ask themselves the same questions. Why was the play written when it was - in a single week during the winter of 1944/45? Why did Priestley set it in the Edwardian past, around thirty years previously but well within living memory? And, above all, why should the play still engage and entertain audiences at the end of the millennium?

J.B. Priestley himself was fascinated by theories of time. Through his reading of the works of the mathematician J.W. Dunne and the Russian mystic Peter Ouspensky, he arrived at his own theory of how we experience time. Priestley, as Ian MacNeil explains, "believed that time is not experienced by linear means; that we experience things *simultaneously* in our present, our past and, in some senses, our future. At any given moment we can develop a sensitivity to these simultaneous times". This theme emerges in several of Priestley's plays, including *I Have Been Here Before* (1937) and *Time and the Conways* (1937). Priestley's fascination with time, together with his interest in Jung's idea of the collective unconscious, was to be a key influence upon Stephen Daldry's production of *An Inspector Calls*.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN DISCUSSION

- ◉ Social responsibility=everyone is responsible for everyone else.
- ◉ Who makes this point clear?
- ◉ How is it proved in the plot?
- ◉ Who disagrees?
- ◉ Does anyone in the play come to understand this?
- ◉ What message does this give and why does Priestley allow two characters to change?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN DISCUSSION

Class= How does Priestley present the different classes in the play? How are the audience meant to react/respond? What are we meant to feel about each class?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN DISCUSSION

- ⦿ Time = what sense of time passing by is given in the opening act?
- ⦿ What references to the future?
- ⦿ What do those references suggest about Birling's society and what do they suggest about him?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN DISCUSSION

- ◉ Role of women = How are women presented in the play and what does this say about their position in society?

MORALITY IN AN INSPECTOR CALLS

Some characters in the play react **defensively**

Some characters in the play react **moralistically**

- 1) Can you work out the meaning of the words
- 2) Can you place the characters under these headings

Moralistic	Defensive

mor·al·is·tic (môr -l s t k, m r -). adj. 1. Characterized by or displaying a concern with morality

Psychology Constantly protecting oneself from criticism, exposure of one's shortcomings, or other real or perceived threats to the ego.

AN INSPECTOR CALLS

EXAM STYLE QUESTIONS

- ◉ How are **women presented** in the play and what does this say about their position in society?
- ◉ How does Priestley show the **differences in attitude** to social responsibility in 'An Inspector Calls'?

AOS

- ◉ **A01**

- ◉ Read, understand and respond to texts: maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response; use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.

- ◉ **A02**

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

- ◉ **A03**

- ◉ Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written

- ◉ **A04**

- ◉ Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation

Morality Play

This was a type of play performed in the late middle ages. Its purpose was to instruct and guide an audience as to the 'correct' way to live, behave and treat others. (Basically, not to break the Seven Deadly Sins.) Does Priestley (the Inspector) have a moral for us?

Task:

Find one quote from Sheila
that shows she has changed from
acting defensively, to being more
moralistic

(p....)

Now find a quote from Eric, in
which he is also displaying
a more moralistic attitude



Look at the introductory notes to
'An Inspector Calls'...

Can you find out what each of these terms means?

Why might they be significant to the play?

THE 'WELL-MADE' PLAY

- ◉ How is the play a 'well made play'?

“An Inspector Calls” – a well-made play

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- The Obligatory Scene – A well-made play will contain a scene or scenes where a secret is revealed. This also adds to the tension and drama.
- The Climactic Curtain – acts and/or scenes will end on a cliffhanger, a point when things are particularly tense or dramatic.

A well-made play continued

- Mistaken Identity – the well-made play often features mistaken identity or issues surrounding identity.
- Plot – the plot focuses on one story-line. There are no real sub-plots or deviations from the primary focus.
- The Dénouement – the ending of a well-made play is both logical and plausible. Is this true of ‘An Inspector Calls’? Why might Priestley have broken away from the criteria at this point? Why would he undermine his audience’s expectations in this way? Does the ending shock or surprise the audience? Does the ending leave the audience questioning the play’s meaning more?

Act 1 questions

Use quotes to
back up your
answers

- 1) Why is Mr Birling particularly pleased to be celebrating Sheila's and Gerald's engagement?
- 2) Why is Mr Birling's speech ironic?
- 3) Why does Birling think that Lady Croft might object to Sheila? (p8)
- 4) How does the sound of the doorbell work as a dramatic device considering its position in the script? (p10)

WHO IS INSPECTOR GOOLE?

- ◉ All this **mystery** suggests that the Inspector is not a 'real' person. So, what is he?
 - Is he a ghost? Goole reminds us of 'ghoul'.
 - Is he the voice of Priestley?
 - Is he the voice of God?
 - Is he the voice of all our consciences?
 - Do you have any other suggestions?

Is the play still relevant for a modern audience?

iii. THE SOCIAL CONTEXT: THE PLAY TODAY

**"There is no such thing as society.
There are individual men and
women, and there are families."**

Margaret Thatcher, *Woman's Own*, 31 October 1987

LOOK AT THE CRITIC QUOTES PERTAINING TO THE PLAY'S RELEVANCE TODAY.

- ◉ In pairs, discuss which comments you most strongly agree with and be prepared to say why

J.B.Priestley joined up in September 1914, at the very start of the First World War. He fought on the front line in France for most of the war, his time in combat only interrupted by a six month spell in hospital in 1917 after he was buried under a collapsed trench. Twenty-four year old Lieutenant Priestley was demobbed in late 1919 after five years in the army.

Read the following extract from J.B.Priestley's *Literature and Western Man* (1960) which bitterly recounts the experiences of his generation during the horrors of the First World War. After reading the extract, look again at the opening pages of *An Inspector Calls*, (particularly Birling's speech, from p.4 "No, we won't..." to p.7 "...we've had experience - and we know."). Compare the two extracts and use the questions which follow to help your discussion.

"In the very middle of this age the First World War rises like a wall of blood-red mountains. Its frenzied butchery, indefensible even on a military basis, killed at least ten million Europeans, mostly young and free from obvious physical defects. After being dressed in uniform, fed and drilled, cheered and cried over before they were packed into their cattle-trucks, these ten million were then filled with hot lead, ripped apart by shell splinters, blown to bits, bayoneted in the belly, choked with poison gas, suffocated in mud, trampled to death or drowned, buried in collapsing dugouts, dropped out of burning aeroplanes, or allowed to die of diseases, after rotting too long in trenches that they shared with syphilitic rats and typhus-infected lice. Death, having come into his empire, demanded the best, and got it. This was no ordinary generation; it was the flower and fruit of an exceptionally long summer of European peace and prosperity, so much vintage blood; and the men among us who fought with it and saw it being destroyed, and the women still alive who cannot forget its wonderful bright promise, we believe to this day that the best companions of our youth, the liveliest minds and bravest hearts, all the golden lads... went to that war and never came back from it. This is something that nobody born after about 1904 can ever fully appreciate."

J.B.Priestley, *Literature and Western Man* (1960)

PRIESTLEY AND THE WAR

PRIESTLEY'S DRAMATIC DEVICES

The Unities

In Classical Greek Drama, plays conformed to the structure of **The Unities**.
The three unities of drama are:

- action; (This means that the plot focuses on one storyline.)
- time; (This means that the timescale of the drama must not be more than 24 hours. In its purest form, unity of time meant that stage time and real time were identical.)
- and place. (This means that there is only one setting.)

To what extent does *An Inspector Calls* meet the criteria of The Unities?
Think about the following:

1. Is there one major storyline being unravelled? What is it?
2. Is the timescale of *An Inspector Calls* less than 24 hours. What is the timescale?
3. What is the setting of the play? Does it ever change?

The Greek Chorus: The Chorus in a Greek drama served a number of purposes. These included:

1. Offering a summary of what has happened so far;
2. Commenting on the characters within the play;
3. Explaining to everyone the lessons to be learned.

Who, in the play, has a similar role to that of a Greek chorus? Find an example where this character does each of the above.

Match the comment to the unity and copy the correct version of the table into your books.

When stage time and real time are the same, this serves to make the play more realistic	Unity of Place
Because complicated sub-plots do not spoil the action of the play, it makes the play realistic and convincing.	Unity of Action
The single, constant setting focuses the attention of the audience.	Unity of Time

EXAM STYLE QUESTIONS

- ◉ How are **women presented** in the play and what does this say about their position in society?
- ◉ How does Priestley show the **differences in attitude** to social responsibility in 'An Inspector Calls'?

Dramatic Devices

entrances/exits pace
contrast
dramatic irony
symbolism
lighting
setting tone cliffhangers

Can you add any more to this list?

◎ **How** does Priestley show the
differences in attitude to social responsibility
in 'An Inspector Calls'?

Device	Definition	Example from the play
	The way in which something is said, usually conveying a certain feeling or atmosphere.	
	The rate at which events occur or information is given in a text. If the pace of the text is slow, this means that the audience is given information gradually.	
	When the audience knows something more than the characters.	
	When contrasting characters, ideas, language etc. are placed together to emphasise their difference.	
	Where the play is set and what the audience can see on the stage.	
	This can be dim, bright, use different colours and change throughout to reflect the mood of the play.	
	When characters enter and leave the stage. It is important to note when and how (e.g. running, crying) these occur.	
	When a section of text ends at a dramatic moment.	
	When one thing (often an idea) is represented by something else. In the play characters can be seen as symbols of different ways of thinking.	

CHARACTERISATION IN AIC

◉ Bell work:

Quick quiz:

- What is dramatic irony and how is it used for effect?
- Give one dramatic device used by Priestley and explain its dramatic effect?
- Name 4 key themes
- Why could AIC be seen as a morality/well-made play?



CHARACTERISATION

WHAT DOES IT INCLUDE?-USE THE PICTURES TO MAKE A PREDICTION



The characterisation of Mrs B

Starter:



Work in pairs to perform Mrs Birling's real thoughts.

One person reads aloud what she actually says,
one person says what she is really thinking

1)"I work for a charitable organisation so that i can give something back"

2)"I enjoy my work for charity because it allows me to help those who need it the most"

3)"We help the most deserving cases"

Mrs Birling's "Wall"

Sheila: You really shouldn't try to build up a kind of wall between us and that girl. If you do the Inspector will just try to break it down. And it'll be all the worse when he does"

Sheila: That's waht I meant when I talked about building up a wall that's sure to be knocked flat. It make's it harder to bear.



Mrs Birling's snobbery
The unbroken wall

In pairs or small groups-
work together to find quotes
that show her snobbery.



The wall crumbles

EG: "stop these silly pretences"

Find quotes that show her "wall" is crumbling—that she is digging herself into a hole by lying and being fake.



EXAMPLE EXAM QUESTION

Priestley criticises the selfishness of people like the Birlings.
What methods does he use to present this selfishness?

- Make a plan for how you would answer this question:
- -find quotes
- -link to context
- -examine Priestley's language/form/structure

ANALYSING PRIESTLEY'S USE OF LANGUAGE

- ◎ “Explain how language, structure and form contribute to writers' presentation of ideas, themes and settings”

◎ A02

- ◎ How to get an high band
- ◎ consider alternative interpretations in language analysis-
- ◎ -implies that/insinuates/intimates that/alludes to/this conveys/proposes that/infers that...
- ◎ evaluate the writer's techniques
- ◎ use technical vocabulary to describe language
- ◎ independently analyse texts and be original in their interpretations

Final speech

In 'spector' Goole

(spectre not detective)

Purpose?

Audience?

Language?

Structure?

But just rememeber this. One Eva Smith has gone - but there are millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths left with us, with their lives, their hopes and fears, their suffering and a 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 in fire and blood and anguish. Good night.

A writer called Max Atkinson spent some time analysing political speeches to see what went down well with audiences. He noticed a few simple techniques were often used. Look at some of these which are listed below and see whether you can find examples of them in the inspector's final speech:

- Listing things in threes (e.g. 'Government of the people, by the people, for the people.' Gettysburg Address, 1863)
- The use of contrastive pairs (e.g. 'That's one small step for man. One giant leap for mankind.' Moon landing broadcast, 1969)
- That talking positively about 'us' or 'we' makes the audience identify with what is being said.
- That talking negatively about 'them' makes for a strong speech.
- The use of the first person singular 'I' to make the audience feel the speaker is sincere.
- The use of powerful or memorable words and phrases.
- The rhythm of the language (e.g. the length of sentences, the effect of pauses.)

THE INSPECTOR'S FINAL SPEECH- HIS USE OF RHETORIC

- List of 3
- Juxtaposition
- Inclusive pronouns/ unifying voice
- First person singular
- Powerful words/phrases(emotive)
- Antithesis- bringing about a contrast of ideas

Can anyone identify the prophetic element in the speech? Why has Priestley included this? Does it relate to any of the key themes of the play?

YOUR TASK:

Write a PEEL paragraph using this extract. How does the language used by the Inspector in this speech reveal any of the key themes? Does it contribute to our understanding of the character of the Inspector?

Remember to identify specific language devices and **explain their effect on the reader**. Don't analyse a language device you know really well, choose one that you learnt about for the first time today

JUXTAPOSITION OF CHARACTERS

- ◉ Who most strongly juxtaposes the Inspector's character?

EXAM QUESTION

- ◉ How is the opening scene an indication of what will happen in the rest of the play?
- ◉ Use the following slide to help you.

Opening speech

Arthur Birling

Purpose?

Audience?

Language

Structure?

By the way **some of these cranks** talk...you'd think everybody has to look after everybody else...**community and all that nonsense**. A man has to **mind his own business** and look after **himself and his own**...

And I'm talking as a **hard-headed, practical man of business**. And I say there isn't a chance of war...**Now you young people just listen** to this-and remember what I'm telling you now. In **twenty or thirty years time**-let's say, **in 1940**-you may be giving a little party like this... and i tell you, by that time you'll be living in a world that'll have forgotten all these **Capital vs Labour agitations** and all these **silly war scares**. There'll be **peace and prosperity and rapid progress everywhere-except of course in Russia**, which will always be behindhand naturally.

Extended Question

Using your knowledge of:

- the play as a whole
- the context
- the quotes in the 2 speeches
- the characters

Answer the question:

"How does Priestley use the characters of Birling and Goole to convey his own political views?"

EXTENDING OUR THINKING

- Symbolism in AIC.



THE 7 DEADLY SINS

- ◉ Wrath, greed, sloth, pride, lust, envy and gluttony

GERALD=AN INTERESTING CHARACTER?

Question 18

1	8
---	---

How do you respond to Gerald in *An Inspector Calls*? How does Priestley make you respond as you do by the ways he writes? (30 marks)

Initial ideas?

Gerald: hard-eyed and dough-faced

Gerald: young and fresh and charming

Gerald: Young and pretty and warm hearted

How is Gerald a bit like a politician?

- What different attitudes are shown in the play?
- Eg: Derogatory attitudes towards women



"We were paying the usual rates and if they didn't like those rates, they could go and work somewhere else."

"young and fresh and charming"

"As if a girl of that sort would ever refuse money."

"women of the town"

"hard eyed and dough faced"

"girls of that class"

"she was very pretty-soft brown hair and big dark eyes"

Who says it?

What does it suggest about treatment of women or how they were viewed?

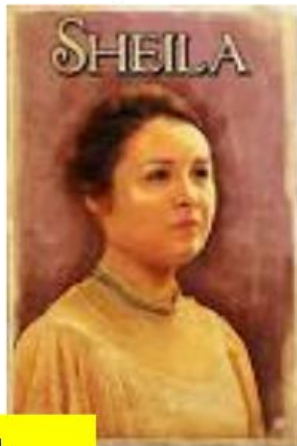
EXAM STYLE QUESTION

What does AIC reveal about the inequality between men and women at the time the play was written?

Which one do you think has the most power and **why**?



Edna



Be ready to
justify your
answer to the
class

Mr Birling is dismissive of the several hundred women in his factory:

"We were paying the usual rates and if they didn't like those rates, they could go and work somewhere else."

Birling's view	Context

"she was very pretty-soft brown hair and
big dark eyes"

"hard eyed and dough faced"

Gerald saw Eva as

"young and fresh and charming" - in other
words, someone vulnerable he could amuse
himself by helping.

Gerald's view	Context

Mrs Birling couldn't believe that

"a girl of that sort would ever refuse
money."

"girls of that class"

Her charitable committee was a sham: a
small amount of money was given to a
small amount of women, hardly scratching
the surface of the problem.

Mrs Birling	Context

“She was very pretty and a
good sport”

Eric is disgusted by other women
who he thinks act as just for ‘fun’

Yet he sees EvaSmith as very different.

ERic's view	Context

INEQUALITIES BETWEEN GENDER

- ◉ Language - characterisation/dialogue
- ◉ Form
- ◉ Stage directions/ dramatic devices/ well-made play-entrances and exits-Greek Unities
- ◉ Structure- acts/scenes/ climactic curtain/ cyclical play- denouement

RESPONDING TO AN ESSAY QUESTION

Question 18

1

8

How does Priestley present the change in Sheila during the course of the play *An Inspector Calls*? How do you think this change reflects some of Priestley's ideas?
(30 marks)

- How would you go about answering this question? **There are 2 parts**
- Language Form Structure

Question 18

1	8
---	---

How does Priestley present the change in Sheila during the course of the play *An Inspector Calls*? How do you think this change reflects some of Priestley's ideas? (30 marks)

Language

Form

Structure

Exposition

climactic curtain

gender

dialogue

You might want to
split your page up
like this.

DON'T FORGET:
The more you can
analyse language,
form and structure
or talk about
Priestley's
dramatic devices the
higher your mark

lighting

Essay plan

generation

dramatic irony

Title:

morality play

Introduction: Link to context and give an overall answer to the question.

proletariat

well-made

play

First point:

stage directions prophetic

Second point:

ignorance to knowledge

hyperbole

Third point:

patriarchy

characterisation

Conclusion: Comment on Priestley's overall message and how he conveys this to the audience

polemic

monologue

collective vs individ

omniscient

The Greek unities

denouement

We first meet Sheila in the opening scene of the play which shows straight away that she is a central character.

She comes across at first as a bit giddy when she speaks 'gaily, possessively' and this is probably because this is a dinner party to celebrate her engagement. We soon learn however that she is not completely carefree as she says about Gerald, her fiancé; 'except for last summer, when you never came near me, and I wondered what had happened to you.' This gives the audience the impression that she is suspicious about Gerald and this comes at the beginning of the play so that we wonder if we are going to find out what he was doing and makes us more interested. As the play progresses, a different presentation of Sheila is given. She is shown as quite caring in contrast to her father, Mr Birling; 'But these girls aren't cheap labour, they're people.' You begin to see that Sheila is compassionate and does not see the lower classes as beneath her or as a means to making money. However in the next scene we learn that even though Sheila feels sorry for the lower classes she doesn't always show this in reality. When the Inspector makes her admit that she had Eva sacked just for being pretty she says; 'I couldn't be sorry for her', the audience see that her upbringing has still made her selfish and used to getting her own way and she will use the advantage of her class status when it suits her. However the fact that she then feels really bad about it; 'I behaved badly too. I know I did. I'm ashamed of it', shows that she has a conscience and she will learn from her mistakes. I think we like her more because of this because we all make mistakes and this shows her as more real. The point that is being made is that we should learn from these mistakes and therefore not make them again. She uses short sentences in this quotation because this shows that she is not trying to make excuses by adding details but is direct in owning up to her part in the death of Eva Smith. This links Sheila to some of the important themes in the play such as guilt and responsibility.

How does the candidate show an awareness of the structure of the play?

Does the candidate consider the effect on the audience? How?

Are the candidate's ideas developed in detail?

How does the candidate make their points convincing?

Does the candidate show an awareness of some of the themes in the play?

Does the candidate make thoughtful comments about possible meanings?

Does the candidate explore the writer's use of language? How?

Do the quotations clearly link to the points the candidate is making?

Priestley uses a range of interesting techniques in order to present Sheila's change. One of the most intriguing methods he uses is language techniques to convey certain messages. At the beginning of the play, Sheila is presented as a stereotypical middle class young woman - immature and spoilt. Priestley brings this out through Sheila's character through her childish language such as "I'm sorry Daddy and "go on Mummy". By addressing her parents in this manner, Priestley clearly wanted the audience to know she has an excited and strong- spirited attitude in life. This could suggest Priestley wanted to keep the play as realistic as possible in order to indicate to the audience that the events could have happened in real life as the Birlings' are a typical example of a middle class family during the set period. Furthermore, Priestley may have also chose to do this to show the audience that upper class conventional behaviour views start from a young age. Moreover, in Sheila's stage directions she is often described as being "half serious, half playful". This could suggest that as well as having childish traits, Sheila is also quite quick witted and has wise instincts - she wonders why Gerald "hardly came" to her last summer, implying that she can tell that there is something not quite right and feels suspicious of Gerald's actions. Thus, the inspector.....

The Generation Gap

The Younger Generation

- In the play, the younger generation (Eric and Sheila) show that they are capable of change. They express sympathy for the strikers in Act 1 and they also show greater sympathy for Eva Smith. Through the play, they are honest about their actions and refuse to go back on what they have learnt.
- Sheila and Eric's ability to change means that Priestley can end the play with an element of hope. It is possible that the next generation can make society better. Without this, the play would end hopelessly, with the characters continuing to repeat their mistakes.

The Older Generation

- In the play, the older generation (Mr. & Mrs. Birling) seem incapable of real change. They are set in their ways and see Sheila and Eric as "foolish" "children".
- They have little sympathy for Eva Smith and are only sorry that she has died because it could impact on their lives.
- Priestley uses Mr. & 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.

MOCK ESSAY

- ◉ How important do you think social class is in *An Inspector Calls* and how does Priestley present ideas about social class? (30 marks)
- ◉ SPaG: (4 marks)
- ◉ What do you think is the importance of Inspector Goole and how does Priestley present him?

REMEMBER:

- ◉ Analyse and unpick quotes in detail- focus on the effect of a specific words or phrase
 - ◉ Talk about Priestley's use of dramatic devices.
 - ◉ Talk about the relevance of context
 - ◉ Use words that remind the examiner you know this is a **play**
 - ◉ Well made play/ Greek unities
-
- ◉ **45 minutes**

Birling

Context/dramatic irony

By the way some of these cranks talk...you'd think everybody has to look after everybody else...community and all that nonsense. A man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own...

And I'm talking as a hard-headed, practical man as business. And I say there isn't a chance of war...Now you young people just listen to this-and remember what I'm telling you now. In twenty or thirty years time-let's say, in 1940-you may be giving a little party like this...and i tell you, by that time you'll be living in a world that'll have forgotten all these Capital vs Labour agitations and all these silly war scares. There'll be peace and prosperity and rapid progress everywhere-except of course in Russia, which will always be behindhand naturally.

simile

repetition

metaphor

inclusive pronouns

list of 3

emotive language

prophetic element

Sentence lengths

Personal pronouns

Any others you can find

Inspector

But just remember this. One Eva Smith has gone - but there are millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths left with us, with their lives, their hopes and fears, their suffering and a 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 in fire and blood and anguish. Good night.

On your sheet-
annotate each speech:
look for interesting
language/punctuation
etc

Look for contrasting
sentences- where the
Inspector and Birling show
different opinions