



An Inspector Calls

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE Study Guide

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Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Product Support from ZigZag Education | ii |
| Terms and Conditions of Use | iii |
| Teacher's Introduction..... | 1 |
| Specification Information | 2 |
| Plot Summary..... | 3 |
| Section-by-Section Analysis | 5 |
| Direction before the Prose..... | 5 |
| Act 1 Parts 1–3 | 6 |
| Act 1 Parts 4–7 | 12 |
| Act 2 Parts 1–4 | 16 |
| Act 2 Parts 5–6 | 20 |
| Act 3 Parts 1–3 | 22 |
| Act 3 Parts 4–6 | 25 |
| Whole–Text Analysis | 27 |
| Characterisation | 27 |
| Relationships | 42 |
| Settings and 'Props' | 46 |
| Themes..... | 48 |
| Ideas and Messages | 51 |
| Form and Structure | 53 |
| The Writer's Use of Language | 57 |
| Context..... | 61 |
| Key Term Glossary | 64 |
| Literary Terms | 64 |
| Vocabulary | 65 |
| Further Reading | 68 |
| Suggested Answers | 69 |

Teacher's Introduction

An Inspector Calls is THE seminary play to introduce students to the craft of the novel, the deception and treachery combined with a detective novel's murder-mystery who is the culprit. Set in England in social turmoil, is nearly impossible to surpass. This guide, written for the purpose of placing an intense interrogatory spotlight on each character and their plotline to unravel the truth, provides candidates with a clear understanding of the play's intricate allegoric angst.

This guide comprises of the following sections:

- **Plot summary:** A brief summary of the main events and structure of the narrative.
- **Chapter-by-chapter analysis:** Detailed scrutiny of the play, with tasks and exercises.
- **Characterisation and relationships:** Analysis of key characters in the play and how they create them.
- **Relationship mind-map:** Visual mapping of the key relationships in the play.
- **Setting:** The role of place, place names, household objects and of visual effects.
- **Themes:** A detailed treatment of the key themes of the play.
- **Ideas and messages:** Exploration of Priestley's key ideas in the text.
- **Language, structure and form:** Priestley's use of language, exploration of the elements and how these relate to structure.
- **Cultural, social and historical context:** Key aspects of cultural context impacting on the play, including gender, equality, and social responsibility, including some biographical information.
- **Glossary of key terms:** Explanation of literary and other terms used in the guide.

Key Features of Guide

This resource is designed and written to support the teaching of the play *An Inspector Calls* for the Edexcel iGCSE 2016 specification. To that end, it is written to address the assessment objectives.

| Key Feature | |
|---|------------------|
| Key events and developments in <i>An Inspector Calls</i> . | Plot Summary |
| Visual guide to key relationships in the novel, with analyses of the development and nature of these. | Relationships |
| Detailed act-by-act analyses of literary techniques, events and development of relationships and plot, with important quotations. | Act and language |
| Consideration of Priestley's choice of formal and structural elements and language, and their effects upon the reader. | Language |
| Analyses of key ideas and messages in the novel. Examination of settings and their role in the novel's structure and themes. | Setting |
| Information and analyses of the novel's social and cultural contexts, including biographical information. | Social context |
| Explanation of literary and cultural terms being used. | Glossary |

Edition of the Text

The edition used in the preparation of this source was *An Inspector Calls and other Modern Classics* Edition 2000 ISBN 978-0-141-18535-4. For Component 2, student edition: Penguin Modern Classics; New Edition, March 2001, ISBN 9780411853544.

Before using this resource ensure all students have read through *An Inspector Calls* in a class group.

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Specification Information

An Inspector Calls is examined by Pearson Edexcel iGCSE as part of English Literature.

This pack applies to the following component:

Component 2: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts (Section A:

Modern Drama (examined)

and

Component 3: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts (coursework)

Component 2 is worth 50% of the total qualification. In this component candidates study two texts, one Modern Drama text and one Literary Heritage text.

Component 3 is available as an alternative to Component 2 and also assesses 40% of the total qualification through two coursework assignments, internally set and assessed, and externally assessed.

The focus of this pack is, therefore, on drawing out key features of the play across this board. There are discussion points and exercises in each section which support this. Some are aimed at group work, and others to enable further individual study and analysis.

Assessment Objectives

These are standardised across all iGCSE components:

| Students must: | |
|----------------|---|
| AO1 | Demonstrate a close knowledge and understanding of texts, maintaining and presenting an informed personal engagement. |
| AO2 | Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meaning. |

In addition, AO3 'Show an understanding of the relationships between texts and the world they were written in' has been touched on in this pack as it is helpful to have an overview of the context in which the texts were written to develop a deeper understanding.

Note: Students will not need to write about context in their assessment.

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Plot Summary

Act One

The play begins with the Birling family celebrating daughter Sheila's engagement to Mr Gerald Croft. Despite the happy occasion, Sheila is somewhat suspicious about Gerald's devotion to her during the summer. Mr Birling, at the insistence of his wife, Sybil, launches into two pompous, portentous, speeches. Both speeches, given on the occasion, are essentially aimed at the guests in the room (Eric, Birling's son and Gerald) about his opinion of commerce, **social class**, hard work, his distaste of social responsibility, and, above all, himself. The celebrations are interrupted by the arrival of a police inspector, Inspector Goole, who brings news of the suicide of a young lady, Eva Smith. The Inspector confronts both Mr Birling and Sheila as to their involvement: Mr Birling having sacked Eva as the leader of a strike at his factory, and Sheila who had Eva sacked from a job in a department store. Following the second sacking, the Inspector explains that Eva changed her name to *Daisy Renton*. The revelation causes two significant events – Gerald looks decidedly uncomfortable and Eric is forced to leave the room. Sheila notices Gerald's slip and confronts him. Curtain falls...

Plot: this re-story which themes

AO1:

Draw a time entrances and importance

Portentous or arrogant
Social class people in s

Act Two

The act opens with Gerald preferring his involvement to be kept between himself and the earshot of Sheila. **Unperturbed**, he insists on staying and hearing how Gerald admits Daisy was his mistress. But, still in shock, half-heartedly explains the six months, in order for him to concentrate on Sheila. The revelation unsurprisingly engenders the engagement ring back to Gerald. In disgrace, and clearly **whammy**, Gerald leaves the house.

As he leaves, Mrs Birling attempts to seize control of the ever-downward spiral of hands of the Inspector, but as traps have been set for all the characters, she falls to her preconceived plan. With Eric out of the room, she is forced to admit that she had Daisy Renton earlier that month. Calling herself *Mrs Birling*, Daisy had sought, by assistance from Mrs Birling's charitable organisation. Mrs Birling, in refusing to pursue the father of her unborn child for help. Upon hearing this confession from Sheila realises who the father is, only moments before Mrs Birling. This sends co... Curtain falls...

Key Terms

Unperturbed: calm and collected despite pressure

Whammy: a double blow or a double setback

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Act Three

Eric returns and confesses to being the father of Daisy's unborn child. He explains that during the pregnancy, he had panicked and taken money from his father's firm to pay her off. When she found out the money was 'stolen', she had rejected it and sought charitable help instead. When Eric asks for financial help, Eric explodes and blames her for the suicide and his child's death. He gives his 'fire and brimstone' speech on social responsibility, in a clear juxtaposition with Sheila's selfishness, Gerald's condoning of such and Mrs Birling's indifference. Eric is disgusted and the guilt making them remorseful.

As the dust settles, and Birling goes on his way, Sheila begins to question the Inspector. Gerald returns with more bad news – the Inspector wasn't a real Inspector, but another later, one to the **Chief Constable** and one to the **Infirmary**, prove that there isn't a **Brumley** police force, and there hasn't been a local suicide for weeks. Mr and Mrs Birling changes back to normality in juxtaposition with their two children who do not feel the same. Eric continues to control their minds. However, the equilibrium is again shattered when answered by Mr Birling. He returns to inform the family and Gerald, that a police officer has found something about a young girl and a suicide... Curtain falls.

Key Terms

Chief Constable: the head of the police force in a specific geographical area

Infirmary: a hospital

Brumley: a fictional town or city in the North Midlands created by Priestley to represent the house and Mr Birling's (wool?) manufacturing business

AO2: Top Tip

In your responses in an exam make sure you make connections with Priestley's use of heavy irony: the engagement celebration, Mr Birling's speeches or Mrs Birling's refusal of charitable assistance.

AO4 (Context): Dis

J B Priestley began with a story about a mysterious inspector. Why do you think he used these characters as a challenge to social and social responsibility?

Active Learning Task 2

Group work:

Using this plot summary, divide out the play's characters and explain their involvement in the story of Daisy Renton.

Individually:

Using this plot summary, identify one of the characters in the play and explain their involvement in the story of Daisy Renton.

Tip: You will need to use the skills of summarising, describing and persuading.

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Section-by-Section Analysis

Direction before the Pros

AO4 (Context): Top Tip

Understanding the context and contexts of the play are crucial in understanding Priestley's motivation. 'A Play in Three Acts' and 'The Play's Dedication' will help you understand this.

Key

Capitalism: an economic and political system in which the means of production are controlled by private individuals
World War II: a second world war fought between Britain and its allies and Germany

'A Play in Three Acts'

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Holy Spirit, Matthew 28:19.

This quote, taken from the Bible, is worth considering and keeping in mind when studying Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*. Why? Well, the Christian faith has as its core beliefs resurrection (rebirth) and community (love thy neighbour) – values rejected and rejected. Even the playwright's name, Priestley suggests having church-like qualities. It could be argued that Priestley drew heavily from the Christian religion (often at odds with his own political beliefs) to make his point. The uncanny significance that *An Inspector Calls*, 'A Play in Three Acts' and the Christian Holy Trinity cannot be understated:

| Act One: The Father | Act Two: The Son(s) | Act Three: The Inspector |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| Mr Arthur Birling (the father) and his ironic speeches Eric, father's son, taken away from him | Eric Birling (the son-in-law) Eric Birling (the son) | Inspector |

AO4 (Context): Discussion Point 1

The Angel Gabriel in the Christian faith, is God's messenger. To what extent does Priestley use the Angel Gabriel as bringing an important message to the characters and the audience?



The Play's Dedication

J B Priestley dedicated the play to his friend, actor and director, Michael Macoway. In 1944, Priestley had told his friend about an idea he had for a play involving a man who visited a family. This was to become the genesis of *An Inspector Calls*. Enquiring about the idea, Macoway asked what had become of the idea? This meeting led to Priestley gathering some of the ideas for the play, and, clearly frustrated with life, in the autumn of 1944, wrote the entire play.

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Act 1 Parts 1-3

The Pre-inspection celebration

Act 1 Part 1: A (very) mixed (and soon to be shaken) celebration

Gerald: And I've told you – I was awfully busy at the work all that time. (p. 161)

Summary

The play begins with six of the play's key characters at the end of a lavish celebration. Priestley deliberately establishes in the first few directions a scene of wealth and prosperity, love and value, not only in the setting but in the characters' dialogue (p. 161). Suggestions are made by certain events, as yet undiscovered by the full cast.

AO4 (Context): Did you know?

The drink, port, in particular, is used as symbolic of wealth in the play. Mr Birling wastes son-in-law, Gerald, as to its pedigree and how he knows this: 'Finchley told me' (p. 161) establishing an aristocratic tone by name-dropping. Also, the port is the same that Gerald

Analysis

As the curtain rises for Act One, the contrast between the classes: the rich and the poor, is immediately and obviously established. The play opens with a parlour maid, Edna, clearing a middle-class household's dinner table, replacing dessert plates and champagne glasses with a decanter of port, cigar box and cigarettes. Mr and Mrs Birling are celebrating the engagement of their daughter, Sheila, to aristocrat Gerald Croft. The parlour, a room of working-class Edna handling the dinner table items, is used by Priestley to symbolise the clear wealth and class divide right from the beginning of the play. The play opens with some apparent idle, but significant port, and the dialogue begins with Mr Arthur Birling establishing a precedent of his attention to the real issue at hand, not the engagement, but that of impressing Gerald

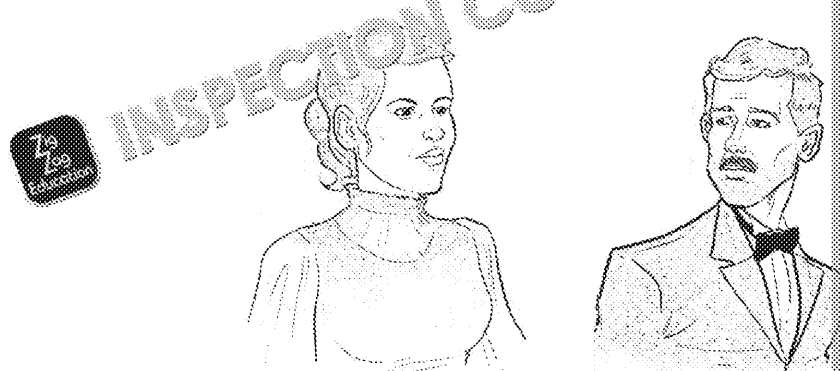
Paradox: a
ridiculous, b

Aristocrat:

Sheila, who is half-excited, but half-suspicious of Gerald, teases him about his knowledge of port, and she becomes a 'purple-faced old men' (p. 162) him curiously obedient to Sheila's demand and keen to keep her happy.

AO1: Discussion Point 1

Priestley's decision to make Gerald obedient of Sheila at the beginning of the scene is deliberate. Why is this so? Is Gerald feeling guilty about something? There is certainly some venom in Sheila's tone towards Gerald at this point.



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Curiously, Mrs Birling appears unconcerned about the celebrations. She is sat w unlikely to fill it, until persuaded by Sheila. Like daughter, she admonishes her h for daring to compliment the cook, an apparent middle-class **faux pas**, revealing upbringing. Mrs Birling is upset that he has embarrassed her in front of her **arist** rubbishes such a thought saying that he feels Gerald should be considered one o agrees. Gerald says he's been '*trying long enough*' (p. 162) to become part of the family. Here, Sheila demonstrates her suspicious nature and is not entirely convinced that he's been trying hard enough and digs Gerald about his time with her '*all last summer, when you never came near me*' (p. 162). Priestley again and again uses **dramatic irony** from the beginning of Act One, only revealed later in the investigation.

Dramatic irony is when a character's actions or words are understood by the audience, although they are not understood by the characters involved.

Mrs Birling explains that Sheila must get used to her future husband spending '*most of his time on their business*' (p. 163). Sheila responds with disbelief. Sheila again teases Gerald to be careful not to spend too much time at work when they're married as she won't get on if Gerald must be more careful to spend more time with her, to which Gerald makes a promise '*Oh – I will, I will*' (p. 163). This causes Eric to guffaw out loud. Does he know so much about the further use of irony by Priestley?

Annoyed by Eric's outburst, Sheila immaturely snaps at Eric, calling him '*squiffy*' (p. 163) and is **admonished** for such language by her mother. Eric scoffs at his mother saying '*If you think that's the best she can do –*' (p. 163) but is interrupted by Sheila before he can go any further, calling him '*an ass*' (p. 163).

Faux pas: a social mistake or error, often made by a person who is not familiar with the customs of a particular culture or society. **Admonish:** to reprimand or scold someone.

AO1: Discussion Question

Priestley uses **dramatic irony** in the early parts of the play to make suggestions about future events. For example, when Eric and Sheila squabble over his guffaw, Eric answers his mother's challenge to his mother's authority forebode future significant events.



Extended Essay Question 1

- Priestley establishes **deception** as a key theme at the start of the play. Using evidence from pp. 1–3 explain the idea that there are clues that the characters are hiding secrets from each other, or
- How does Priestley explore deception in *An Inspector Calls*? Consider the theme and how his thoughts and ideas are articulated through his language.

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Act 1 Part 2: A toast, the host and Birling's first boast

Birling: When you marry, you'll be marrying at a very good time. Yes, a very even better time (p. 165).

Summary

Mr Birling makes a toast to Sheila and Gerald's engagement. The toast turns into self-congratulatory and partially as a demonstration of his **pomposity** and inability after 1912.

Key Terms

Stiff upper lip: an idiom identifying a person, generally upper class, who will stay resolute of hardship, even tragedy

Pomposity: having a sense of self-importance

Matriarch: a female head of family, or the most powerful female in a family

Cartel: a group of businesses who work together for their own interests and to keep price competition

Lament: to feel sorrowful, or to mourn over something regretful

Sleight-of-hand: an idiom used to describe a manoeuvre generally used to trick or fool

Foreboding: a prediction – sometimes used by writers as a sense of irony to predict a

Analysis

As the siblings squabble, Priestley forces **matriarch**, Mrs Birling, to look for damage further embarrassment in front of Gerald. The squabbling is brought to a sudden stop by her husband, through her passive-aggressive prompting, into action – '*what about this*'

Not one to shy away from being the centre of attention, Mr Birling explains how important his business is to him and that it means a tremendous amount to him (p. 163) and explains the benefits of his business. Priestley makes him truthful, if too self-indulgent, congratulating himself on the fact that by marrying Gerald, Sheila marries into a powerful family, one of Birling's biggest rivals. This gives him the opportunity to avoid competition in the future and be able to set up a **cartel** (p. 164). Again, in a moment of self-indulgence, this time for being too self-indulgent, Birling is very fortunate to marry his daughter. Gerald agrees and says, '*I know I am – this is a great opportunity*' (p. 164). In his voice is clear as Priestley pursues **dramatic irony**, missed perhaps by Gerald or certainly by her mother.

Realising he is caught in the **lament**, albeit very briefly, Gerald with his **stiff upper lip** proceeds on and produces the engagement ring (already picked by Sheila!) in an attempt to keep her suspicions, and his undisclosed emotional state at bay. This is clearly noticed by Mrs Birling, the significance of which is, at that point, lost on Gerald. Receiving the ring, Sheila demonstrates and **forebodes** her obsession with maternalism, saying she'll '*never let it go out of my sight*' (p. 165). Ironically, unlike her future husband, she is right about the summer.

Mr Birling begins a second and more self-indulgent speech attempting to gloss over the events that could prevent his business, and that of Gerald's father, from continuing. In what is perhaps his key dramatically ironic statement of the play, Priestley displays his opinion in clear **paradox** with reality about to occur. He insists that there will be no more strikes or action by the miners, no war with Germany, although his predictions on transport advancement are mixed: he predicts a growth in cars and plane production, but also hypes the steamship **Titanic** as '*unsinkable*' (p. 166). While his predictions are partially correct on technology, he is woefully wrong, crucially, on everything else: strikes and the outbreak of war.

Titanic
designed
on its

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What Mr Birling fails to appreciate, and is again mercilessly set-up to fail by the play, is that the middle classes seem obsessed with creating wealth, such as Birling himself, the upper classes (Mr and Mrs Birling) seem hell-bent on protecting the wealth they've got. And if any more resources will be taken from the upper classes, history foretells that war is inevitable in Priestley's life.

AO4 (Context): Top Tip

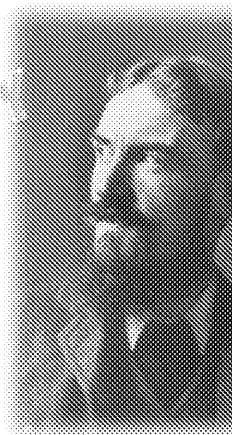
Mr Birling's inability to predict the future is demonstrated in the fact the Titanic voyage, the night the play is set in, was about for other examples, peppered throughout the play for dramatic ironic effect.

When Mr Birling is on his final run having begun to criticise the Russians as being '*behindhand*' (p. 166) he is interrupted by his wife to end the speech. Which he does, but not before criticising two well-known **socialists** and political **agitators** (such as Priestley himself, and two of his own heroes) – **H G Wells** and **George Bernard Shaw** (p. 166). Having heard enough, and completely uninterested, Mrs Birling leaves Sheila. This leaves the men to talk business and to allow her and her daughter to go to a more fitting for ladies, such as clothes and marriage. Eric is forcibly removed by his father and to cut down his alcohol consumption.

Socialists: a person who believes in a political ideology/society where the wealth is shared out.
Agitators: those who stir up trouble.



H G Wells



George Bernard Shaw

AO4 (Context): Discussion Point 3

Why does Priestley allow Mr Birling to correctly predict the future on some things?

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Extended Essay Question 1

- (a) Mr Birling's force of conviction in his dialogue in pp. 3–4 is such that he convinces some truth in what he says. Discuss how J B Priestley convinces us that Mr Birling is mistaken in his beliefs as to most future events. Mr Birling makes a very successful businessman, but would make a very poor politician.



Act 1 Part 3: Another boast from the host and the arrival of the 'ghos'

Birling: ... – so long as we behave ourselves, don't get into the police court or s

Gerald: You seem to be a nice, well-behaved family – (p. 167)

Summary

Left on their own, Birling and Gerald spend some mal...ding time together. B... middle-class lifestyle by discussing the virtues of... Sensing that Gerald's pa... do not approve of Sheila as a future... for their son, he carries out a further persuasion *job* on Gerald. Again, Gerald seems totally unimpressed or concerned about Birling's attempts at **pretence**, but nevertheless... to Birling's sentiments in a sickly sycophantic way. Birling... that he is in line for a major award from the King, a **knighthood**. Provided, of course, he or his family don't get into any trouble! Then the doorbell rings.

Knighthood
the most
and com
Pretence
or emo

Analysis

On his own with Gerald, Mr Birling has a captured audience to further demonstrate his self-importance, arrogance and materialistic views to Gerald. Again, Birling is quick to demonstrate his wealth by offering Gerald a cigar. And, in a similar over-assumption with the port, Gerald refuses a cigar, politely, preferring the more youthful and fashionable *cigarette*. However, he is not so much interested in persuading Gerald of his self-worth as he knows Gerald is on his side, instead he uses Gerald to relay information about his upcoming (and top secret) **knighthood** and further elevated position in society to Gerald's mother, Lady Croft. Birling clearly suspects Lady Croft does not approve of Sheila, who is from **new money** and not from **old money stock**, like Mrs Croft.

Old money
described
whose v
ownership
New money
non-aris
referring
the late
centuries

Mr Birling... a hint of such news to his mother. It is suggested t... Croft or he... even been introduced properly as he does not know her first name. Gerald's parents have attended the engagement party, as they are conveniently '... this view (also saving Priestley from having to write in two additional characters a

Eric returns saying he left the ladies talking about clothes (further irony). Eric he... is quite at home in so doing, suggesting, again, he is no stranger to heavy and reg... why Eric is drinking so heavily. Is there something playing heavily on his mind? Clothes are symbolically important and a token of women's self-respect. Patroni... reflective of the ladies in his family? Birling's comment strikes a chord in Eric wh... 'Yes, I remember' (p. 168) such to be true. Challenged by both Birling and Gerald... outburst, he quickly dismisses his comment. The audience are less convinced...



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Mr Birling again, with a captured audience, Eric out of duty and Gerald out of forced respect, begins to dismiss the idea of community and cooperation in favour of looking after oneself: *'a man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own'* (p. 168). Nevertheless, he brings the attention, unashamedly, back to himself and his beliefs, returning to his attack on crank talk from those writers promoting **socialism** and the idea of community. He continues to peddle his belief that suffering for his cause *'...I work)* and looking after yourself and your family and nobody else is the path to salvation. But he is a symbol of hatred for the audience, a stark contrast to his own beliefs in **socialism** the 'greater good'. Love thy neighbour is a religious ideal that Priestley intertwines with his ideology – neither of which has much to do with the **patriarch** of the household.

Priestley's purpose of Birling's rant is brought to an abrupt stop, and as if God, had enough of Birling's free reign, *the sharp ring of a front doorbell* (p. 168) calls and devastating silence.

AO1: Discussion Point 4

What effect does Mr Birling's bragging have on the audience? What effect does Gerald's reaction have on the audience?



Extended Essay Question 3

- Mr Birling spends most of the play trying to impress Gerald, and how successfully this is achieved. Use the evidence for the whole play.
- In the play, props, although deliberately few in number, play a greater role than is apparent to the audience. Discuss the accuracy of this statement.



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Act 1 Parts 4–7

The Inspector has landed

Act 1 Part 4: An Inspector does indeed call

Birling: ... I was an alderman for years – and Lord Mayor ten years ago – and

Summary

Birling's further attempts at evasiveness are brought to a crashing halt as the arrival of the family's front doorbell signals Priestley's first display of greed, indulgence and selfishness of the Birling family. Wrongly assuming that the late evening call of a police inspector is for a **warrant**, Inspector Goole proves the visit is for a much more serious matter, a girl's suicide. He quickly sets a **pugnacious, formal** tone in response to Mr Birling's attempts to **pontificate** over his 'community' achievements. A new direction, scorched by revelation, is set by the Inspector which none of the Birlings, or Gerald, are able to derail.

Watch
rule of
Priestley
through
demonstrations
such as

Analysis

The arrival of the Inspector brings a sense of **irony, paradox** and hierarchical role-reversal. Where Mr Birling had had near **carte blanche** with his captured cast and audience, the Inspector brings a sudden and sobering challenge to his **pomposity** and a realisation that he, and his family, may not be infallible. Mr Birling seems surprised at the arrival of a police inspector, but quickly dismisses it as a minor matter, 'probably, *'about a warrant'* (p. 169), involving his role as magistrate. Gerald playfully mocks his future father-in-law, given their previous conversation about the **knighthood** and having to deal with any trouble.

When the Inspector is brought to the dining room, Mr Birling immediately tries to impress the Inspector as to his membership of the **old boys' club**, by offering him an alcohol and professionally refuses. Here, the **tone** is set as the Inspector is on a formal visit. He again tries to regain control by explaining how important (Priestley using a **tricolon**) local community: **Alderman**, Lord Mayor and magistrate. However, the Inspector is investigating the recent suicide of a young lady. The pressure and the **irony** are devices.

Key Terms

- Bench:** a collective term for magistrates and lay persons who sit in groups of three and preside over a magistrates' court
- Warrant:** in certain situations, a magistrate can issue an arrest (or search) warrant, a document which allows a police officer to arrest a suspect if they have reasonable suspicion that an offence has been committed
- Pugnacious:** to be confrontational, usually in the form of a verbal or physical fight
- Formal:** something done which follows a strict code of conduct or etiquette
- Pontificate:** to preach or lecture in a pompous way
- Carte blanche:** having full authority or power without challenge
- Triplet:** a group of three, often called the **rule of three**, is a literary device which groups three items together for emphasis
- Old boys:** a colloquial term for a group of people, generally upper-class men, who share common interests or each other, to the detriment of others
- Alderman:** an appointed local official generally on a local council

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Act 1 Part 5: Birling, his ex-employee and business efficacy

Birling: *If we were all responsible for everything that happened to everybody we would be very awkward, wouldn't it?* (p. 172)

Summary

The Inspector's first line of enquiry forces Mr Birling to admit that he knew the dead young lady, Eva Smith, as one of his former employees, and that in sacking her from his employment he started a chain of events that, the Inspector believes, led to her suicide. As the truth becomes clear, Mr Birling goes on to try to intimidate the Inspector. But his contacts and background are of no concern to the Inspector. Gerald takes the back seat and Eric is **lampooned** for having a social conscience.

Lampoon: To make fun of or mock.
Disinfectant: A cleaning fluid that kills germs.
Socialist: A person who believes in social justice and equality.
Agitate: To stir up or excite.

Analysis

The Inspector reveals that earlier that evening, a young lady had been admitted to the factory and subsequently died (although, is it, in fact, one or two people who died?). Only Eric, ironically, shows any emotion, whereas Gerald says nothing and what any of this has to do with him. The Inspector quickly reveals that the young lady's name is familiar to Mr Birling but, ironically, and deliberately written by Priestley. Initially, Mr Birling denies knowing her, even when the Inspector informs him that she was sacked from his factory. However, when Mr Birling is shown a photograph of Eva Smith, Mr Birling is shocked and recounts his dealings with her. The Inspector deliberately prevents Eric and Gerald from seeing the photograph. The Inspector quickly realises that the other two men in the room are not as concerned as with Gerald's fiancé, Sheila.

Mr Birling reveals that Eva Smith was part of a workers' group, and, as he saw the group was leading a strike for higher wages. The strike was seen as a brief, and as a result, all of the workers, including Eva Smith, were sacked. Mr Birling is confused as to why the sacking nearly two years later led to her death. However, the Inspector reveals that he believes this was the start of a chain of events that led to her suicide. Mr Birling explains to the Inspector, Eric and Gerald in another bloated, self-serving justification for the sacking. But not before he manages to ridicule Eva's background as a poor, uneducated, and uneducated, at p.172), and, in a **misogynistic** way, complimenting her looks.

He is quite flabbergasted when the Inspector asks why he didn't meet her demands. He is confused and incensed that the Inspector is challenging his decisions, to which the Inspector responds with 'the duty to ask questions' (p. 173). Mr Birling can't argue with that. Gerald comes to support the decision to sack Eva. But Eric is not convinced, and having vocalised his disapproval, he tries to support the business by his father in a veiled attempt to reassert his dominance. Clearly now, Mr Birling's authority, Birling turns on the full offensive. He begins by asking for the Inspector's name. Unintimidated, and for sport, the Inspector tells him and even spells it out, 'G-O-L-DING'. In contempt and indifference to Mr Birling. Further attempts to intimidate the Inspector fail. In desperation, he says that he is a good friend of, and plays golf with, the Inspector. The Inspector says he doesn't play golf, to which Mr Birling retorts: 'I didn't say you did'. Eric tries to support, ironically, Eva, but his father gets irritated and comments on his soft 'public-school-and-Varsity' (p. 174) demonstrating, perhaps, his contempt for the privately educated children of the rich.

In the end of the scene Mr Birling does ask after Eva, but not out of sympathy for what happened to her, but certainly hoping to apportion, or pass on the blame.

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AO1: Discussion Point 5

The photograph is only shown, at first, to Mr Birling. How important is the photograph in maintaining suspense?

Act 1 Part 6: Sheila, the shop assistant and childish tantrums

Inspector: The girl's dead though (p. 176)

Sheila: What do you mean by saying that? You talk as if we were responsible (p. 176)

Summary

Sheila re-enters the dining room just as her father is finishing his admission that The Inspector seizes the opportunity of her arrival to move onto the next part of next job, that of a sales assistant at a local department store in Brumley. Having Eva, Sheila's delightful evening ends abruptly, and her misery begins.

Analysis

As Mr Birling makes his semi-nonchalant, veiled concerned enquiry about Eva, Sheila the men from retiring to the drawing room, but intercepts her father's question. The Inspector along, and out of the house, Mr Birling is stopped when the Inspector is there to speak to Mr Birling. This leaves the cast, but not the audience, bewildered he needs to interview next. The Inspector, following on from Mr Birling's enquiry, Eva managed to get a job in a local department store, Millwards. This sends Sheila explaining that she shops there, forgetting for a brief moment the tragic circumstances of the death and the Inspector's visit. The Inspector's suspicion, as yet something the audience doesn't know what about, is, therefore, confirmed. She explains to Gerald that she goes there and in more recent times, goes there for his 'benefit' (p. 177). The Inspector reveals that due to an outbreak of **influenza** (p. 177) the store took her on. However, her appointment was short, as they had to sack her following a complaint from a very good customer.

Influenza
discovered
respiratory
reference

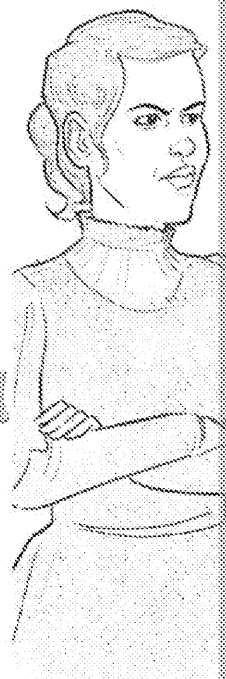
The identity of that very good customer is revealed to the audience, who are aware of dramatic irony closely, by the revelation of the photograph (or another photograph) of Sheila by the Inspector. The photograph causes great upset to Sheila who runs off, allowing Gerald a chance to admonish the Inspector for being 'heavy handed' (p. 178). The Inspector to

AO2: Active Learning Task 1

The sense of dramatic irony and foreboding is displayed in this part of Act One. Explain what this means in relation to Gerald's speech where he says: 'After all, y'know, we're respectable citizens and not criminals'.

AO1: Discussion Point 6

The photograph secondly shows to Sheila. How important is the photograph in displaying the truth and maintaining the truth?



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Act 1 Part 7: Sheila's confession, her 'pet lip' and Gerald's slip

Sheila: ...and if I could help her now, I would (p. 181)

Inspector: Yes, but you can't. It's too late. She's dead (p. 181)

Summary

Sheila confirms her involvement in Eva's sacking from Milwards and is genuinely remorseful. The level of the family's involvement thickens as the Inspector reveals Eva's pregnancy. This causes a traumatised change in both Gerald and Eric. Sheila's suspicions are cornered Gerald who simply cannot avoid admitting knowing Daisy Renton.

Analysis

Sheila returns, acknowledging the Inspector's piecing together of the puzzle, and admits her involvement in the chain of events. Unlike her father, Sheila remorsefully asks whether her actions made much of a difference to the death. The Inspector responds by confirming that they did, and that this had been Eva's last stable job. Sheila is obliged to **recount** the day in question. But, unlike her father, is genuinely devastated by her actions. She explains about being in a terrible temper, ironically perhaps, because Gerald had not been paying her enough attention. Sheila had argued against the advice of her mother and a senior sales assistant. However, when the dress, Eva had suited the dress and made Sheila very angry and jealous. Sheila had been laughing at Sheila) so she had complained to the management and said she would account elsewhere, unless Eva was sacked.

In despair, and in an attempt by Priestley to show remorse, notably that the young ways, Sheila pleads for forgiveness and says she'd wished she hadn't done it and The Inspector, sensing he must move on and not dwell on Sheila's misery, reveals that Smith changed her name to *Daisy Renton* (p. 181).

This fact deliberately used by Priestley, reveals two things to the audience. Firstly, to be a more exotic and jollier name than her birth name. Secondly, Gerald's different but noticeable ways at the revelation: Gerald managing only to keep his composure, by pouring himself a drink, but he is startled and says 'What?' (p. 181). But Sheila spots his slip, and all her previous suspicions are potentially answered. Not until the Inspector and Eric leave to find her father. Holding her temper, she asks Smith. In a caddish and convenient way, he says he didn't know Eva Smith, until how he knew Daisy Renton.

Gerald is unable to avoid the truth, but continues to play down his involvement saying it was all over six months ago and asks Sheila to keep quiet. In disgust, hysterical and in triumph, she informs him that the Inspector must know already. Just then, the Inspector returns to confront Gerald about his involvement and Act One ends on a **cliffhanger**...

Cliffhanger:
which ends in
wanting to know

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Extended Essay Question

- (a) Priestley demonstrates the contrast between the young and old change. Explain the playwright's deliberate contrast between Sheila's involvement in the suicide of Eva Smith.

- (b) Compare how remorse is portrayed differently between the young and old in *An Inspector Calls*.

- (c) Priestley demonstrates in his writing the contrast between the young attitude to responsibility. Explain the playwright's deliberate contrast between the father's realisation of their involvement in the suicide of Eva Smith.

Act 2 Parts 1–4

The young aristocrat is exposed

Act 2 Part 1: Gerald's paradox – hiding the truth to protect his fiancé

Inspector: And you think young women ought to be protected against unpleasant

Gerald: If possible – yes (p. 183)

Summary

Gerald is cornered by his fiancé and the Inspector. Sheila is determined to confess with Daisy. Gerald is determined that she doesn't. Sheila throws off her inhibitions and takes a genuine interest in the Inspector, his tactics and everyone's role in the tragedy.

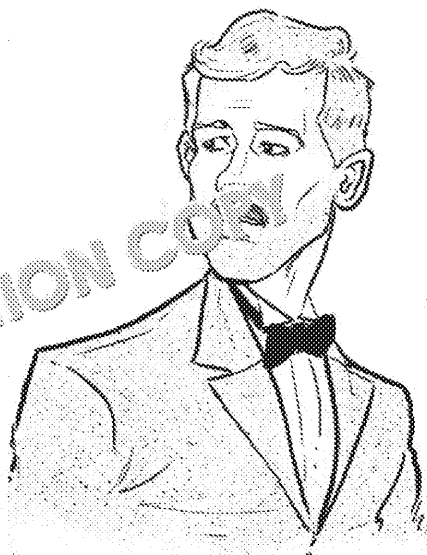
Analysis

Priestley begins Act Two, as Act One ended, with the Inspector asking: 'Well?' (p. 182). The break between acts has left the audience on a **cliffhanger**, with just enough time to allow the audience to contemplate over Gerald's involvement in the suicide. Nevertheless, keen to play down his involvement, Gerald asks for his fiancé to be excused while he is questioned by the Inspector, but Sheila doesn't agree, as Priestley elevates Sheila from giggly girl to defiant, demanding **iconoclast**.

AO1/2: Discussion Point 7

The revelation that Gerald knew Eva/Daisy brings a shock to Sheila's system. The reality Priestley brings Sheila out of immaturity and childish innocence into cold sobriety, maturing her. Why does he do this?

We are not sure if the Inspector noticed Gerald's slip at the end of Act One, but it is a determining factor in his decision to flush out the aristocrat's involvement. The trip, fall and capture method. Sheila's insistence on Gerald's admission, leads to Sheila believing her to be enjoying his turn under the Inspector's cosh. Sympathy for the Inspector demands that Sheila stays to hear the confession. He shows sympathy for her and believes must not blame herself entirely for the suicide, to which she takes a VEIL – 'Yes. That's true. You know. [she goes closer to him, wonderingly] I don't understand.' Birling enters.



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Act 2 Part 2: Take the mother-in-law for example, please someone to in-law, anywhere – Mrs Sybil Birling re-enters

Mrs Birling: You seem to have made a great impression on this child, Inspector

Inspector: We often do with the young ones. They're more impressionable. (p.

Summary

Mrs Birling arrives to sweep control of the proceedings, only to have her confidence upon by her daughter. Shock. Unconvinced by the matriarch's posturing, the Inspector mother about something she'll regret. This leads Mrs Birling to become suspicious and intimidate, like her husband, the Inspector. Mr Birling returns and Eric is exposed. Parents are forced to realise that the Birling's boy and girl have become man and

Analysis

Mrs Birling's brisk and self-confident entrance is used by Priestley as a marked contrast of the Act. However, this forebodes pride before a fall. Here, Priestley sets up yet. Despite her daughter's pleading for her mother to be careful with the Inspector – *something that you'll be sorry for afterwards*' (p. 185) Mrs Birling, untypically, ignores the immaturity of Sheila's suggestion – *You seem to have made a great impression on*. Again, like Gerald, Mrs Birling tries to dismiss Sheila by sending her to bed. But as a defiant example made by Priestley of Sheila's challenge to her parent's authority.

Like her husband, Mrs Birling demonstrates utter contempt for the working class *of that class –* (p. 186). Mrs Birling mocks her daughter's hysteria in trying to win what she says. Sheila knows that the Inspector must have something on her mother. Failing to see what Sheila means, she asks the Inspector if he knows. Seizing his chance, he brings everyone back into his line of enquiry, impatiently and firmly he responds in the *understand her. And she's right.*' (p. 186). Mrs Birling is insulted at the Inspector *is a trifle impertinent, Inspector*' (p. 186). This leads to the now familiar, and poignant name-dropping. Here, in her contempt for the Inspector, she boasts about her Mayor and Aldermanic status. Ironically, both Sheila and Gerald join forces to outmanoeuvre her tactics.

Attention is turned to the whereabouts of Mr Birling, and it is explained that he is in a *silly mood*' (p. 187) which is blamed on his unfamiliarity with alcohol by his mother, not the other characters, and certainly not the audience. It is here that Mrs Birling is drinking. She refers to him as *only a boy*' (p. 187), but the Inspector, Sheila and, *'...I have gathered that he does drink pretty hard'* (p. 187). Why he's heavily drinking is probably not on a clever audience and Sheila. Mr Birling returns to explain that his refusal is down to the Inspector wanting to speak to him. Birling is incensed at the moment.

AO1/2: Discussion Point 8

Why do Mr and Mrs Birling are keen to get their son and daughter off to bed in Act Two.



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Act 2 Part 3: The Fairy Prince's concubine, a trip to the seaside and a dishes the dirt

Sheila: I want to understand exactly what happens when a man says he's so busy he can't find time to come and see the girl he's supposed to be in love with. I would

Summary

Gerald is confronted by the Inspector over his involvement with Daisy Renton. Gerald emotional wobbles, how he met and set up the young lady in a flat as his mistress. The audience silently scoffs through and Sheila listens intently, while her mother

Analysis

The Inspector picks up the saga's momentum by reiterating Eva Smith's name. In another deliberate tension rise, Priestley has the Inspector, in lightning, *'when did you first get to know her?'* (p. 188) which brings an exclamation of surprise. Gerald again tries to dodge the questioning, but his fiancé tells him to give up and confess. Priestley provides no photograph to tempt Gerald's confession, but instead sits him at the end of the chain to suicide, all on the basis of a name.

AO1/2: Discussion Point 9

Why does the Inspector not need to produce a photograph to elicit Gerald's confession?

Prostitute
their bodies

In the longest recount of any character in the play, no doubt to the contempt of such people, Gerald explains that he met Daisy Renton at the Palace Bar (nightclub notorious pick-up place for **prostitutes**) in Brumley. And like his future father-in-law, he gives a physical description: she *'was pretty – with dark hair and big dark eyes'* (p. 189). In a distraught at the death, the aristocrat suddenly wobbles, revealing his pain before *'well, I've suddenly realised – taken it in properly – that she's dead –'* (p. 189).

Composing himself, and in an attempt to appear gallant, Gerald explains that this was while he was being accosted by a senior **Alderman**, and friend of the Birlings, who was trying to find out as to Daisy's exact reason for being there, indeed Gerald explains that Daisy had not perhaps betraying her naivety, or Gerald's. He took her for something to eat as she was alone. It was accidentally that first night, Gerald, however, met with her deliberately two nights later. Nowhere to stay he set her up in a chum's flat while he was away in Canada. From that time on, she was his mistress. The back and forth nature of *assistance-in-return-for-favours* is played out to show that while Gerald wants the family to see his chivalrous nature, it is actually a form of indulgence. Specifically, in paying her an allowance, she becomes little more than a

AO1: Top Tip

Do not underestimate Eva/Daisy's intelligence and motivation. Desperate times take on desperate action. Priestley deliberately shies away from revealing Daisy as a prostitute in order to prevent the audience losing sympathy for her.

AO1: Discussion Point 10

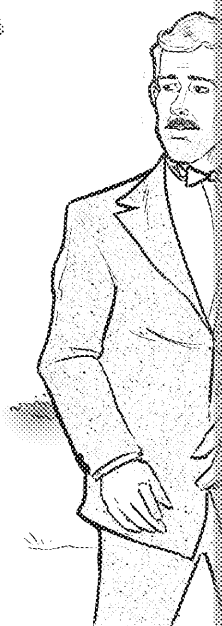
Is Gerald a gallant gentleman? An innocent, pretty young woman looking to fulfil his own

While Gerald unfolds Mr Birling tries to protect him – when the Inspector asks Gerald: *'Were you in love with her?'* (p. 191), Mr Birling protests, but is shouted down by the Inspector. It is only Mrs Birling who the Inspector allows to pass comment on how distasteful and degrading Gerald's actions were. This is a deliberate ploy by Priestley to provide a build up to the **juxtaposition** of her turn to *face the music* after Gerald.

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Gerald ends his tale, as others before and after do, by forcibly moving Daisy on in the property that he'd set Daisy up in, was about to return, and the fact Sheila was his nocturnal activities, he explains that he ended the relationship, gave Daisy more flat. After that, he explains that he knew no more of what happened to her. With embarrassment, the Inspector explains to Gerald that she left for the seaside 'just to



Extended Essay Question 5

Explore how Priestley portrays Gerald Croft as a paradox – is he the gentleman his peers see him as, or a devilish rogue taking advantage of Daisy Renton's misfortune?

(b) Explain how Priestley uses deception in his portrayal of Gerald in Act Two.

Act 2 Part 4: A deflated Gerald, the returned ring, a feline and some fresh air

Sheila: I think you better take this (p. 193)

Gerald: I see well, I'm expecting this (p. 193)

Summary

As Gerald's recount lies heavy in the air, Sheila returns the engagement ring to him. Sheila shows her solidarity for Gerald's actions and gives him a lifeline that the ring. Having realised what his rejection of Daisy had led to, and feeling his own rejection, permission from the Inspector, now in complete control, to leave for some fresh

Analysis

Gerald, demoralised by the realisation of what he had done, or relieved that he had to her suicide, leaves to go for a walk, promising to return shortly. This exit, as the tension of the plot as we find out later.

But, before he goes, Sheila returns the engagement ring and 'in a moment of extreme respect you more than I've ever done before' (p. 194). In saying that she believed 'out of pity' (p. 194) taking some of the blame for herself – that Eva/Daisy was in that her sacked. Then, in a moment of compassion, Sheila gives Gerald a lifeline: 'You can sit down to dinner here. Mr Birling wants to start all over again, getting to know each other'. In irony, Mr Birling tries to pick up the broken engagement, but again a sharp reminder to not interfere.

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Act 2 Parts 5–6

The old aristocrat is exposed

Act 2 Part 5: Sybil's conceit, her refusal to help the other 'Mrs Birling' (pp. 194–200)

Mrs Birling: Well, really, I don't know. I think what you're talking about come to an end of itself.

Inspector: I think you did something terribly wrong – and that you're going to regretting it. (p. 198)

Summary

The Inspector's attention switches to Mrs Birling, who squarely refuses to take a suicide. This is despite the fact, revealed by the Inspector, that she was the last one when Mrs Birling refused her charitable monies from her women's organisation.

Analysis

Not one to leave anyone *off the hook*, or be outdone by another upper-class target, the Inspector switches seamlessly to the cast's other **aristocrat**. He sets Mrs Birling up to appear as a wicked step-mother, the wicked witch – all in one shot.

The Inspector produces a photograph – is it the same one, or a different one? Mrs Birling pretends not to recognise the photograph of Eva/Daisy. This raises the tension: ponder if the Inspector is to be defeated on this point? Priestley clearly works the contempt for Mrs Birling from the audience. Challenged by the Inspector for not recognising the photograph, she blunders into a hopeless protest, posturing to gallantly defend her wife's good name to the Inspector. The Inspector remains firm and establishes that Mrs Birling is a woman being part of the Brumley Women's Charity Organisation. 'We've done a great deal for deserving cases' (p. 195) she boasts, but she leaves the house to the alarm of his part of distraction for Mrs Birling, but the Inspector is quickly back on track. Mrs Birling tells the cast and audience that she met Eva/Daisy 'only two weeks ago' (p. 196). Eva, as she was poor, destitute and homeless, but her financial aid was refused by Mrs Birling's direction.

The Inspector asked Mrs Birling why she was refused monies. Easy, Mrs Birling explained, she called herself *Mrs Birling*. The irony lost at the time, on the other characters, and the moment, except, again, Sheila. Alarm bells begin to ring in the audience and among the cast. Mrs Birling refuses to see what she has done wrong and instead says her advice to the child since it was his responsibility. For once, she is firmly alone in her opinion. The Inspector panics about the potential involvement of the press. Irony floods the stage, the cast, the theatre, but misses a belligerent Mrs Birling.

Again, in sole defence of her actions, Mrs Birling continues to feel justified: she explained to her a pack of lies about the father being a young silly who drank too much. The father who should take responsibility. As this is spoken, the irony reaches fever-pitch: the only person in the theatre who has not considered who the father of the child is Mrs Birling and the audience is deafening. Mrs Birling continues to ridicule Eva and she had refused money for the father as it had been stolen: 'As if a girl of that class' (p. 199).

AO1: Active Learning Task 2

Write a contemporary news article for a newspaper outlining Mrs Birling's involvement

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Extended Essay Question 6

Mrs Birling: *As if a girl of that sort would ever refuse money!* (p. 199)

Explore how Priestley's use of *contempt* in Mrs Birling's attitude towards her downfall in the hands of the Inspector. Refer to evidence from response.

Act 2 Part 6: The grandmother, the granddaughter and Sybil's

Sheila: *Now, Mother – don't –* (p. 201)

Mrs Birling: *It's a girl... I mean... it's ridiculous...* (p. 201)

Mrs Birling: *I don't believe it. I won't believe it.* (p. 201)

Summary

Slow on the uptake, Mrs Birling, pushed towards realisation by her daughter, comes to realise who the father is. She must be the last person in the theatre for whom the situation comes as an epiphany.

Analysis

The Inspector picks up on Eva/Daisy's honesty and integrity: deliberately crafted stolen money, even though it would have given Eva/Daisy the opportunity to buy her way out of the situation, she would rather the father was kept out of trouble.

When pushed by the Inspector as to whom Mrs Birling says 'to blame for the girl herself' then 'Secondly, I blame the young man who is the father of the child... he ought to be dealt with very severely –' (p. 201). This turns Sheila apoplectic: 'Mother, to no avail, as Mrs Birling continues to refuse the Inspector to chastise the father, it is his duty to exert a public rebuke – suggesting he should go about his duty and not take her private argument. Mrs Birling asks what it is he is doing. When the Inspector is waiting to carry out his duty, Mrs Birling senses, then realises the truth: that the Inspector is for none other than her son, Eric, the father. Eric enters looking *extremely pale* and marks the end of Act Two on another traumatic realisation. The **cliffhangers** keep the audience in suspense.



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Act 3 Parts 1–3

Eric is not as immature as his parents think

Act 3 Part 1: Eric returns, his first recount of Daisy Renton and the ladies have to leave the room

Eric: [Bitterly] You haven't made it any easier for me, have you, Mother? (p. 201)

Mrs Birling: But I didn't know it was so... I never dreamt. Besides, you're not...
– (p. 202)

Summary

Eric realises his involvement in Eva/Daisy's pregnancy and suicide have been discovered. While his mother stays in denial until Eric confesses, Sheila brings Eric up to speed, ignoring her parents' protests to stay silent. Eric displays his prowess in pouring alcoholic drinks, but little else, unless you include getting Eva/Daisy pregnant! He recounts his first meeting with Daisy. Mrs Birling, in distress is taken, at Mr Birling's insistence, to the (with-) **drawing room**. Eric continues his recount, and his drinking.

Draw a with in a to re

Analysis

Priestley continues his seamless start of each act as Act Three begins by picking up where Act Two ended. Eric, in **sombre** mood, and with childish admission begins by saying: 'You know don't you?' (p. 202). His mother is still, understandably, in shock. But Sheila... reads the proceedings by explaining to Eric that her mother blames 'the father' entirely for the suicide and that she is still in denial of her son's involvement. Sheila, again, brings a reality check on Eric's lifestyle, but feels justified by the evening's events and her mother's ignorance, deliberate or otherwise, of her son's nocturnal activities at the **Place Bar**.

AO1: Why do over her to contin

Sombre darkness

The Inspector's impatience at the interruptions leads to his reprimand of the Birling's. But not before overruling, with great politeness, Mr Birling's refusal yet another drink. Eric demonstrates his prowess, in which he [stage directions] *manner of handling the decanter and then the drink shows his familiarity with qu*. This does not go unnoticed by his mother and the others. Again, like Gerald, no. When prompted by the Inspector, Eric recounts his first meeting: that he'd been squiffy and insisted on taking *Daisy Renton* back and forcing his way into her lodgings, '– well, I was in that state when a chap easily turns nasty' and then explains in his **euphemistic** way, 'And that's where it happened...' (p. 203).

Euphemism substituted when refer

The admission is all too much for Mrs Birling, who in return for her husband's den... protesting to stay, takes her mother to the **drawing room**.

AO2: Active Learning Task 3

The literary device **euphemism** is used on more than one occasion in this part of the Act and explain any of the examples used by Priestley in this part of the play in relation to

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Act 3 Part 2: News of the pregnancy, the pay-off with stolen money and fury at his son

Inspector: So what did you propose to do? (p. 204)

Eric: Well, she hadn't a job – and didn't feel like trying again for one – and she was giving her enough money to keep her going – until she refused to take any more

Summary

With the ladies gone, Eric continues to drink and has sex with Daisy until she told him she thought she was confirmed, that she was pregnant. Eric confessed that he had taken from his father's work.



AO4 (Context): Did you know?

£50.00 in 1912 converts into nearly
£4,000.00 in 2018

AO1: Discussion Point 1

Why do you think Daisy didn't complain about Eric's actions in accommodation and forcing his night they met?

Analysis

Eric is allowed to continue and explains that he met Daisy quite by accident at a bar and again he went back to her lodgings. But, that this had been an altogether different situation as they had talked about themselves before having sex. Despite protests from his father, Eric is no longer a child: 'Well, I'm old enough to be married' (p. 204). Priestley uses this to show that Eric was aware of what profession Daisy was employed in, since he explains that Daisy, he said she wasn't one of '...these fat old tarts round the town – the ones I've got friends with –' (p. 204).

This fact, and the potential use of Mr Birling's friends of prostitutes, had already been mentioned. Two. Quick to silence Eric, Mr Birling interjects but the Inspector only wants the sordid hobnob. Eric says that Daisy suspected and then felt sure she was pregnant. Like his father, Eric thinks such business could be dealt with by a pay-off, Eric had given her £500. When asked by his father where he got the money from, Eric admits that he stole it, but while refusing to think that he stole it, his father disagrees.



AO1: Discussion Point 1

Despite a potential criminal confession by Eric in the taking of the money, the Inspector is not interested in the details.

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Act 3 Part 3: The ladies' return, Mr Birling panics, Eric blames his mother, Inspector's dramatic prophesy

Mr Birling: – why didn't you come to me when you found yourself in this mess?

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

Summary

As Eric is confessing the ladies return. Eric explains how he obtained the money and his father sets about ways to cover this up in front of the Inspector, who curiously watches his activity.

Analysis

The ladies return just as Eric is confessing to taking the money. In a fury, Mr Birling tells Eric that he has confessed to being *'...responsible for the girl's condition...'* (p. 205) and that he has taken the money without permission. Eric explains the scam in obtaining the money. Mr Birling, in front of a 'police officer', says: *'I've got to cover this up as soon as I can'* about Daisy's realisation that the money was stolen. Eric begins to explain...but is interrupted by the Inspector. Startled, Eric enquires how he knows. Sheila answers: 'Sheila

Eric is confused and shaken until the Inspector reveals that Daisy, having refused Mr Birling and pleaded her case before her Organisation, but was refused. The harsh reality sees him turn on his mother: *'Then – you killed her...and the child she'd have had granddaughter – you killed them both – damn you, damn you'* (p. 206). As the room falls back control. He takes his turn to distribute the blame, the young Birlings in shared guilt has a sudden moment of guilt and like his son sees money as being the solution: *'Look, Inspector – I'd give thousands – yes, thousands –'* (p. 207). This is dismissed as wholly inappropriate. Priestley could have left the scene there with all in a distraught way. However, as the Inspector is about to leave, he leaves with his apocalyptic summative speech about the importance of community and responsibility.

The speech reiterates the religious maxim *love thy neighbour*. The Inspector reminds them that *'Smith'* has gone, but there are millions of other Eva Smiths (and John Smith's) (p. 207). Each person's life or death, happiness or sadness is interdependent upon each other and we are *'responsible for each other'* (p. 207). This is all clearly set up by the Inspector's analysis of how the Birlings have behaved. He leaves the scene with his premonition (indirectly referring to the First World War, and in Priestley's anger in writing the play in 1944 during the Second World War) *'soon come when, if men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire'* (p. 207). Which they hadn't, clearly.

AO1: Active Learning Task 4

The impact on the characters by the exit of the Inspector is clearly made in the characters' own words. Write a 'witness statement' for each character's contribution to Eva/Daisy's fate. Include their factual involvement and their own opinion as to their blame.

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Act 3 Parts 4–6

It was all a hoax. But was it?

Act 3 Part 4: The immediate aftermath, blame is apportioned, while Sheila becomes suspicious

Mr Birling: *There's every excuse for what both you and I did – (p. 208)*

Sheila: *The point is, you don't seem to be sorry about anything. (p. 208)*

Summary

The devastating effect on Mr and Mrs Birling is in marked contrast with Eric's understanding and unhappiness with their parents' tactless attitude. Eric's speech about 'those cranks who spout community and responsibility, when the Inspector' (p. 209). Sheila becomes suspicious of the Inspector.

Analysis

Mr Birling wastes no time in blaming Eric for the whole sorry mess. Priestley portrays Mr Birling as feeling his **knighthood** slipping away, particularly if there is a public scandal. He is adamant that their involvement was correct. The juxtaposition between the generations is clear here. The young siblings are regretful as to their actions and resentful as to their parents' attitude. Eric indeed ridicules his father about his earlier speech, in the absence of the ladies, and to ignore the crank talk about community: '— and then one of those cranks who talks about community' (p. 209). Eric mocks.

This stirs something in Sheila, who begins to question, then doubt the authenticity of her suspicions. Sheila is unmoved and continues to take the blame for her actions and theirs. However, Mr Birling is more dubious, and keen to believe that the man who was no more than a: 'Socialist or some sort of crank' (p. 211) convincing himself of his own importance. He confesses, and at his wife's demand: 'What am I to do something and get to work' (p. 211) is on his mind. Just then the door opens again. It's good news, for once. P

Act 3 Part 5: Gerald returns with 'good news', Birling's call to the Chief Inspector

Eric: *And it doesn't alter the fact that we all helped to kill her (p. 215)*

Gerald: *But is it a fact? (p. 215)*

Summary

Gerald returns with 'good news'. While out walking, he was told by a police officer Goole on the Brumley force. This is confirmed by Mr Birling in a call to the Chief Inspector. Celebratory, Gerald is smug, but the young Birlings are still reeling from the event. It may not have been a suicide at all! Shock! This is confirmed in a call, by Gerald,

Analysis

Gerald returns, and Sheila is keen to inform him of the traumatic revelations (her and Mrs Birling's and Eric's involvement). But Gerald is less concerned about such matters and to reveal his remarkable discovery. Gerald reveals that the Inspector was confirming Mr Birling's belief in 'cranks'. Assuming nothing, and in a rare moment of honesty, the information confirmed in a phone call to the Chief Inspector, that there is no force called Goole.

This sets in motion its own chain of events. In the minds of Mr and Mrs Birling, a gloss over the events and indeed debunk the chain of events entirely. The young siblings, in particular Eric, until Gerald queries whether there was in fact a suicide or not. Gerald looks to the fact that the 'Inspector' only showed the photograph of the girl at the time — and, indeed, not to Gerald or Eric. Only the mention of Daisy Renton was from both the boys. To settle the matter, Gerald telephones the infirmary and is told in months!

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Act 3 Part 6: Mr and Mrs Birling celebrate, their children are disgusted the telephone rings...

Sheila: You're pretending everything's just as it was before. (p. 219)

Birling: That was the police. A girl has just died – on her way to the infirmary – disinfected. And a police inspector is on his way here – to ask some – questions.

Summary

Mr and Mrs Birling are in congratulatory mood at the revelations from the two phone calls. Gerald is clearly self-congratulatory, and in the spirit of arrogance asks Sheila to take back the ring and get back to 'normal'. Mrs Birling needs time to think. Then the phone rings and, by Jove, it's the Inspector!

Analysis

Despite the criticism, Priestley uses the contradiction of heavy drinking and all the Birling and Gerald wasting no time in celebrating and toasting their realisation of demonstrates how easy it is for them to go back to how it was, before the Inspector. They are not so convinced as their father treats the whole thing as a joke, something to scold her father and reminds him that he was remorseful earlier, but has gone back. Eric agrees with his sister. In a move calculated to bring the story and Gerald's story started, he produces the engagement ring and offers it back to Sheila. But still during the events, she asks for time to consider. Really? Just then, the phone rings.

So far acting as the bringer of good news, this time the phone rings in bad news. in panic-stricken fashion.

The call was from the police.

A girl has died in the infirmary.

A police inspector is on his way.

To ask questions.

The curtain falls with dramatic ironic effect.



Extended Essay Question 7

- The play is deliberately set in 1912 by J B Priestley in which he explores class lines. Explore how a divided society is demonstrated by the plot. Use textual examples to support your views.
- The play explores the themes of change and the lack of change. How does Sheila change through the play?

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Whole-Text Analysis

Characterisation

Key Term

Characterisation: the techniques used by a writer to develop the sense of a coherent, complex character. The writer uses description, action, speech and dialogue with which to convey

Eva Smith aka 'Daisy Renton', aka 'Mrs Birling'

– turned down too many times

One person or an amalgamation?

For Eva Smith, there are no stage directions, only **conjecture** and speculation, a portrait no one sees, only the Inspector's **sleight of hand**. But, are they all true or

Key Term

Protagonist: the leading, or one of the leading, characters in a play or novel. In *An Inspector Calls* there are, arguably, several.

AO1: Discussion Point 1

Did Eva Smith even exist? Were separate people used to trip up the play's **protagonists**? Or, was this demonstrating Priestley's 'controversial' treatment of the working

Working-class hero

Eva Smith is the **antithesis** of the comfortable upper name, Smith, at one time the most common surname in England, was deliberately chosen to be the opposite. Poor, eventually destitute, hungry, working as a prostitute and dead. Putting the pieces together, Eva is described by each member of the cast to form a sympathetic or pitiful picture in the audience's mind.

Mr Birling describes her as 'A lively good-looking girl – country bred, I fancy' (p. 17). He meant, remembered by Mr Birling only by her looks and his belief in her naivety.

Antithesis: the opposite. Sometimes used as a literary device to show

Eva/Daisy is the play's prophetic message

The Inspector, and, therefore, Priestley uses Eva as his message of an apocalyptic warning to the audience to change their attitudes towards community and each other.

Key quotations (from the cast)

- Two hours ago a young woman died in the infirmary. (p. 170)
- A lively good-looking girl – country bred, I fancy. (p. 171)
- I went down myself and told them to clean up. And this girl, Eva Smith, was the one.
- She looked young and fresh and strong and altogether out of place down there.
- I'm very sorry. But I don't think she had only herself to blame. (p.197)
- So she came to me for assistance because she didn't want to take the stolen money.
- Yes, I was in love with her or anything – but I liked her – she was pretty.
- One Eva Smith has gone – but there are millions and millions and millions of

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AO1/AO2: Active Learning Task 1

Explain how each of the following characteristics relate to Eva Smith.

| | | |
|---------------|----------|--|
| Defiant | Misfit | |
| Desperate | Agitator | |
| Consequential | Pretty | |



Extended Essay Question 1

Using the information from this section, and your own knowledge, answer the following questions.

- How does Priestley explore the characters' contempt for Eva Smith in *Inspector Calls*? Write about his portrayal and ideas about contempt. How does he use his writing to demonstrate this.
- Mrs Birling: *Please don't contradict me like that. And in any case, that we can understand why the girl committed suicide. Girls of that class...* Explore how Priestley demonstrates middle and upper-class contempt for Eva Smith in *Inspector Calls*. Refer to the whole play, where relevant.

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Mr Arthur Birling

For he's a jolly good fellow, for he's a jolly good fellow, etc. (in his own mind)

Priestley uses Mr Birling as his main protagonist in his personal demonstration of capitalism and the class system. Mr Birling is used as a demonstration of excess, and the play establishes Mr Birling as the **antithesis** of the Inspector, and, therefore, the



(Context): Did you Know?

Log Cabin is a game played by lumberjacks – the idea is to stay afloat while balancing on a rotating log in water. Like running a business, perhaps, or a family or avoiding trouble?

AO4 (Context): Did you Know?

Priestley was a lifelong socialist, and, as such, blamed the ruling classes (essentially the bourgeoisie) for the two world wars in 1914 and 1939.

Stage directions: *It's all in the audiences' mind*

Priestley immediately establishes to directors and readers of the play, that Mr Birling is not to be liked by the audience. He is described as 'heavy-looking' (overweight, thickset), 'rather portentous' (full of his own self-importance), 'in his middle fifties' (of an age where opinions are harder to change), 'with fairly easy manners' (polite, but a little too familiar) 'but rather provincial in his speech' (revealing his background as likely to be working class or upper-working class, from the **North Midlands**, without a public school education, but, in his own mind, he speaks).

Not
only
the
way
he
speaks

Self-made businessman

It's a 'Birling' name, and as he is a self-made man, Mr Birling doesn't suffer any fools. He expects his workers to share his vision of a country being built on hard work, sweat and tears!

Self-styled leader of people / self-serving interests

In his speeches in Act One, Priestley curses Mr Birling with **dramatic irony**. In a pompousness, Mr Birling catastrophically predicts the future, wrongly. His complete lack of foresight of a world war is blended with his casual racism of the **Balkans** and of Russia. Unbeknownst to him, in the events he calls the Titanic 'unsinkable' and criticises some of Priestley's heroes, like **Shaw**, both **socialist** intellectuals, condemning them as mere 'cranks'.

Key Text

Balkans: a geographical area in south east Europe, which includes Sarajevo in Bosnia, Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in 1914 and began a chain of events which led to the outbreak of the Great War.



AO1: Discussion Point 3

When confronted, Mr Birling refuses to accept responsibility for Eva's death. Explain why you think he does this.

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Social climber

The play opens with Mr Birling hosting a triumphant celebratory dinner for his daughter, Gerald Croft, son of his close business rival and member of the local **aristocracy**, Sir George Croft. Pleased for his daughter, it is transparent that he is more ecstatic with this merger and the gain it brings. However, both Gerald's father and his mother, Lady Croft, are missing from the party, overseas at the time.

In and out of control

The play begins with Mr Birling being very much in control of his life and, seemingly, of the world. The arrival of the Inspector challenges him. Birling is consistently challenged. Trying to outwit the Inspector with his rhetoric, as a mayor, magistrate and good golfing buddy of the Chief Constable, he bows to the Inspector's superior knowledge and accusatory powers as a police officer. As an observer, his life falls apart around him. Mr Birling and his Edwardian optimism are revealed as a hoax by Gerald, and confirmed in a phone call to the Inspector. He is quick to revert to type. However, his smugness and joy are short-lived as he anticipates the impending visit of a police inspector concerning the death of a young girl at the mill.

AO1: Active Learning Task 2

At points Mr Birling predicts the future, but gets this horribly wrong. List and explain five speeches in Act One.

Key quotations

- *I'm going to tell you frankly, without any pretences, that your engagement to her is a disaster to me* (p. 163)
- *I'm talking as a hard-headed, practical man of business* (p. 166)
- *A man has to mind his own business and look after himself* (p. 168)
- *I can't accept any responsibility. If we were all responsible for everything that happened in the world, it would be very awkward.* (p. 172)
- *If you don't come down hard on these people they'd soon be asking the earth for its money* (p. 180)
- *I must say, Sybil, that when this comes out at the inquest, it isn't going to do us much good to easily take it up.* (p. 198)
- *Look, Inspector – I'd give thousands – yes, thousands* (p. 207)
- *–we've been had, that's all* (p. 213)
- *That was the police. A girl has just died – on her way to the infirmary.* (p. 214)

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AO1/AO2: Active Learning Task 3

Explain how each of the following characteristics relate to Mr Birling:

| | |
|----------------|-------------|
| Congratulatory | Sycophantic |
| Dismissive | Tough |
| Unemorseful | Gullible |



Extended Essay Question 2

Using the information from this section, and your own knowledge, answer the following questions.

- (a) How and why is Mr Birling's position as the head of the household, continued by the Inspector, but also by his own wife and children? Write about how Mr Birling's authority is challenged by the Inspector and his family, and how this is presented by Priestley.
- (b) **Mr Birling:** *They wanted the rates raised so that they could average about twenty per cent a year.*

Inspector: *Why?*

Mr Birling (surprised). *What! Did you say that?*

Inspector: *Yes. Why did you say that?*

Mr Birling. *Well, yes, but I don't see that it's any concern of yours how I choose to run my business.*

Inspector: *It might be you know. (p. 172)*

Write an essay about the character of Mr Birling and the way his authority is challenged. You should use this extract and the whole play.

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Mrs Sybil Birling

Don't change at Remorseville please, continue to Conceitville

Right from the outset of the play we understand Priestley's desire to create a 'rather cold woman and her husband's social superior'. Wife, of Mr Birling, mother to Sheila and Eric and 'prominent member' and occasional Chair, of the 'Brumley Women's Charity'.

AO4 (C)
In Edwardian
marry 'new'
lifestyles m

Social standing – the first 'fa' – Mr Birling

Mrs Birling, like Gerald, comes from an **aristocratic** background. However, for so married below her social class system and this seems prominent in her unhappy family's downfall. This could be a reason for marrying Arthur Birling, a self-made man, gentry or an **aristocratic** position. Even though her daughter is marrying Gerald, doing so. This could be, perhaps, Mrs Birling is embarrassed about her middle-class or the fact the Crofts, Gerald's parents, have seen fit to be abroad, rather than at home. Perhaps Mrs Birling knows Lady Croft and would rather she didn't come down from a 'large suburban house' – Oh, the embarrassment!

Misplaced poise – pride comes before a fall (from the grace of God)

Her aristocratic upbringing ensures that her confidence and opinion can only go unchallenged and that, as such, she is **unimpeachable**. Her husband and children follow Mrs Birling's instructions and, in the beginning, any contradictions would be intolerable. However, as the play progresses her authority is constantly challenged, initially by the Inspector, much to her **consternation** (and her husband's pathetic attempt at preventing this) and by a steady build up by her children, culminating in the final act's explosion by Eric.

Malevolent and cynical

Mrs Birling is a prominent member of the Brumley Women's Charity, an irony not already detected by Sybil as it is revealed that while Eva Smith had asked for money, Birling had refused any support, in effect damning Eva to suicide.

Intolerant and unforgiving attitude

Even when Mrs Birling discovers that she was the last person to see Eva from the actions had been the final straw in Eva deciding to commit suicide, she remains a responsibility for Eva's actions. Her contempt and disgust at Eva calling herself an insult. Even when Eva apologises for using the name, Mrs Birling is unforgiving. She blames the father, the identity of who remains another un-concerning matter to herself, and her son (and grandchild). The truth would lead to scandal, the Achilles' heel moment at least, she is distraught.

Defiant and triumphant

Her distressed state is short lived. When Sheila begins to get suspicious about the Inspector, it is confirmed by Gerald, her defiance suddenly returns [**triumphantly**] and she reproaches her husband for folding so quickly. She is then taken in by the fake inspector. Quickly forgotten, she returns to pre-Inspector state, that is, until the telephone rings at the end of the

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Key quotations

- When you're married you'll realise that men with important work to do some of their time and energy on their business. (p. 163)
- I'm Mrs Birling, y'know. My husband has just explained why you're here, and anything you want to know, I don't think we can help you very much. (p. 163)
- You know of course that my husband was Lord Mayor only two years ago and he's got a lot of influence. (p. 163)
- Yes, we've done a great deal of useful work in helping deserving cases. (p. 163)
- As if a girl of that sort would ever refuse money! (p. 199)
- I don't believe it. I won't believe it. (p. 201)
- Didn't I tell you? I said I couldn't imagine a real police inspector talking like that. (p. 201)



AO1/AO2: Active Learning Task 4

Explain how each of the following characteristics relate to Mrs Birling:

| | | |
|-------------|------------|--|
| Domineering | Defiant | |
| Conceited | Unchanged | |
| Cold | Triumphant | |



Essay Question 3

Use the information from this section, and your own knowledge, and

- (a) Read the following extract

Mrs Birling: if you think you can bring any pressure to bear upon me, Inspector, other three, I did nothing I'm ashamed of or that won't bear investigation. The girl asked to look carefully into the claims made upon us. I wasn't satisfied with the girl's good case – and so I used my influence to have it refused. And in spite of what's happened I consider I did my duty. So, if I prefer not to discuss it any further, you have no power over me.

Inspector: Yes, I have.

Mrs Birling: No, you haven't. Simply because I've done nothing wrong – and you know it.

Inspector: (very deliberately) I think you did something terribly wrong – and that you're regretting it. I wish you'd been with me tonight in the infirmary. You'd have seen the girl.

Explore how Priestley portrays Mrs Birling as cold and unmoved by the tragedy of the whole play, where relevant, in your answer.

- (b) Explore how Mrs Birling responds to the pressure from her family and the Inspector in his writing.



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Sheila Birling – The iconoclast

Stuff your ribbons and your pearls – I'm not just a pretty girl

Daughter to Mr and Mrs Birling, sister to Eric and Gerald's fiancé, Sheila is always someone to someone else, not somebody in her own right. As an Edwardian middle-class daughter, she is the Birling's property, or **chattel**, until she becomes the property of a husband. Overlooked as a character in preference to her parents, Sheila's lynch-pin performance, often underplayed by candidates (and played down in classes), Sheil is the family, the principal character of the play. Ironically, her place in society in 1912, but cleverly done, is the light, foreboding women's roles, emancipating suffrage. Priestley portrays the Birling's daughter as a symbol of hope – his genuine belief in the young generation; those having the ability to change their attitudes from immature selfishness to mature consideration of society.

While appearing as a **subservient**, girly **empty vessel** early in Act One, Sheila soon begins to show her wisdom, is articulate in her thoughts and feelings and, most importantly, her shrewdness in forming a suspicion over the legitimacy of the Inspector is demonstrated not once, but crucially twice.

Stage directions

A pretty girl, in her early twenties, very pleased with life and rather excited. Don't miss this description. This is a deliberate attempt by Priestley to play down her importance coming of age right in front of their eyes.

Childish and giggly, but not for long

Despite what the stage directions suggest, Priestley sets the audience up to expect either sadness or slight contempt for Sheila, the young middle-class daughter waiting to marry a rich **suitor**. For the young generation lamented by her father, she is excited about getting engaged.

Foul temper

Bubbling under the surface, when she doesn't get her own way, Sheila's temper is used for selfish purposes: most importantly in getting Eva Smith the sack from Millwards and she hears the horror of the suicide, her attitude, and temper changes to **consternation** at her parents' stupidity and their failure to realise they've been deceived. This boils over into anger and defiance of her parents, her fiancé and her brother.

Takes responsibility and matures

Sheila begins as part of the problem but ends as being part of the solution – a sympathetic figure. Upon her own realisation at her and her family's appalling treatment of her ways and is distressed by her actions in getting Eva sacked from Millwards. She realises that she used her 'power' to punish Eva to which she is appalled and w

AO1: Description

Sheila is the character

AO4: Context

It was not until 1930 were the Election. many people contributed to the Great V

AO4: Context

Like many upper-class people, Croft', or crossed h

Key Terms

Chattel: a personal possession

Subservient: to obey without question

Empty vessel: a colloquial term describing someone of low, or no, intelligence

Suitor: a man who pursues a specific woman with a view to marrying

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Sheila was suspicious of Gerald and, despite Gerald using Daisy as a **concubine**, his honesty, and perhaps misguided **chivalry** in admitting his relationship with Daisy was just a 'fling' something to get out of his system before marriage? Nevertheless, she ends the engagement, but, surprisingly, leaves it open for a potential second engagement.

She also is the prime challenge to her parents' authority in the household, in particular her contrariness towards the Inspector.

Suspicion – a woman's intuition

There are two crucial examples of Sheila's suspicious nature. Through her suspicion, she wonders exactly what happened during 'last summer' when he was 'busy at the work' preoccupied with his plant business, but Sheila is not convinced. However, she ignores her suspicions when Gerald produces her engagement ring. Girls eh? The crucial suspicion is when Eric mentions that when the Inspector arrived his father told him to 'face the facts'. This proves the **tipping point** in exposing the Inspector as a hoax, with ironically

Key quotations

- You're squiffy (p. 163).
- Look – Mummy – isn't it a beauty? (p. 164)
- Oh – how horrible! Was it an accident? (p. 174)
- Yes, but it didn't seem to be anything very terrible at the time. Don't you understand her now, I would – (p. 181)
- I wouldn't miss it for worlds (p. 189)
- [staring at him]: Yes. That's true. You know. [she goes close to him, whispering] about you. (p. 184)
- No, he's giving us the rope – so that we'll hang ourselves. (p. 188)
- It's you two who are being childish – 'face the facts' (p. 209)

Key Terms

Concubine: a woman who lives with, or is housed by, a man and has a lower status than his wife.

Chivalry: courteous behaviour especially by men towards women

Tipping point: the point where small and insignificant events become too significant and

AO1/AO2: Active Learning Task 5

Explain how each of the following characteristics relate to Sheila:

| | | |
|----------|------------|--|
| Childish | Mature | |
| Naïve | Shrewd | |
| Selfish | Suspicious | |

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Extended Essay Question 4

Explore a moment in *An Inspector Calls* which demonstrates Sheila's honesty when she told the truth.

Eric Birling

Rebel with a cause? You're driving me insane!

The eldest child of Mr and Mrs Birling, brother to Sheila and heir apparent to his Birling is ignored and dismissed as being a child by a cold mother and unforgiving young man, but there's something we don't know, right up until the end. The story is set in the *early twenties, not quite at ease, half-shy, half-assertive*. What's Eric's problem? a wrong-un, or just another misunderstood kid by his parents?

A distressed, secretive and worried young man

Eric has something on his mind. He's not *at ease* in the stage directions, and he's whatever Eric is. Yet his parents are oblivious. There are clues as his secret. He [suddenly] [was] at the dinner table for no reason, and says, 'Yes, I remember talking about women and clothes as being a token of their self-respect. What

Contempt for working-class women

His secret, to be revealed by the Inspector in Act Three, is the biggest of the lot. For hiding behind the drinking is his knowledge that he has got a prostitute pregnant. I mean, where do you start to explain to your parents how that has happened?

AO1: Disc

Theft requires
Was Eric dish
to give to Do

Thief? Rapist?

Having kept the audience and his parents in the dark about Eric's nocturnal activities, he does not hold back when the direct talking Inspector decides it's Eric's turn to come to death. For this, the most contempt goes to Eric as he is exposed as a potential criminal.

Not only does Eric force himself upon Daisy, whether he actually raped Daisy is a matter of **conjecture** to the audience. He agrees to taking money from his father's works to pay her off. Was it for an illegal abortion, to pay for the birth or just an attempt to silence Daisy? The jury is still out. What's worse for Eric is that he won't even remember having sex with Daisy. Poor Eric.

A violent temper

As no one understands, or seems to care about Eric, he seems isolated from the world. His secretive nature is kept alive as he feels that he cannot speak to anyone, especially his mother. When events unfold, and he is brought to task by the Inspector, he is forthcoming. He is a character that did not hear his mother's confession. This is quite deliberate by P. and to avoid any confrontation with his parents until he is under scrutiny. Hearing Eva charity, it seems Eric goes to strike his mother, only to be stopped by his father.

Responsible in the end

Despite being portrayed as spoilt, and ignored by his parents, Eric seems to take responsibility. Does he? Is he as sharp and repentant as his sister, Sheila, or is it simply an opportunity to

Key quotations

- *I don't know – really. Suddenly I feel I have to laugh.* (p. 163)
- *I didn't even remember – that's the terrible thing.* (p. 203)
- *Because you're responsible, of father a chap could go to when he's in trouble*
- [nearly] [reaching point] *Then – you killed her. She came to you to protect – yes, a girl – and she killed her – and the child she'd have had too – my child – you killed them both – damn you, damn you-* (p. 206)
- *You don't understand anything. You never did.* (p. 206)
- [sulkily] *Well, I didn't notice you standing up to him.* (p. 211)
- [shouting] *And I say the girl's dead and we all helped to kill her – and that's*

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AO1/AO2: Active Learning Task 6

Explain how each of the following characteristics relate to Eric:

| | | |
|-----------|----------|--|
| Criminal | Troubled | |
| Fiery | Spoilt | |
| Secretive | Victim | |



Extended Essay Question 5

Using the information from this section, and your own knowledge, answer the question below:

Inspector: You went with her to her lodgings that night?

Eric: Yes, I insisted – it seems. I'm not very clear about it, but afterwards she told me that – well, I was in that state when a chap easily turns nasty – and I threatened her.

Inspector: So she let you in?

Eric: Yes. And that's when it happened. And I didn't remember – that's the thing – how stupid it all is! (p. 203)

- (i) How does Priestley portray you or Eric in this extract, and elsewhere in the play? How does he make you or Eric seem to be a troubled or troublesome young man?

Either,

- (ii) Priestley set the play in 1912. How is Eric's language and his behaviour in this extract different from the way in which it is set?

Or,

- (iii) Show how Priestley allows the character of Eric Birling to mature through the play.

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Mr Gerald Croft

A cad and a bounder? He doesn't see any ring on his finger, yet?

Upper-class man-about-town, Gerald is the son of Sir George and Lady Croft. His major rival to Mr Birling's company. Gerald is briefly engaged to Sheila Birling until having an 'affair' the previous summer when he had told her he was at work. *an attractive chap about thirty, rather too manly to be a dandy but very much the about town.* The directions portray Gerald as the *typical aristocratic* eligible bachelor, his father's business which probably runs its own bank.

A conduit for Mr Birling's expansionist policy

Unable to part with the love of his country, Mr Birling predicts happy prosperous prospect of *the world* marrying his daughter. The son of his main rival, marrying into Limited to work with Birling's company and not, as it does presently, run against prosperity.

Stiff upper lip and all that

As an *aristocrat*, Gerald is brought up to show no emotion, even in the face of adversity. *As a man of his class* would bring any other class to breaking point or breaking down, Gerald must keep his composure and mustn't shed a tear. Drink anyone?

An absolute cad and a bounder

Promising to spend more time with his future wife, buying her an expensive engagement ring as the princess she (doesn't) deserves, Gerald in the early stages of the play is portrayed as a *cad*. He is clearly polite to his future father-in-law, while seeming quite unconcerned about the *possibility* attempts at sycophantism with him. However, with the *sudden* revelation of a young woman's death, his entire world comes crashing around him. Well, it's a while until he gets it.

Key quotations


- *And I've told you I'm just as busy at the works all that time* (p. 163)
- *I know I'm not a bounder* (p. 164)
- [startled] *What?* (p. 181)
- [distressed] *sorry – I – well, I've suddenly realised – taken it in properly – I'm a bounder* (p. 181)
- *After all you know we're respectable citizens, not criminals.* (p. 179)
- [slowly] *That man wasn't a police officer.* (p. 212)
- *Everything's all right now, Sheila.* [Holds up the ring.] *What about this ring?* (p. 212)

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AO1/AO2: Active Learning Task 7

Explain how each of the following characteristics relate to Gerald:

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Eligible | Helpful |
| Remorseful | Liar |
|  Suspicious | Confident |



Extended Essay Question 6

Using the information from this section, and your own knowledge, answer the following questions:

- How and why does Priestley demonstrate manipulation of the lower classes Croft throughout the play?
- Explore how Priestley allows Gerald Croft to break with tradition and seem involvement in Eva Smith / Daisy Renton's suicide.

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The Inspector / Inspector Goole

Inspector Goole (or is it Ghoul? A **homophone** used by Priestley which has more impact vocally in a theatre than as the written word) is the man of mystery. He appears out of the night just as Mr Birling is discussing cranks and turns the lives of the characters in the play upside down and inside out. He claims he's a policeman transferred, but this proves to be false. So, who is he? We never find out!

Homophone: two words that sound the same but are different

Stage directions

- *Need not be a big man. He creates at once an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness.* – in Priestley's view.
- *He is about 50, in his fifties, dressed in a plain darkish suit of the period – the suit is plain, dark and inexpensive.*
- *He speaks carefully, weightily and has a disconcerting habit of looking hard at you when he actually speaking* – he is not intimidated and uses an old police technique of looking at the questions he's about to ask, he's just looking for a confession. So, don't

He dominates the characters and the play

The Inspector's job is a very clever move by Priestley. Setting his position as a policeman, someone who cannot be ignored. If the characters refuse to answer his questions, he can arrest them. Not even upper-class Gerald or Mrs Birling are able to challenge his legal authority or his questions of them.

He has an order to things

His plan of action is to question each of the characters – a stroke of luck that they are all related, and in the same place at the same time. Partly to help the plot and partly to show the Inspector is, he approaches each of the characters in a near chronological manner. It is deliberate by Priestley to draw in the characters of the young man against his mother.

Godlike moment

Upon his arrival, the lighting becomes brighter so all can see the Inspector and this represents justice or the seeker of justice, the irony may be lost on some that Mr Birling is the Angel Gabriel?

He carries a message to the characters and audience

Priestley no doubt based the Inspector's characteristics and opinions upon his own views, but this is difficult to qualify with evidence. His message is clear – the characters caused Eva/Daisy's death. He doesn't hide his utter contempt for them. However, in that if they change their attitudes, and work collectively, then the world can change. If they don't change then it will end in horror and bloodshed. Like war or something.

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Key quotations

- Two hours ago a young woman died in the Infirmary. She'd been taken there, swallowed a lot of strong disinfectant. Burnt her inside out, of course (p. 170)
- A chain of events (p. 172)
- it's better to ask for the Earth than to take it (p. 173)
- Goole. G. double O-L-E (p. 173)
- And you think young women ought to let their reason go against unpleasant and
- A girl died tonight. A pretty girl. A girl, who never did anybody any harm, but she was in agony- hating life (p. 183)
- If there's anything else we have to share our guilt (p. 184)
- Public houses, Mr Birling, have responsibilities as well as privileges (p. 195)
- But each of you helped to kill her. Remember that. Never forget it. (p. 206)
- One Eva Smith has gone – but there are millions and millions and millions of still left with us...And I tell you that the time will soon come when, if men won't learn that lesson, they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish. Good night.' (p. 207)

AO1/AO2: Active Learning Task 8

Explain how each of the following characteristics relate to the Inspector:

| | | |
|------------|------------|--|
| Mysterious | Determined | |
| Direct | Moralistic | |
| Biblical | Forgiving | |



Extended Essay Question 7

Using the information from this section, and your own knowledge, answer the following questions:

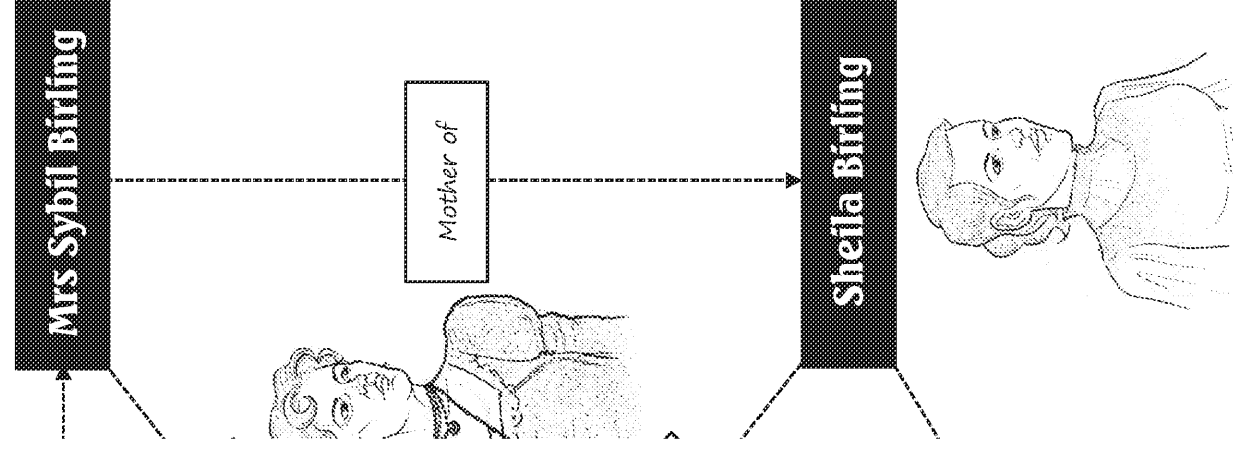
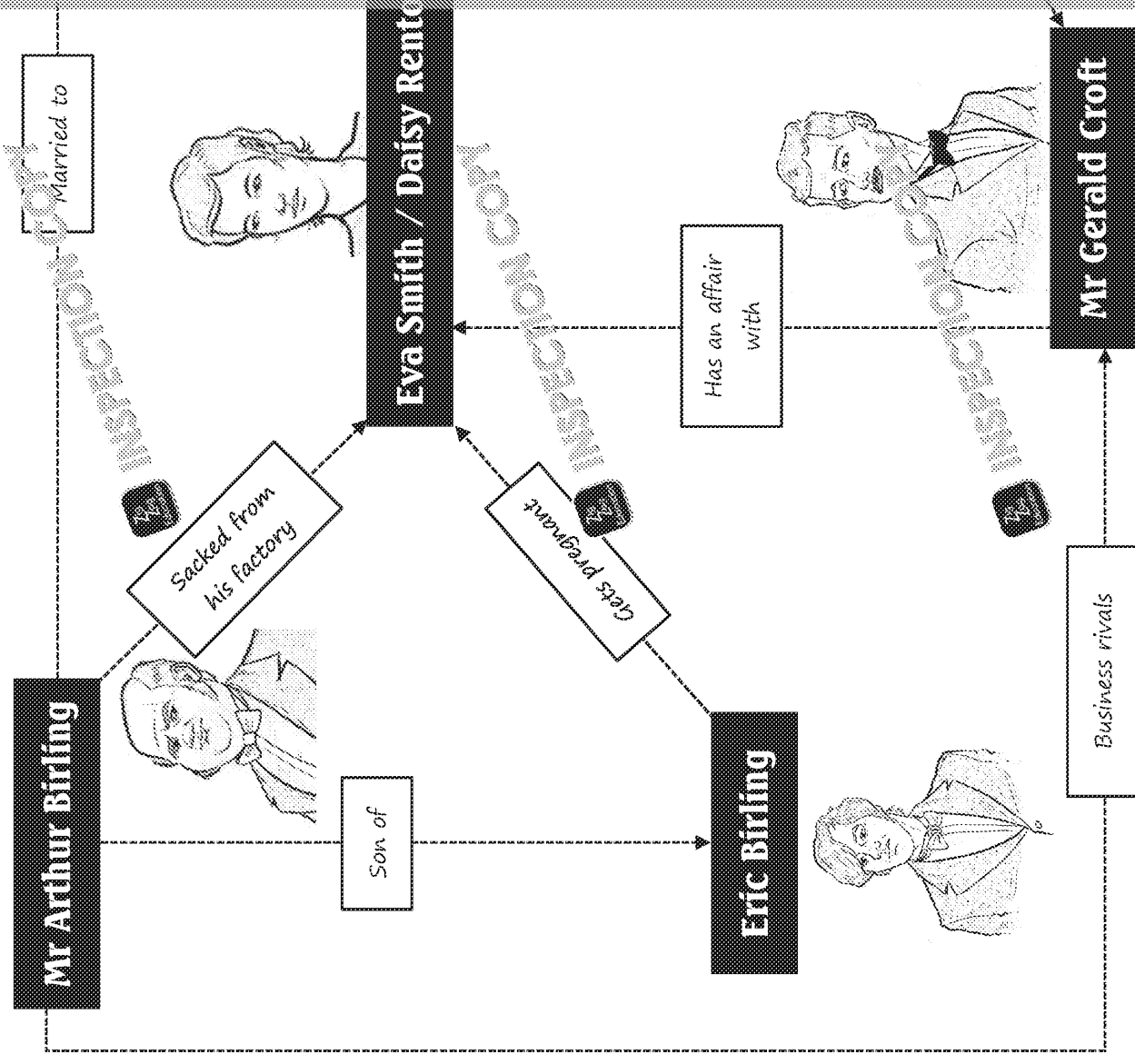
- How and why does Inspector Goole bring about change in *An Inspector Calls* attitude towards the young Birling's, their parents and to Gerald Croft.
- How does Priestley explore the need for social change in *An Inspector Calls* change in the play and in the way J B Priestley develops this requirement throughout the play?

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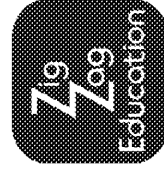
Relationships

Mind Map



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Relationships Analysis

Mr Arthur Birling and Inspector Goole

When Edna, the parlourmaid, announces that there is a police inspector at the front door, Mr Birling is dismissive, he predicts the visit as probably being a minor matter, a warrant or something similar. However, the audience are clearly aware that this is not the case. When Inspector Goole enters the scene, the 'pink and intimate' (p. 161) lighting changes to a 'brighter and harder' (p. 161) light. This clearly unsettles Mr Birling, who goes first on the defensive by offering the Inspector a drink which is then dismissed, is replaced by a more direct and intimidatory attack: he's a former Lord Mayor, plays golf with the Inspector's boss and is a local magistrate, in case you didn't know.

AO4

There would be different possible interpretations of Mr Birling's reaction.

Belligerent: to
Marginalised:

Likewise, Mr Birling is not intimidated by the Inspector, certainly to begin with. Of Eva Smith, his immediate reaction is dismissive to the Inspector. He employs (p. 170) and while she looks familiar he doesn't remember her. However, quickly forces him to concede that he knows Eva and had had her sacked. Remaining calm and sacking, quickly and as surely as his family are rounded upon by the Inspector he and authority. **Marginalised** by his treatment of Eva, ridiculed by his daughter he remains largely simply a shouter of vague insults and threats towards the Inspector. None of which hit or stick in with any effect. It is only when the Inspector leaves, that Birling begins to steady himself, but to his children and the audience the scorn of the Inspector remains. One is irreversible: portrayed by the Inspector, and remaining as a buffoon.

AO1: Discuss

How does Priestley portray Inspector Goole?

Sheila, Gerald and Inspector Goole

Upon her return to the dining room, Sheila is instantly drawn to the attraction of the Inspector. Like some supernatural being, the Inspector is a symbol of wonder, intrigue and **iconoclastic** torment to Sheila. On hearing of the suicide and of the sacking from the works, Sheila reprimands her father and shows a solidarity with the Inspector over the use of 'cheap labour' (p. 177) workers. While obedient towards her parents, she takes the Inspector's lead in pushing away her father's attempts to silence her.

AO1: Discuss

How are the different reactions of Sheila and Gerald to the Inspector's involvement in Eva Smith's death?

When the Inspector challenges Sheila over the sacking of Eva from Millwards, Sheila but quickly returns to face her accuser and to explain what had happened. Unlike responsibility and is duly recognised by the Inspector for having done so. She blames while the Inspector doesn't abandon her blame, he does explain that she was not leading to suicide.

Given the Inspector's mention of the name 'Eric Sykes' (p. 181) Sheila is quick to identify this person. And, at the insistence of the Inspector, despite Gerald's protests, Sheila and involvement. Through this and her mother's interrogation, Sheila becomes a bringing each of the characters in line as the Inspector seeks the truth of their involvement.

When the Inspector leaves, he leaves Sheila to argue her parents' involvement in up his challenge to their lack of care even when Gerald returns with news of a hoax. First suspected the Inspector was not who he said he was. When the hoax is revealed, he is unconcerned that he wasn't a real police inspector, and along with Eric, continues to

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Mrs Sybil Birling and Inspector Goole

Having heard that a police inspector has arrived and has rounded on her husband and her daughter, she arrives in the dining room '*briskly and confidently*' (p. 185) so that she can take control and relieve the house of such intrusion. She's wrong, of course, as her daughter tries to inform her, as the Inspector brushes aside any such hopes. Mrs Birling's confidence is quickly removed by her husband's heavy drinking and Gerald's involvement in the suicide. Shocked at the Inspector's revelations, she remains on the fringe of the action, contributing, like her husband, to the ultimately derogatory condemnation of the whole sordid affair between Gerald and Eva.

However, her indignation is rounded upon by the Inspector who brings her in for a grilling. Defiant and angry, Mrs Birling explains her meeting with '*Mrs Birling*' (p. 197) and even her husband's lament, that she did anything wrong in refusing to help. Birling calls for swift and strong justice to be brought to the father of '*Mrs Birling*' and ultimately to blame for the suicide, until she realises, traumatically, that the father has been removed by her daughter from the scene clearly distraught.

Once the Inspector leaves, and Sheila's suspicion of a crank caller, is confirmed by her old ways – triumphantly she scolds her children and husband for falling for such a trick house! Mocked by her daughter about her lack of remorse and continuing as if nothing happened, Birling says – '*Well, why shouldn't we?*' (p. 220).

AO1/AO2: Top Tip

When answering a question about relationships, it is important that you use different words to summarise (from the whole play) as well as analyse and comment on the relationship (by looking at the play and commenting upon this). Always use quotes to support your response.

Eric Birling and Inspector Goole

Eric, like his father, is traumatised by the whole revelation. He has lost the most precious thing in his life, a child, and is carrying a secret that has turned this well-educated man into a drunk. He is too drunk to really understand the importance of the Inspector's comments when his father and sister's selfish involvement is exposed. He remains silent, but the Inspector, deliberately, and with exact timing, mentions the name '*Daisy Renton*' and his involvement without saying anything...

Eric's initial reaction is to hide and go to bed, but the Inspector stops him, later to instructing him to not do so. Eric takes the Inspector to find his father, but soon returns to the house to escape while his mother is interrogated. When he returns, the Inspector describes Eric's treatment of Eva as akin to '*an animal, a thing and not a person*'. The Inspector shows sympathy with Eric, although he is convinced that he like his sister, Sheila, can change.

AO1: Discussion Point

How does Priestley view the relationship between the Inspector and Goole in the play?

AO1/AO2:

The Inspector exposes the parents' involvement. How does the play that supports this?

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The characters and Eva Smith / Daisy Renton / 'Mrs Birling'

The play evolves around the central **retrospective** character of Eva/Daisy. Priestley has the Birlings confessing their (~~seven~~) five deadly sins. Some confess reluctantly, but all 'confess' without any remorse.

| Character | Impact on Eva/Daisy |
|-------------|---|
| Mr Birling | Sacked Eva Smith from her first job as Mr Birling's works because of her role as a strike leader. |
| Sheila | Forced Eva to leave her employer, Millwards department store, to which she was sent from her job as a sales assistant when Sheila was in a foul mood and jealous of Eva's looks. |
| Gerald | Gave her some hope that life was worth living and that she didn't have to work as a prostitute, but having used her as a concubine, he cast her out of the accommodation he had provided for her when he had to concentrate on his future fiancé, Sheila. |
| Mrs Birling | Refused financial aid to 'Mrs Birling' (Eva/Daisy), and is the last of the cast to see her alive. |
| Eric | Abused Daisy Renton for his own sexual gratification, to which she fell pregnant, stopping Daisy from continuing to work as a prostitute. Eric gave her 'stolen' money to which she refused. |

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Settings and 'Props'

Settings

The form of *An Inspector Calls* is partially based on a Greek tragedy. Therefore, it dictates that there is only one setting in which the action takes place. Here, all of the Birlings' dining room in their house in Brumley one evening in Spring 1912. Also, **made play**, as so much of the plot has already occurred, and, therefore, all of the events are presented in a **retrospective** way by the characters.

Key Terms

Setting: the time or period to which a story or play is set. This can also refer to the geographical and political period to which it is set

Well-made play: a well-made play is a type of play consisting of a tight plot, strong characters and an explosive climax

Retrospective: looking backwards to past events

AO2: Discussion Point 1

Consider the definition of 'setting' above. What do you think is the setting of *An Inspector Calls*?

The Birlings' dining room (from stage directions)

- Set in the dining room of a fairly large suburban house (p. 161) – this establishes a prosperous family home.
- The house is *substantial and heavily comfortable* – the room is *cosy and homelike* – abundant signs of prosperity, there is no artificiality – feeling to its atmosphere
- *The lighting should be pink and intimate until the INSPECTOR arrives, and then it should become brighter and harder* – Priestley does allow some comfort to the 'happy occasion' to which the characters are celebrating, but this is swept away as the Inspector begins his spotlight interrogation coming in hard on each character.

AO2: Discussion Point 2
What is the effect of the 'lighting' to the setting?

Brumley

- The Birlings' house is set in the fictional manufacturing town/city of Brumley – a perfect setting for Priestley since such towns and cities had historically produced goods exported around the world and was a source of mass employment for people
- Mr Birling's factory and Gerald's father's factory(s) are both situated in or near Brumley – in competition with each other – at least until Mr Birling gets his own way and favours to increase profits.
- A fairly large town/city – Priestley created the town/city to be big enough to support Mr Birling and ego by carrying out his 'civic duties' as Lord Mayor, while having its own problems – must be of a substantial size since it has its own police force, Chief, Colonel Robert Brown
- Brumley is large enough to have its very own *Princess Victoria Theatre* at which various acts performed at the time – the Birlings acquire the services of a prostitute from the nearby *County Hotel* – Mr Birling goes to eat or use the services of a prostitute
- The flat in Brumley, where Mr Birling lives, is used by Gerald to keep Daisy away from his father and for his own purposes – it's used as an especially seedy secret by Priestley's friend, Mr Birling. Mr Birling, Mrs Birling, and Sheila are unaware that it's being used for such purposes

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Extended Essay Question 1

Write about retrospective settings and the way they are presented in response, refer to the play as a whole showing your understanding of settings are crucial to the play.

'Props'

'Props' are deliberately minimal in *An Inspector Calls* in order to maximise their effect on the plot and on the characters and their dialogue.

'Props' is an property, in the character

- **Dining** (which has no cloth) – while the dining table is large enough to sit five or more people comfortably, and must have been of has no cloth demonstrating coldness and lack of finesse or emotion.
- **Clothing** – the Birlings and Gerald are wearing evening dress, the men in tail jackets – thus showing celebration, not simply formal dinner attire. This clo Inspector, dressed in a plain darkish suit and Edna, the chambermaid.
- **Alcohol** – this is deliberately expensive and in abundance – port and whiskey symbols of wealth, and, paradoxically, Eric's coping method for despair and
- **Cigar, cigarettes** – similar to alcohol these are used as symbols of wealth, es have been imported from somewhere exotic like Cuba.
- **The doorbell** – this is crucial in 'ringing in' changes – the Inspector's arrival in family, and Gerald's return in Act Three to expose the hoax.
- **A photograph** (or photographs) of Eva Smith / 'Mrs Birling' (but not of Daisy's confessions from Inspector, Sheila and Mrs Birling and crucial to the hoax. The delibe chosen to one character at a time, for one line of enquiry at a time
- **Eva/Daisy's Diary** – this is referred to, but not seen and is crucial for the Ins together.
- **The Birlings' house telephone** – this is used by Priestley as a paradox. It is the phone calls exposing the hoax, but bad news in the final part of Act Three w returns to tell the characters that a police inspector is on his way... It is again as such items would have been very expensive and rare in homes.



Extended Essay Question 2

The ringing of a bell usually signals an end of, or the beginning of an

Write about how the playwright emphasises the importance of props and the way *Inspector Calls*. In your response, refer to the play as a whole showing your understanding of how they are crucial to the play.

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Themes

An Inspector Calls was a party political broadcast on behalf of the Labour Party in the 1945 General Election. Probably.

Key Terms

A **Theme** in a play or drama is a repetitive message that a playwright is trying to express, both express or implied in the dialogue and through the effect of linking the ideas in it. It may be part of a broader or deeper idea or concept, but remains the central concept. Themes can be explored through characters and their relationships and events, and incidents in the play.

A Polarised Class System – privilege or prostitution

One of Priestley's biggest dislikes was the divided class system. Eva Smith is part of the lower class system. A system which protects the privilege of the **aristocracy** and the comfort of the middle classes, while exploiting the poor working classes. The Inspector exposes this exploitation and to show how appallingly the upper classes treated the lower classes.

AO1/AO2: Discussion Point 1

1. What role does the refusal of charitable assistance to 'Mrs Birling' (Eva/Daisy) have in the play's plot?
2. What themes and ideas does it explore?
3. What does it tell about Mrs Birling's opinion of the working classes?

Hierarchy: a system in which things or people are ranked according to importance or status.
Prejudice: a dislike or distrust of someone or something based on preconceived notions.

The Birlings live with some degree of wealth and are dismissive of the working class. Mrs Birling is 'socially superior' (p. 157) although we're left to assume why she married Mr Birling. Mrs Birling belongs to a charitable organisation that helps destitute people with children. When Eva Smith applied, Mrs Birling 'didn't like her manner' (p. 197) – it was irreconcilable. She was abandoned by the child's father. Her arrogance is demonstrated by the decisions with such 'deserving cases' but in her household as she rebukes her husband when they step out of line and breach etiquette. Again, irony is used as it is suggested that Mr Birling didn't start with wealth or was part of the landed gentry like his wife. 'Deserving cases but rather provincial in his speech...' (p. 161) suggests a working-class background. Mr Birling's wealth is 'new' wealth born from industrialisation, capitalisation and not from tradition.

Money breeds money, as the saying goes, so when his daughter is to be married, Mr Birling is overjoyed, not so much for his daughter, but mainly for providing an opportunity for his future son-in-law Gerald's father's company. Competition can be reduced. 'Hurrah for Arthur! However, simply being wealthy doesn't allow him to move up into the **aristocracy**. Even **prejudice** is experienced between the higher classes, since Gerald is conveniently away and can't attend the engagement party. Is this deliberate? Or a coincidence? Mr Birling thinks the latter and tries to explain to Gerald about his situation. He mind telling his mother, on the night, in any case...

When confronted by the Inspector about sacking Eva Smith he pleads ignorance. He had defied his authority and organised a strike. 'A pitiful affair' (p. 173) is how he describes her. She is sacked. His decision is supported, again through irony, by Gerald.

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The Birlings' children live in blissful ignorance of the world around them, or so they are portrayed as a typical middle-class daughter who is 'potty' about clothes. She goes to a department store, Millwards, in town, where her parents have an account. Eric's attitude to this is to the detriment of Daisy Renton, whom he treats with contempt, forces her to work, and he can simply buy his way out of trouble. Is Eric concerned about Daisy when he discovers her fate, and her fate after pleading with his mother? Or, is he simply upset that his Christmas time? The jury is out.

The Inspector ends his time on stage with a warning and a judgement of the Birlings. They don't become socially responsible and learn from each other and appreciate community, but two huge wars have taken place in the play's setting in 1912. Audiences in 1945 and the importance of this message clearly.

Social responsibility/irresponsibility

A key message in *An Inspector Calls* is that of responsibility, or a lack of responsibility. With noticeable exceptions, the characters demonstrate a lack of social responsibility by denying Eva Smith the chance to live a comfortable life. Each character has an initial role to play in Eva's suicide but it is only the youngsters who seem to accept some blame and, therefore, take responsibility for their actions.

AO1: Discuss

There is a clear message about capitalism as to how it affects the poor. How does this affect the characters' attitudes towards Eva/Daisy?

Both Mr and Mrs Birling take responsibility for their actions, however, their responsibility is born out of justifying their appalling actions rather than seeing the error of their ways. When confronted with his involvement, Mr Birling says *'If we were all responsible for everything that happened to everybody we'd had anything to do with, it would be very awkward, wouldn't it?'* (p. 172). His wife disagrees.

Sheila thinks it's only right that she should ask for higher wages and it was *'a mean thing to do'* (p. 176) in sacking Eva. Indeed, having confessed to getting Eva sacked, Sheila stays, despite her father's protests, at the behest of her mother: *'If she leaves us now, and doesn't hear any more, then she'll feel alone with her responsibility, the rest of tonight, all the next night.'* (p. 184)

AO1: Analyse

Priestley's exploration of social responsibility is crucial to establishing the characters in the play and their beliefs before and after the events of the play.

Gerald is rather upset at the realisation of the suicide victim, but whether he takes responsibility for his actions of leaving for a walk to get some air. This deliberate act by Priestley is a warning – the refusal of charity by Mrs Birling, the last person to see Eva, and the last person to take responsibility and prevented the suicide. The trap is set, the confirmation of her fate, the girl, and ultimately the blameworthiness of the father of her child is vocalised: *'the father of the child. It's his responsibility'* (p. 198).

Eric's confession starts a squabble between himself and his father, to which the Inspector says *'You must divide the responsibility between you when I've gone'* (pp. 205–206) – which they do for different outcomes. He takes on responsibility for his actions and is repulsed at his father's attitude: *'How much nonsense about when a girl goes and kills herself. You lot may be letting your children go. Nor can mother. We did her in all right.'* (p. 206)

The Inspector pulls his audience in his final speech before leaving the Birlings responsible for their actions and the parents hoping to avoid public scandal, *'One Eva Smith has died – one Eva Smith who has millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths... We don't live alone. We are all responsible for each other.'* (p. 207)

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The generation gap – the young are restless and the old content

Priestley strongly believed that if there was to be a change in the way society behaved and took responsibility towards each other, then hope was to be found in the younger generation, such as Sheila and Eric. He felt that the older generations, Mr and Mrs Birling and, to an extent, Gerald, were fixed in their ways and that their stubbornness reflected the problems inherent in a society that had led England to two world wars.

AO1/AC

Create a time
the play when
their parents

The Birlings are very traditional in their views: they maintain the class division and classes. They are outraged when these views are challenged by their children. Mr Birling says 'I know it all' (p. 220). Priestley's own political views made for their stubbornness and rigidity in Edwardian times, and wholly blamed such people for the wars.

Priestley felt that at the time, in 1912, if the younger generation had (and still could) reject these traditional and destructive values then wars could have been avoided and England, and the rest of the world could have seen prosperity through **equality**. Priestley demonstrates, in a revolutionary way, the challenge that is possible to parents and the older establishment. Not out of immature or teenage angst, but out of a genuine need for a better society and conditions for all.

Ex
er
ec
op

AO4 (Context): Did you Know?

The general election in 1946 delivered Priestley's wish to an extent, as the Labour Party won. The British people rejected Winston Churchill's Conservative Party, despite him being Prime Minister. Edwardian values and miseries of the working classes were rejected and changed.



Extended Essay Question 1

Explore how J B Priestley explores the theme of responsibility in *An Inspector Calls* from the whole play and how this theme is demonstrated in the use of language.

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Ideas and Messages

Key Terms

Idea or message: this is the key thought or thoughts that the playwright is trying to bring to the audience's attention through the different themes that are used in the moral issue that **appeals to the sense of the audience to show or prove a point of**

Forewarned is forearmed

The Inspector is believed to be Priestley's alter ego: a messenger of biblical proportions, bringing a forewarning that the future will not be kind unless people change their attitudes towards each other. Priestley knew at the time of writing in 1944, that if he set a play in 1912, he could set irony as a language device to expose the characters. This is especially true of Mr Birling, portrayed as being a buffoon, and the others as ignorant to their surroundings – the stupidity and ignorance of which would lead the country to not one, but two world wars.

AO

The Angel of religions as perhaps used by the Inspector to characters

Mr Birling is **lampooned** by Priestley in order to forewarn the audience:

- *Don't worry. We've passed the worst of it.* (referring to strikes) (p. 165)
- *...you'll hear some people say war's inevitable. And to that I say –fiddlesticks!*
- *The German's don't want war.* (p. 165)
- *– the Titanic...unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable.* (p. 166)
- *...in 1940...There'll be peace and prosperity and rapid progress everywhere.*

To the audience, each of these prophecies by Mr Birling will be clearly seen as dramatic irony. The Inspector is not lost on the fact that he speaks with divine right, no doubt drawing on his own experiences and injuries from the **Great War** influencing his final speech – an iconic line: *'If men will not learn that lesson, they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish'*

People can change and there must be no resistance to change

Perhaps the most important message to be conveyed by Priestley is that people can, and must, change their attitudes towards each other. Being a founding member himself of a socialist organisation, the **Socialist Commonwealth Party**, the need for citizens to take social responsibility was crucial to his beliefs. He felt that despite the general reluctance to change, believing change to be a bad idea, it was far worse maintaining the Edwardian **status quo**, and in the words of the Inspector, that *'if men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish'* (p. 207).

AO4:

Why would you oppose the fair

Key Terms

Lampooned: to be made fun of or ridiculed

Omnipresence: to be present everywhere at the same time

Great War: First World War fought between Great Britain and its allies and Germany

Status quo: existing state of affairs in relation to politics or society

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Priestley began the play by setting clues, like landmines, laid ready to explode in throwaway comments made by the characters, to be timely detonated through his use of **socialism** through cooperation and wealth-distribution. Priestley's remorse, hides the self-interest of the rich and ruling classes in plain sight requiring a socialist message.

Religion, a parable and the seven deadly sins

Arguably there is a Christian message through the play. Whether there is or is not, there are certain parallels that can be drawn and linked to Christian teachings and philosophies, particularly, the **seven deadly sins**.

AO4 (Context)

A **parable** is a story that illustrates a moral or spiritual lesson in the Bible through an analogy.

Seven deadly sins are those that certain religions believe one must avoid or else be damned.

At the time of the early performances, quick-witted audiences would notice that all of the main characters' flaws were based on one of the sins:

- **Mr Birling = Greed.**

Mr Birling is not interested in helping anyone but himself and to maximise his profits from his workers: *'we may look forward to the time when Croft's and Birling's are no longer working together – for lower costs and higher prices.'* (p. 164)

AO1/AO2: Active Learning Task 1

Summarise your understanding of what Mr Birling is referring to in the quote above. Consider what this might mean in his attitude towards Eva Smith.

- **Sheila = Envy.**

Sheila has Eva Smith sacked from Millwards when she thinks that Eva is more beautiful than her. *'And it just suited her. She was the wrong type.'* (p. 181)

- **Gerald = Lust.**

While Gerald may have been seen by Eva as a knight in shining armour, come to realise his true idea – to keep her as his mistress for sex on demand. *'She was young and pretty and intensely grateful.'* (p. 191)

- **Mrs Birling = Pride.**

She behaved in a proud and self-important way when confronted by Eva's inquiry into herself Mrs Birling. *'Yes, I think it was simply a piece of gross impertinence –'*

- **Eric = Gluttony.**

While educated with the best things money can buy, Eric decides to occupy his time with his friends at the Palace Bar and elsewhere: *'... well I was in that state of mind.'* (p. 203)

There are parallels between the plot and the Bible's parable of *'the Sower'*. In the parable, seeds are thrown on rocky ground where they fail to grow: arguably representing Mr Birling's seeds on rocky ground, nothing happens. Other seeds are thrown on ground occupied by the thorns as they grow. Gerald could be the seeds that fall on such ground and, as a result, change, his upper-class surroundings and attitude choke any sense and sensibility. Finally, seeds fall on good ground and grow. These seeds could represent Eric and his sister Sheila, who are restless where they are, and have hope and growth and hope for the future.

AO2: Key Fact

Like an Agatha Christie detective novel, Priestley uses the repeated incendiary bomb as a plot device popular at the time of the play's writing in 1944.

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Form and Structure

Key Term

Form: in drama/theatre this refers to the play's shape or design, for example, the way the characters act out their roles or the way themes are explored.

Form

An Inspector Calls can be best described as a hybrid of a **well-made play** and a **modern Greek tragedy**.

A 'well-made' play

This form of drama is a popular **genre** at the time *An Inspector Calls* is set in 1912, has:

- Requires a very tight plotline;
- A climax to the plot which takes place near, or very near, to the end of the first act, with any other spaced climaxes to the plot;
- Key information is kept from all, or some, of the characters to be revealed as the play progresses;
- The main storyline of the play occurs before the opening of the play and is revealed throughout the actual play;
- The plot is divided up into a chain of events to be revealed as the play progresses;
- The climax is where a central character, against adversity, accomplishes their goal or what they want to achieve;
- The climax usually ends with a resolution of the issues. However, *An Inspector Calls* ends with a dilemma rather than a secure ending.

AO2: Top Tip

Being able to refer to such concepts as 'a well-made play' in responses in an exam will help structure and provide excellent analysis when relevant.

AO2: Act

Using the bullet points under 'well-made play' apply to *An Inspector Calls*.

Traditional Greek tragedy

As the plotline is continuous, Priestley followed the form of a traditional Greek tragedy, crafted by **Aristotle**, characteristic as having the **three unities**:

- Unity of Time – here the tragedy should only recount the story happening in one day, in one piece of time;
- Unity of Space – there should be only one scene/setting;
- Unity of Action – there should be a tight and fast-paced plot with no subplots or side-stories that aren't directly relevant or contribute to the play.

AO2:

Using the bullet points under 'Traditional Greek tragedy' to *An Inspector Calls*.

Key Terms

Genre: a class or category of literature or art.

Aristotle: Greek philosopher, author of *Poetics*.

Three unities: a style of drama or play requiring a single action, occurring in a single day, in a single place.

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Detective genre

Very popular at the time of writing in 1944, Priestley drew some inspiration for the play from the detective novel sub-genre of clue–puzzle. Here, clues providing evidence about the characters, readers or audience, if performed as a play, to discover and for a purpose of importance. Such as the Inspector.



Extended Essay Question 1

Explore how J B Priestley uses structure in *An Inspector Calls*. Use evidence to support your response.

Structure



The structure of *An Inspector Calls* is a three-act play with one singular setting, the Birlings' dining room. The other settings are part of the dialogue being discussed by the characters retrospectively, but not acted out.

Structure: the structure and patterns of reference to events plotted

The play runs continuously in real time as Priestley deliberately runs with prolonged structural hiatus. The hiatus is prolonged as each act ends with specific dramatic events and Three pick up where Acts One and Two, respectively, end. This is to ensure that throughout each act is not lost during the play's intervals. The use of plot twist adds to the tension, especially when characters are unaware of their involvement, or, they are not involved in the suicide.

Top Tip

Being able to refer to such concepts in your response, for example: a chain of events, responses in an exam will help to structure and provide excellent analysis where relevant.

The chain of events



Priestley uses the structure of each act to establish the chain of events. For this reason, characters, the events started some two years before the opening act:

Act One

- Begins with the celebratory event – the engagement.
- Priestley establishes, very quickly, the traits of each character as they sit around the table.
- When the Inspector calls, the celebratory atmosphere quickly changes as he reveals the truth to Sheila directly and Eric and, importantly, Gerald indirectly with the revelation of the suicide.
- The act ends with Gerald trying to hide his involvement from the Inspector, with the Inspector asking: 'Well?'

Act Two

- Begins where Act One ends with the Inspector asking: 'Well?'
- Further, and more shocking revelation is made, maintaining the tension at the characters' involvement in this time Gerald and Mrs Birling.
- The Act ends with Eric's realisation as to who Eva/Daisy's baby's father was.
- Eric reveals the truth to the scene.



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Act Three

- Eric has just re-entered the scene.
- Attention is focused on Eric who reveals his involvement in the chain and discovers his mother's involvement.
- The Inspector makes a dramatic speech through a **monologue** about social responsibility contradicting Mr Birling's two monologues in Act One.
- Sheila becomes suspicious and Gerald returns with news that the Inspector is dead.
- Two further telephone calls confirm the fake inspector and hoax suicide.
- Eric and Sheila continue to be reprieved despite the apparent hoax, while the Inspector's death is confirmed.
- As the pressure and tension seem to subside, the telephone rings with the news that the infirmity and the police inspector is on his way.

Monologue



AO2: Top Tip

It is vitally important that you know when events occur and in which chronological order of events in the exam could make the answer appear muddled.

Retrospectives

As each character is confronted by the Inspector, an ensuing dialogue between them reveals their involvement in Eva/Daisy's suicide.

Partly to save money on set design (it was written in 1944, a time of great **austerity**) the retrospectives are deliberately created to expose each character as being selfish and unpleasant by eliciting a confession, police interrogatory style, over their own involvement.

Austerity

- Mr Birling has to recount that he sacked Eva Smith from his works as she led a 'wild and wicked life'.
- Sheila recounts that when Eva Smith was working as a sales assistant at Milford, she had been sacked because she had been in a bad mood and thought she was laughing at her.
- Gerald's confession reveals he had met Daisy Renton at the Palace Bar and then seduced her when he couldn't continue with the 'affair' anymore.
- Mrs Birling's recount reveals her as the last character to meet Eva/Daisy when she was at the Women's Organisation, she refused 'Mrs Birling' financial assistance telling her to 'get on with it'.
- Eric, like Gerald, explains that he met Daisy Renton at the Palace Bar. He had a 'fling' with her and forced his way into her accommodation, then forced her to have sex with him subsequently, and that she thought, then later confirmed, that she was pregnant.



AO1: Top Tip

Having an extensive and specialised vocabulary when answering questions on *An Inspector Calls* is a 'top tip' and boost marks for AO1.

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End/beginning of Act cliffhanger

Act One is the only act that doesn't begin with a cliffhanger, or the audience 'on' with a distractor, a comforting scene of congratulation and celebration. Oh, the lived. This is in marked contrast with the scene's ending – here, Gerald has some the audience on a hiatus, reeling at the revelations of both Mr Birling and Sheila. Gerald lets slip he knew the young lady... He doesn't say anything but his actions as [pulling himself together] (p. 181) goes to get a whisky, thus marking him as When confronted by his fiancé, Gerald tried to play down his relationship and, from the Inspector. Sheila mocks him for his suggestion when suddenly and the Inspector quietly appears in the dining room and asks him: 'Well?' (p. 182). Act the same prompt.

Interesting. The emphasis and grip of tension now placed on Gerald at the Priestley is able to prolong the tension by refraining from moving straight to the arrival of Mrs Birling back to the dining room. Act Two ends with Mrs Birling's ign pitch, her realisation, eventually, of her involvement in the suicide, and more de granddaughter, leaves her, the other characters, and the audience gasping for br

Act Three begins with another slick, quiet entrance. This time from the father of Eric doesn't know, but the other characters and the audience does know, is his m and, therefore, the play ends again on a permanent **cliffhanger** – tension had be hoax but the final telephone call, and Mr Birling's final dialogue, mark the final t had taken her life and a real police inspector is on his way! No one in the audien perhaps it's Eva's suicide that's been delayed rather than having (not already) ha premonition, too late to avoid.

Entrances and exits

To quote from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*: 'All the world's a stage, And all the men They have their exits and their entrances.' This is used symbolically in *An Inspector* comings and goings of the characters to build tension upon leaving or to create t

Act One

- Begins with the characters sat around the dining table enjoying themselves
- Mrs Birling and Sheila retire to the drawing room as custom would dictate;
- The Inspector arrives bringing the house of Birling crashing down;
- Sheila returns, flees, then quickly returns and is forced into confession;
- Mr Birling leaves with Eric to brief his wife, leaving Sheila to confront Gerald
- The Inspector returns quietly to confront Gerald.

Act Two

- Mrs Birling returns to seize control from the Inspector;
- Mr Birling returns explaining that Eric won't go to bed upon the Inspector's
- Gerald leaves after his confession;
- (Eric leaves the house) Hearing the front door close, Mr Birling leaves to inv
- Eric returns to the house, and to the dining room.

Act Three

- The Inspector leaves the Birlings' house after his fiery speech;
- Gerald returns with news of a hoax.

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Extended Essay Question 2

- Explore how J B Priestley uses structure in *An Inspector Calls*. Use to support your response.
- Explore how J B Priestley uses entrances and exits to create dram

The Writer's Use of Language

Priestley deliberately crafted the language to demonstrate the characters' class and status, generally in a less than positive way.

Key Term

Language: the actual words used in the text and their purpose in giving the play a sense of realism and dimension

Colloquial terms: an informal or slang term, instead of its formal version

| Class-related (realistic) dialogue | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Definition | Priestley had to set the dialogue to match the types of people and make them as distasteful. Their accents and dialect to an audience must not otherwise seem unrealistic. |
| Examples | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Please, sir an inspector's called.</i> (Edna) (p. 169) • <i>You're squiffy.</i> (Sheila) (p. 163) • <i>Don't be an ass</i> (Sheila) (p. 163) • <i>'— well I was in that state when a chap easily turns nasty —'.</i> (Eric) (p. 179) • <i>'an elaborate sell.'</i> (Mr Birling) (p. 219) |
| Purpose | <p>Edna, as parlourmaid is an employee, as is the Inspector. However, the Birlings so her language is that of a servant to her master and mistress without conversation or question and in respect for her employers.</p> <p>Both Sheila's and Eric's speech, and to the mother's irritation, is typical of the adult of the time. They use working class colloquial terms to describe characteristics: Sheila accuses Eric of being '<i>squiffy</i>' (drunk) and he describes her (man) — not a term associated with the working classes, who perhaps use colloquial terms for being drunk!</p> <p>Mr Birling as a businessman uses business-type speak and terms. If the Inspector is a hoax he describes the whole thing as '<i>an elaborate sell</i>' using selling terms.</p> |

AO2: Discussion Point 1

J B Priestley had to make the dialogue realistic for audiences to believe the story. How does he achieve this in *An Inspector Calls*?

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| Tone | |
|------------|--|
| Definition | This is the way that Priestley expresses the characters' attitude to life; this is easily conveyed through stage directions, but it is the actor's job to bring it to life. |
| Examples | <p>For example, Mr Birling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [rather portentous] – stage directions (p. 161) • [somewhat impatiently] – in an early conversation to Inspector (p. 162) • <i>A man has to make his own way</i> (p. 168) • <i>A man has to mind his own business and look after himself</i> (p. 168) • <i>There'll be a bad time ahead...unless we're lucky.</i> (p. 208) <p>Sheila Birling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [very pleased with life] and [rather excited] – stage directions (p. 162) • [gaily, possessively] (p. 162) • <i>She isn't living on the moon</i> – from the Inspector (p. 192) • <i>I'm not a child</i> – to her father, Mr Birling (p. 192) • <i>But these girls aren't cheap labour...they're people.</i> (p. 177) <p>Mrs Birling is portrayed as having a cold, superior tone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Haughtily] (p. 186) • [Very sharply] (p. 187) • [Bitterly] (p. 187) |
| Purpose | <p>Each character is shown in a particular way or light, depending upon the audience to perceive their traits or beliefs. Using the dialogue and stage directions, the audience can get to grips with each of the cast's attitude to themes.</p> <p>Mr Birling's tone is arrogant, controlling and selfish; Sheila's tone is more petty to mature and perceptive; Mrs Birling is portrayed as having a cold, superior tone.</p> |

AO2: Top Tip

Pay attention to the stage directions used by J B Priestley throughout the play. They are often used to set the scene, but deliberately, just before the dialogue is spoken by a character.

| Monologue | |
|------------|--|
| Definition | A monologue is a single speech by an actor in the play. |
| Examples | <p>Mr Birling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>...It's one of the happiest nights of my life...</i> (p. 163) • <i>I'm delighted about this engagement...</i> (p. 165) • <i>...I don't want to lecture you two young fellows again...</i> (p. 168) <p>The Inspector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>You're offering the money at the wrong time...</i> (p. 207) • <i>But just remember this...</i> (p. 207) |
| Purpose | <p>The monologue is an important literary feature. In <i>An Inspector Calls</i> it is used for two clear purposes: firstly, to demonstrate Mr Birling's arrogant attitude; secondly, to demonstrate the Inspector's role as a moral authority. Several long monologues are given by Mr Birling about looking after 'No.1'; secondly, that of the Inspector's role, the Inspector, in his 'fire blood and anguish' speech, to show that unless there is solidarity and cooperation or else society will face death and destruction.</p> |

AO2: Top Tip

Ensure that you read *An Inspector Calls* regularly. This is better in a group, but can be done on your own. Watch out for the language devices as they appear. They appear VERY regularly.

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| Irony/dramatic irony | |
|----------------------|--|
| Definition | To express meaning by using language that would usually signify the humorous or resounding effect. |
| Examples | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ...It's one of the happiest nights of my life... (Mr Birling) (p. 163) • The Germans don't want war. Nobody wants war... (Mr Birling) • That was nice for you. (Sheila) (p. 192) • Thanks. You're going to be a great help. I can see (Gerald) (pp. 192-193) • Secondly I blame the young man. He was the father of the child. |
| Purpose | <p>As the play was written in 1944 and set in 1912, Priestley uses dramatic irony to establish certain characters' pomposity with great effect. In a scathing critique of the playwright gives the character free rein to spectacularly misjudge specific things and events.</p> <p>Similarly, Mrs Birling, in refusing to give 'Mrs Birling' financial assistance, is Priestley in her blame of the father of 'Mrs Birling's' child. The father's responsibility. The father, as the audience and cast realise, is her son before she does. Boom!</p> |

AO4 (Context): Key Fact

Priestley knew when writing in 1944, and after two world wars, that Mr Birling's One would be seen by the audience as hopelessly wrong.

| Euphemism | |
|------------|---|
| Definition | A word or expression that is substituted for another where the original is controversial, embarrassing or taboo. |
| Examples | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busy at the works all that time (p. 163) • Went on the streets / worked in the town (p. 189) • A girl of that sort! (p. 192) • A girl in her position (p. 199) • Should I go to bed with her? (p. 204) • Poor, Eva Smith's gone. (p. 207) |
| Purpose | <p>This language device is not to be confused with metaphor, which uses words or phrases without embarrassing or vulgar connotations and acceptable terms.</p> <p>Euphemisms are deliberately used by the characters to speak of controversial issues. This is used by Priestley as an element of realism in society. They are used in the play to demonstrate a social character of issues such as sexual intercourse or prostitutes in Edwardian polite society. Their children know what they're talking about (mixed with irony).</p> <p>Euphemisms are not used by the Inspector – he uses direct speech and features in order to get to the truth.</p> |

Key Terms

Metaphor: a language device where a word or phrase replaces another to which it is not literally related.

Realism: the idea of representing a situation or concept and the ability to reason with it.

Symbolism: the use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities

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AO1/AO2: Active Learning Task 1

Keep a kind of diary or notebook of language devices that are used in the dialogue of about 5–10 per character to use as evidence in your responses in an exam.

For example:

| Character | Language Device |
|-----------|-----------------|
| | |



Symbolism

| | |
|------------|--|
| Definition | A word or phrase which is used to represent ideas or qualities in a play. To create a strong picture in the character's and audience's mind. |
| Examples | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ...she'd swallowed a lot of strong disinfectant. Burnt her inside • You mustn't try to build up a kind of wall between us and that • Her position now is that she lies with a burnt-out inside on a sofa • You were the wonderful Fairy Prince. (p. 192) • Well, Eva Smith's gone. You can't do her any more harm. (p. 207) • ...but there are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and us... (p. 207) • We are members of one body... p.207) • And I tell you that the time will soon come when, if men will not learn, they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish... (p. 207) |
| Purpose | Symbolism is used by Priestley to provide clear and explicit imagery to the character and audience or to paint a picture to make the reference to an event or object. Explicit images are used to link individual characters or to elaborate on a theme. |



Extended Essay Question 1

- Discuss how J B Priestley uses the language device of irony throughout the play.
- Discuss how J B Priestley uses the language device of euphemism throughout the play.



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Context

Biographical information

- John Boyton Priestley was born into a middle-class suburban household in Bradford, Yorkshire in 1894. This type of household may have influenced Priestley on the setting of *An Inspector Calls*.
- Priestley left school at 16, in 1910 (note the date), and took a job as a clerk in a wool firm. This type of manufacturing business may have influenced Priestley on the setting of Mr. Birling's factory in *An Inspector Calls*.
- Between 1914 and 1918 Priestley served in the Great War and was injured and gassed. The criticisms of the Allied military strategy, run by **aristocratic** males, was bitterly shared by Priestley and is reflected in *An Inspector Calls*.
- In 1919, Priestley studied for a degree in modern history and politics at Cambridge. He would have mixed with the middle and upper classes while studying.
- In 1922, having graduated from university, Priestley began a career in journalism.
- Between 1918 and 1939, influenced by his father's political views and his own views on the class divide and the rise of capitalism and fascism, Priestley's socialist views became more pronounced.
- Between 1939 and 1945, Priestley broadcast '*Postscripts*' a radio show for the wartime Government. He felt the radio show was too pro-socialist, especially as it was broadcast to socialist political groups in the early years of the war.
- Priestley wrote *An Inspector Calls* as an **allegory** of his contempt for society.
- Died aged 89 in 1984.

Context: the setting of the play is a middle-class household in Bradford, Yorkshire in 1912.
Allegory: a story or picture that is understood as having a deeper meaning, especially a moral or political one.

AO4
Until the Second World War was referred to as the Great War.

AO4 (Context): In its first real General Election in 1906, the Labour Party won 29 seats.

AO4 (Context): Act 1. Watch an episode of the BBC's *An Inspector Calls* ironically bittersweet interpretation of the play, set during the First World War.

Wrote in 1944, but set deliberately in 1912

- *An Inspector Calls* was written in 1945, but it is set in 1912.
- It was a party political broadcast on behalf of the Labour Party for the July 1945 General Election.
- In 1912, society was far from being equal as there was a massive social divide between the working-class people to improve their standards of living as the ruling classes.
- In 1945, Priestley was using irony, that despite two world wars, nothing had changed, the ruling classes from using and abusing the working classes.
- As the play is set in 1912, two years before the Great War, audiences would have known that Britain was about to go through huge changes and loss of life, only to be repeated in 1945.
- The play implores the audience to learn from Britain's mistakes, noticeably its greed and upper-class selfishness, and to change and even vote for **socialism** in the 1945 General Election.

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Edwardian England in 1912 – War? What war? There won't be war!

- Britain was a very divided class society in 1912.
- The middle classes ran the businesses and professions, while the upper classes owned the land and ran the country's government.
- The working classes were generally exploited or kept in near poverty in order to keep them working for the benefit of the upper classes.
- There was no **Welfare State** – no free medical care, National Health Service payments. The working class had to either work, or rely on charitable help, – maybe.
- The **Labour Party** was formed in 1906 to represent the rights and interests of the working class.
- The three most powerful European countries: Britain, France and Germany, each other, were strongly affixed on settling old scores through military conflict. They began huge investment in expanding their military, and their leaders were keen to do so.
- Inevitably, war broke out in 1914 which led to four years of conflict, during which 16 million were wounded, including Priestley.

Welfare State
for its people
and education
Labour Party

Wartime England in 1945 – sick and tired of war and our leaders!

- A lot had changed in society during the inter-war years, but social conflict continued.
- By the time Priestley began writing the play in 1944, Britain had endured new hardships including heavy aerial bombing by the German air force.
- Socialism was on the rise in Europe as sympathy turned towards a one-class ruling-class-led society.
- A coalition wartime government, including Labour Members of Parliament, was formed.
- In 1945 when a General Election was fought, the **Labour Party** won by a landslide majority.

Socio-Political Conflict

Miners' strike 1926

- Trade union membership had steadily grown since the turn of the century and general workers' discontent had grumbled along until 1911 when dockworkers, miners and railway workers had stopped working and came out on strike. British industry ground to a halt.
- No doubt enthused by the national strike of 1911, the miners had taken industrial action out on strike for a better, minimum wage.

AO1: Discuss
Why was the
unsuccessful general
election of 1926?
1911 and 1926

Political change

- With the successes of industrial action and the exploitation of the working class, political parties representing workers' interests were formed to stand up for the working class.
- Ironically, middle-class intellectuals, such as **H G Wells** and **George Bernard Shaw**, were critical of the ruling class society through **socialism** as opposed to **capitalism**.
- As trade unions were formed, so was the **Labour Party** to represent their interests. In contrast to the ruling-class political parties, the **Labour Party** and the **Conservatives**, who dominated the political scene, were running the country.

Key Term

Capitalism: an economic and political system where the means of production are controlled by private individuals and not the state.

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Women and social status

- Not only were the miners unhappy with their conditions, the early twentieth century saw a fight for equality for women's rights.
- In 1903, the Women's Social and Political Union was formed by Emmeline Pankhurst. The *Suffragettes*, they advocated equal rights for women. But, as their tactics became more extreme, they were sent to prison and went on **hunger strike**. But rather than be criticised as criminals, they grew for their demands, particularly among middle-class women and men, leading to the feeding of female prisoners who went on hunger strike.
- In 1912, there was no **universal suffrage** for women.
- Many women worked, or had to work, in factories because of a shortage of men during 1914–1918.
- In 1918, women were given the vote, but only if they owned property or were the owners of property.

Key Terms

Hunger strike: a tactic used by prisoners as a means of protest by refusing to eat or drink.

Universal suffrage: the right for all persons, usually over 18, regardless of gender to have the right to vote.

AO1: Discussion Point 2

1. Priestley uses advancements in modern technology in Mr Birling's predictions about the future, for example, the Titanic. In pairs, discuss how successful these predictions are?
2. In three groups, identify one of the socio-political contexts in *Inspector Calls* and discuss its relevance in the play.
3. The context of the play is entirely one of criticism of the ruling classes by Priestley. Discuss the reasons why?



Extended Essay Question 1

- (a) Explore how J B Priestley portrays Mr Birling's attitude towards the working class in *Inspector Calls*.

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Key Term Glossary

Literary Terms

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Allegory | A story or play which is written or understood as having a hidden political one |
| Antithesis | The opposite of something – often used as a rhetorical/literary juxtaposition |
| Characterisation | The techniques used by a writer to develop the sense of a character. The writer uses description, action, speech and dialogue to develop a character. |
| Cliffhanger | An event, or end of a scene which ends in suspense, leaving the reader wondering what happens next |
| Colloquial term | An informal or slang term used instead of its formal version |
| Dramatic irony | A literary device where the character's words are clear to the audience but as yet unknown to the character, or other characters |
| Euphemism | An indirect word or expression substituted for one considered too harsh or to something unpleasant or embarrassing |
| Foreboding | A prediction – sometimes used by writers as a sense of irony to foreshadow a bad event |
| Genre | A class or category of literature |
| Homophone | Two or more words which sound the same but are spelt differently |
| Idiom | A saying or a phrase which provides a recognisable meaning without being literal |
| Irony | A literary device which uses words to convey an opposite or contradictory meaning |
| Juxtaposition | Language/Structural device where two words or phrases are placed side-by-side to create a contrasting impact |
| Lament | To feel sorrow, grief or to mourn over something regretful |
| Lampooned | To mock or ridicule |
| Melodrama | A dramatic play with exaggerated characters following moving plot lines to appeal to the audience's emotions |
| Metaphor | A language device where a word or phrase replaces another to create a comparison |
| Monologue | A long solo speech by a character in a play |
| Paradox | A contradiction which may seem ridiculous, but is, in fact, potentially true |
| Plot | This refers to the main events of the story which advances the narrative |
| Props | 'Props' is an abbreviation for properties or property, items used on stage to enhance the plot. |
| Retrospective | Looking backwards to past events |
| Setting | The location, time or period to which a story or play is set. This includes the historical and political period to which it is set. |
| Simile | A language device which compares one thing with another thing using 'like' or 'as' to give a more unequivocal meaning |
| Symbolism | The use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities |
| Theme | A Theme in a play or story is a repetitive message the playwright conveys to the audience. It may be directly expressed or implied in the dialogue and actions of the characters. A theme may be part of a broader context or idea that runs through the story. Themes are the central concept or concepts of the play. Themes can be explored through the characters and their relationships and events, and incorporated into the plot. |
| Tone | The general attitude or style of a play |
| Triplet | A triplet, sometimes called the rule of three, is a literary device where three nouns, in a sentence spontaneously for emphasis. |

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Vocabulary

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Acquiesce | To reluctantly agree or accept |
| Admonish | To scold, to tell someone off |
| Agitate | To unsettle or disrupt |
| Agitators | Those who agitate for purpose |
| Alderman | An appointed local official general or local council |
| Apocalyptic | Predicting the end of the world |
| Aristocracy | The upper classes a group of people who hold power and privilege |
| Aristocrat | A member of the aristocracy |
| Aristotle | Greek philosopher, author and playwright |
| Austerity | Strict and severe times, usually resulting in poverty |
| Balkans | A geographical area in south east Europe where in Sarajevo in Bosnia was assassinated in 1914 and began a chain of events which led to the First World War |
| Belligerent | To be aggressive or hostile |
| Bench | A collective term for magistrates and lay persons who sit in group cases in a magistrates' court |
| Brumley | A fictional town or city in the North Midlands created by Priestley Mr Birling's (wool?) manufacturing business |
| By Jove! | An expression of surprise |
| Capitalism | An economic and political system where the means of production are owned by individuals and not the state |
| Carte blanche | Having full authority or power without challenge |
| Cartel | A group of businesses who work together to restrict competition |
| Chattel | A personal possession |
| Chief Constable | The head of the police force in a specific geographical area |
| Chivalry | Courteous behaviour especially by men towards women |
| Concubine | A woman who lives with, or is housed by, a man and has a lower status for sexual purposes |
| Conjecture | An opinion or conclusion made by a person on the basis of incomplete information |
| Consternation | A feeling of dismay or extreme anxiety |
| Context | The circumstances that form the setting of the play and to provide background fully understood. |
| Disinfectant | A strong and toxic chemical cleaning fluid which kills bacteria |
| Double-whammy | A double setback |
| Drawing room | An abbreviation for a withdrawing room – a large room in a large house where people receive and entertain guests |
| Edward VII | An era of rule by King Edward VII which symbolised technological progress and deterioration between Britain and Germany |
| Empty vessel | A colloquial term describing someone with little or no intelligence |
| Equality | The belief that all things, especially people, should be equal especially in rights and opportunities |
| Ethics | Principles with a moral code that govern a person's beliefs and behaviour |
| Faux pas | A social blunder or mistake made by a person causing embarrassment |
| Foreboding | A prediction – sometimes used by writers as a sense of irony to predict a bad outcome |
| Form | In drama/theatre this refers to the play's shape or design, for example in acts, the way the characters act out their roles or the way they are presented |
| Formal | Something done which follows convention or etiquette |

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| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Great War | The First World War fought between Great Britain and its allies and Germany from 1914 to 1918 |
| Hierarchy | A system where members of society are ranked according to status |
| Honours list | A list of people who are recognised by their contribution to society, especially a title, by the king or queen |
| Hunger strike | A tactic used by prisoners as a means of protest by refusing to eat |
| Iconoclast | A person who destroys images and statues, especially in religion |
| Idea or message | This is the key thought or message that the playwright is trying to bring to the audience's attention through the different themes in this writing. It is an issue that appeals to the sense of the audience and its importance. |
| Infirm | A hospital |
| Influenza | Highly contagious viral infection which affects the person's breathing |
| Kaiser (The) | The German Emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm II, who encouraged Austria-Hungary that would aggravate Britain, France and Russia which led to the First World War |
| Knighthood | A type of award issued under the honours list |
| Labour Party | British socialist political party. |
| Lament | To feel sorrowful, or to mourn over something regretful |
| Lampooned | To be made fun of or ridiculed |
| Language | The actual words used in the text and their specific purpose in giving a sense of realism and dimension. |
| Marginalise | To treat someone as insignificant |
| Matriarch | A female head of family, or the most powerful female in a family |
| Melodrama | A dramatic play with exaggerated characters, following moving events to the audience's emotions |
| Misogynist | A person who dislikes or is hostile to females |
| Morality | A set of principles which provide a distinction between right and wrong |
| New Money | A phrase used to describe non-aristocratic wealth, generally referring to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries |
| North Midlands | A geographical area of middle England which was famous in the nineteenth century for its manufacturing industries especially wool |
| Old boys' club | Colloquial term for a group of people, generally upper-class men, who share common interests of each other, to the detriment of others. |
| Old country stock | Colloquial term to describe aristocracy or 'landed gentry' whose wealth is based on ownership of land. |
| Omnipresence | To be present everywhere at the same time |
| Paradox | A contradiction which may seem ridiculous, but is, in fact, potentially true |
| Patriarch | A male head of family, or the most powerful male in a family |
| Peremptory | Requiring immediate obedience |
| Perspective | An idea or view on a particular issue |
| Polarised | To divide into specific different parts, usually with opposing views |
| Pomposity | Having a sense of self-importance |
| Pontificate | To preach or talk in a pompous way |
| Portentous | Meaning portentous, pompous or arrogant. |
| Prejudice | Prejudice or hostility towards someone or something |
| Pretence | A false display of feelings or emotion |
| Prostitute | A person who sells their body for sexual purposes |
| Protagonist | The leading character or one of the leading characters in a play |
| Pugnacious | To be confrontational, usually in the form of a verbal or physical argument |
| Realism | The idea of accepting an idea or concept and the ability to reason about it |

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|---------------------------|--|
| Recount | To give an account of a past event or experience |
| Retrospective | Looking backwards to past events |
| Sardonic | To mock or be deliberately disrespectful |
| Seven Deadly Sins | Seven habits or behaviour that certain religions taught their follo by God |
| Shaw, Bernard | Writer and leading socialist |
| Sleight of hand | An idiom used to describe a magical trick, generally used to trick or |
| Social class | A division or hierarchy of people in society |
| Social justice | A system or justice with regard to the distribution of wealth, opp |
| Socialism | An economic and political ideology/system where the means of p state and not private individuals |
| Socialist | A person who believes in the socialist political ideology/system |
| Socialist agitator | A socialist who believes in direct, sometimes violent, conflict to p political system |
| Sombre | An emotion of deep sadness or darkness of mind |
| Status quo | An existing state of affairs in relation to politics or society |
| Stiff upper lip | A lack of emotion, shown by the upper classes, despite being face adversity |
| Structure | The overall organisation, shape and patterns in the story, usually chronology of events plotted by the writer. |
| Subservient | To obey without question |
| Suitor | A man who pursues a specific woman with a view to marrying her |
| Superficial | Basic or insubstantial |
| Three unities | A style of traditional play requiring a single action, occurring in a of one day |
| Tipping point | The point where small and insignificant events become too signif |
| Titanic | A steamship that was designed to be unsinkable, but sank on its r |
| Tragedy (Greek) | A play which deals with tragic events which concludes with an un the downfall of a leading character or characters |
| Unimpeachable | To be beyond reproach or blameworthiness |
| Universal suffrage | The right for all persons, usually over 18, regardless of gender to |
| Unperturbed | To be calm and collected despite being under pressure. |
| Warrant | In certain situations, a magistrate can issue an arrest (or search) w the police to arrest a suspect if they have reasonable suspicion th |
| Welfare state | The right in the United Kingdom for its people to have access to a and social security |
| Wells, H G | Writer and leading socialist |
| World War II | A second world war fought between Great Britain and its allies an 1945 |

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Further Reading

- Atkins, John Alfred, *J B Priestley: The Last of the Sages* (New York: Riverrun Press, 1997)
- Baxendale, John, *Priestley's England: J B Priestley and English Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007)
- Broome, Vincent, *J B Priestley* (London: Methuen, 1988)
- Day, Alan Edwin, *J B Priestley: An Annotated Bibliography* (Gloucestershire, 1997)
- Fagge,  *The Vision of J B Priestley* (London: Continuum, 2012)
- Lloyd Evans, Gareth, *J B Priestley, the Dramatist* (London: Heinemann, 1964)
- Other plays by J B Priestley that are readily available are: *The Linden Tree*, *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* and *the Conways*

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Suggested Answers

Plot Summary

Discussion Point 1

As a confirmed socialist, and a former soldier who was wounded in action during the First World War, Priestley had hindsight and blamed the ruling classes for social problems caused by their mismanagement. In *An Inspector Calls* in 1945, at the end of the Second World War he saw the same mistake being made by the government (as did the British electorate in 1945 who voted in a Labour government) and his domestic and attitudinal policy of the time.

Active Learning Task

This requires a personal response, but could include using Arthur Birling, for example, that

- He doesn't believe in 'community' and sees the working classes as 'cheap labour';
- He refused to pay Eva and her fellow workers extra wages and fired her for being on strike at his factory;
- He believes that to get on in life a person has to work hard and not accept the charity of others.

Section-by-section Analysis

A Play in Three Acts

Discussion Point 1

The Angel Gabriel, it is argued here, was used by Priestley as a Christian symbol of great importance. A figure who appears in three important moments, bringing important messages from God. One significant moment is where the Angel brings news to the virgin Mary to tell her she would give birth to the Son of God. Priestley presents the Inspector as a bringer of a similarly, and symbolically, important message.

Act 1 Part 1

Discussion Point 1

There is certainly some venom in Sheila's speech towards Gerald at this point of the play. As Gerald had been hiding his affair with Daisy Renton from Sheila, and in consequence was ashamed of his secret. In order to overcompensate for his secret, he adopts a subservient attitude about often working late at his father's works during the previous summer!

Discussion Point 2

The back-answering by Eric is symbolic of Priestley encouraging the young generation to challenge the older generation, of who Priestley blamed for two world wars, using the vehicle of subtlety as a language device to fool the cast, and perhaps the audience, into believing a world in 1912), but on occasions, as here, the challenge to authority builds to Armageddon. Eric discovers his mother's involvement in the death of Eva/Daisy/'Mrs Birling'.

Extended Essay Question 1

AO1/AO2

- a) Responses may explore some of the following:
- The dashing **Gerald is curiously obedient** when Sheila scolds him for knowledge of his affair, putting up no fight or argument. Why is Gerald trying to get on Sheila's good and do something?
 - Mr Birling's **lack of cultural upbringing** is highlighted throughout the play, here he is thanking the cook, clearly a ridiculous thing to do since that's her job, she's paid to do it. He wasn't born rich and successful in the middle class. Perhaps he comes from a humbler background. His wife is trying to distance herself from Gerald.
 - Sheila is **very convinced** that the real reason Gerald spent so much time with her was to seduce her. What was Gerald doing all of last summer when he was supposed to be working late at his father's works?
 - Why did Eric **guffaw out loud** when Gerald promised to spend more time with her? Does he know what Gerald was up to in the summer? Sheila is using the adjective to use for her brother who is celebrating her engagement, or is it ironic?
 - What does Eric mean when he scoffs at Sheila and says **'If you think that's the best of her'**? Does she have a darker, devious side we don't know about?

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- b) Students could use the example response above for Act 1 Part 1 – Extended Essay Question 1, then examine each further example of deception throughout the play. Further drinking and partying, the Inspector's real purpose in attending the Birlings' house, the works, Eva/Daisy calling herself 'Mrs Birling' while seeking financial assistance from Mr Birling.

Act 1 Part 2

Discussion Point 3

Mr Birling is not a complete fool! He is a very successful businessman and while he could not predict the Titanic sinking (not the Titanic sinking on its maiden voyage), he can quite easily predict innovations in business.

Extended Essay Question 3 AO1/AO2

- a) Responses may explore some of the following: he says that there is a *good deal of* *optimism* and that they are *marrying at a very good time* – which would probably be true if World War I had not occurred. He dismisses the miners' strike as *worse of it* – industrial unrest became a common feature in the 1920s, including a General Strike in 1926 protecting capital (money, stocks, etc.) but the Wall Street Crash in America led to a depression the effects of which lasted until the late 1930s. He dismisses the Germans for not wanting war (one of the causes being the assassination of an Austrian Archduke) and the Russians for throwing in some casual racism about these people being 'half-civilised' and the Russians for giving Birling some credit about the future of aeroplanes and cars, but on his third forecast he champions the doomed ship *Titanic*. Before slating socialist writers, he suggests that the celebration of the centenary of the Industrial Revolution *let's say in 1940* with their children. Well, not Eric's first possible forecast.
- b) Students should use the suggested answer for Act 1 Part 2 – Extended Essay Question 1 above for advice.

Act 1 Part 3

Discussion Point 4

Mr Birling's bragging makes him appear to be pompous and self-congratulatory, his own success clearly divide an audience into those who hate him and those who quietly admire his success. Gerald's indifference is partly because of his general indifference to most things, but he certainly seems uninterested in the events of Mr Birling, other than to patronise him while having to marry his daughter as part of his upper-class duties in life; again, something that

Extended Essay Question 3 AO1/AO2

- a) See the suggested answer for Act 1 Part 3 – Discussion Point 4 above for advice.
- b) Responses may explore some of the following: The **photograph of Eva Smith** is only shown a few times but with devastating effect. The **dining table** which is used as a central item, is used for the meal then later as a basis for sitting of the cast under the Inspector's interrogation. The **fire** is a crucial buoyancy for the cast and their dismissal of the Inspector as a hoax (the call to the infirmary), but is used to swiftly ring the death knell for a real police inspector's forecast.

Act 1 Part 5

Discussion Point 5

Responses may explore some of the following:

Priestley beautifully crafts both the immediate shock of realisation to the specific characters and the broader social implications of the photograph in order to induce a confession that they know it is true, also to create suspense and tension for the characters as he refuses to show them the photograph until it is their time.

Act 1 Part 6

Active Learning Task 1

Responses may explore some of the following:

Priestley's intention was not to portray any of the characters as criminals, but perhaps to show that while their activities were not illegal in their nature they were morally reprehensible. The Inspector's role is to bring about a sense of imprisonment, but a sense of embarrassment or shame in their actions.

Discussion Point 6

See answer to Act 1 Part 5's AO1 Discussion Point 5 above

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AO1/AO2

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Discussion Point 7

Act 2 Part 2

Discussion Point 8

Act 2 Part 3

Discussion Point 9



Discussion Point 10

This is a question that students need to look at from both a sympathetic view (if possible destitute young girl, and comparing this with a more pragmatic view, for example, using purposes.

Extended Essay Question 5

A01/A02

- 

Act 2 Pair

Active Learning Task 2

Requires a personal response.

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Act 2 Part 6

Extended Essay Question 6

AO1/AO2

There are a variety of crucial examples across the play, and students could include:

- Mr Birling's contempt for the working classes, for the strike, Eva as a ringleader, for (of theft)
- Mrs Birling's contempt for just about anything, including her husband's lack of manliness, Birling's claim for charity
- Gerald's contempt (probably) for Mr Birling and the Inspector's authority

Act 3 Part 1

Discussion Point 12

Mrs Birling's determination to work out who the father of Daisy's child is, which manifests into that it may, though must be true keeps the audience on par and raises the tension shortly before a continuous run into Act 3.

Active Learning 3

Students could pick, for example, '*And that's where it happened...*' (p. 203) which refers to Eric and Daisy.

Act 3 Part 2

Discussion Point 12

The suggestion made by Priestley is that Daisy was working as a prostitute, and that the Inspector is especially as to the identity of who she would be accusing of rape – Mr Arthur Birling's wife (note the use of this writer's irony).

Discussion Point 13

This matter is not, perhaps, directly addressed by Priestley in the play, but potential reasons for the acknowledgement that the young can make mistakes, but learn from them; whereas, the older generation do not learn from their mistakes. After all, Eric was rebelling from his father, not from some other source of money.

Act 3 Part 3

Active Learning 4

Requires a personal response.

Act 3 Part 6

Extended Essay Question 7

AO1/AO2

- This would require a brief, but detailed, discussion of each character with specific examples following about, for example, Sheila:
 - Sheila is not as contemptuous for other people as perhaps her parents are – she is shocked by Eva's death: 'Oh, how horrible. Was it an accident?'
 - She is instrumental in getting Eva sacked from her job in the department store of a leading local businessman to do so. Sheila does not care what would happen to Eva – she would be destitute or whether she would simply get another job.
- See the answer to Act 3 Part 6 – Extended Essay Question 6 above for some suggestions.

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Whole Text Analysis

Characterisation

Eva

Discussion Point 1

Requires a personal response.

Active Learning Task 1

Requires a personal response.

Extended Essay Question 1

AO1/AO2

- a) See the suggested answer to Act 2 Part 6 – Extended Essay Question 6 above for ideas.
- b) See the suggested answer to Act 2 Part 6 – Extended Essay Question 6 above for ideas.

Mr Birling

Discussion Point 2

See Plot Summary – Discussion Point 1 above for suggested content.

Discussion Point 3

Priestley makes it quite clear throughout the play that Mr Birling has his own beliefs and everyone else either agrees with him or they're wrong, although he does waver at one point when he sacks her as a result of her leading a strike, but believes that Eva was, therefore, rightly sacked and others' pay rate. What she did after that, he believes, either serves her right, or was

Activity Learning Task 2

Responses could include: His belief that Sheila and Gerald will be having a similar meal and are getting engaged, the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, the idea that Germany does not care about the Titanic.

Active Learning Task 3

Requires a personal response.

Extended Essay Questions

AO1/AO2

- a) Responses may include:
- Mrs Birling challenges her husband over his table manners in congratulating the dinner.
 - The Inspector, Sheila and Eric are dismayed at the sacking of Eva Smith for simply organising a strike.
 - Eric challenges Mr Birling for not being a father he can talk to about delicate matters, a prostitute pregnant, probably by raping her.
- b) Responses may include:
- Begins play as unimpeachable but this is gradually then forcefully removed by the Inspector.
 - His wife is passive-aggressive in her challenges to his authority, generally out of a desire to protect her family.
 - His daughter, Sheila, becomes the iconoclast of the play challenging his act of authority at any subsequent opportunity.
 - Eric, who is drunk, refuses to go to bed on his father's orders, then challenges Mr Birling's authority.
 - The Inspector is the main challenge to his authority, who flatly refuses to be intimidated by Mr Birling's demands.

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(ii) Responses may include:

- (language) 'Squiffy' is middle-class, Edwardian colloquialism for being drunk (p. 174).
- (language) – 'Chap' is middle-class, Edwardian colloquialism for a male person.
- (language) – He's led a 'Varsity' life, in other words, a private education and/or middle-class experience due to the cost in 1912 (p. 174).
- (behaviour) – He pours whiskey from its container with ease, showing his family products. Whiskey would have been generally too expensive for the working class, unlikely to have decanted their whiskey into a decanter and keep it in.
- (behaviour) – Like all the characters, he has been seduced by Daisy with absolute confidence and unable to complain, or be taken seriously, as she did, about him attacking her.
- (behaviour) – Nevertheless, his actions of bursting out laughing and challenging her goes against middle-class norms in 1912, a tactic used by Priestley to suggest

(iii) Responses may include:

- Stirling's reaction shows him as 'not quite at ease', 'half-shy' and 'half assertive'.
- He is perceived across as feeble-minded or somewhat simple when he 'suddenly guffaws'.
- Priestley plainly presents him as an immature and irresponsible child in the eyes of Eric and don't get excited'.
- He gets excited/upset at the news of a girl's suicide.
- Eric's realisation or embarrassment of getting Daisy pregnant, plays heavily upon his actions.
- He has stolen money to pay Daisy off rather than to admit his part and confess.
- The Inspector's words about his involvement, combined with his father's scorn in an instant, realising what he has done.

Gerald**Active Learning Task 7**

Requires a personal response.

Extended Essay Question 6

AO1/AO2

a) Responses may include:

- Gerald genuinely agrees with Mr Birling's suggestion to not paying higher wages to his workers.
- He 'rescues' Daisy from the clutches of her father, who spots her being cornered by a friend, and provides him with sexual gratification, seducing her and providing her with accommodation.

b) Responses may include:

- His initial revelation of the name 'Daisy Renton' and the subsequent need to pay her.
- His realisation and coming to terms with Daisy's suicide causes a further revelation of his character.
- He tells the Inspector what happened to Daisy after he broke off their relationship, and how anyone else was involved, in a similar way to Mr Birling).
- That Gerald has to leave to get some fresh air and collect his thoughts after the revelation.

The Inspector**Active Learning Task 8**

Requires a personal response.

Extended Essay Question 7

AO1/AO2

a) Responses may include:

- As an iconoclast, the Inspector challenges each character and their involvement in the tragedy.
- For Mr and Mrs Birling he brings about short-lived regret, most likely due to the fact that when their involvement gets into the newspapers.
- For Sheila, his impact on the young Birlings is even more profound. Sheila takes on the role of mother and fiancé, while Eric, in as much as he can, chastises his father for his actions and of not showing him any affection or understanding that a young man is not a professional.
- It is perhaps more difficult to establish the Inspector's impact upon Gerald. The revelations about his involvement and his nerve and pursues the validity of the Inspector's accusations, but he is not a fool; at least he proves they're bogus in the short term.

b) See Plot Summary – Discussion Point 1 above for some suggested material and consider:

- A way out of poverty for huge numbers of working class people.
- A better standard of living for all, including medical care, and a fairer society with more control and ownership of production and wealth by the ruling classes.
- Equality in social standards for men and women and a respect for equality in social standards for men and women.
- Less control and ownership of production and wealth by the ruling classes.

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Relationships

Arthur Birling and Inspector Goole

Discussion Point 1

The relationship begins cordially enough, as Mr Birling welcomes the Inspector as an opportunity as a magistrate to Gerald. When the true reason for the visit is revealed, and revealed a patience is lost and he tries in vain to outmanoeuvre the Inspector. Despite his protests, Gerald is interviewed having realised that he is no match for the prepared police officer. Birling has a working-class background, but is clearly middle class nowadays, makes it all from a person below him in social standing.

Sheila, Gerald and Inspector Goole

Discussion Point 2

There could be a starker contrast between the reactions of the two young lovers. Sheila is willing to take some of the blame and motivated to show the other characters their involvement. Her class upbringing doesn't allow him to show emotion, plus he's a bloke, and how embarrassed then? Priestley clearly plays on Gerald's emotion taking a slight knock, as he is after all not where on at least three occasions he has to compose himself from breaking down.

Sybil and Inspector Goole

Discussion Point 3

The Inspector always has a calm, collective and measured approach to all of the characters. It is exactly how Mrs Birling makes him feel. From the moment she swishes into the dinner, who she is (if it was a comedy, the stage directions would have the cast rolling their eyes), about the charitable work she does (or does not), the Inspector is unimpressed and, indeed, her attitude; although, he doesn't show this necessarily.

Eric and Inspector Goole

Active Learning Task 1

This requires a personal response using textual references.

Discussion Point 4

It is perhaps the most changing relationship from the Inspector's point of view. The Inspector is apportioning more of the blame of Eva/Daisy's death on Eric. If she hadn't fallen pregnant. However, as Eric is only young, and seeing the patronising and belittling by his parents, the Inspector on each of the characters. The Inspector clearly blames the parents for shaping Eric's attitude. Whether the bullied has become the bully, the Inspector doesn't.

Settings and 'Props'

Discussion Point 1

According to the stage directions, the location of the play is set in 'the dining room of a factory in Brumley, a fictitious town in the North Midlands. The time period is during Edwardian times, a time of great social unrest in England and around the world.

Discussion Point 2

The colour makes the scene in the dining room appear warm and loved against the drab, but

Extended Essay Question 1

AO1/AO2

Responses may include the following: The play is set in 1912, written in 1945. Priestley makes it easier for the audience to empathise with the characters, and clearly Priestley about how the world was in 1912. Priestley squarely blames the government for allowing the two world wars to occur. He tells the audience what should have happened then, in 1912, and what needed to happen, in

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Extended Essay Question 2

AO1/AO2

- Responses may include the following: there are very few props used in the play, but central importance, for example:
- *Eva/Daisy's diary* – this is referred to, but not seen and is crucial for the Inspector to
- The Birling's house telephone – this is used by Priestley as a paradox. It is the bringer of exposing the hoax, but bad news in the final part of Act Three where Mr Birling asks the characters that a police inspector is on his way... It is a symbol of wealth and props have been very expensive and rare in homes.
- Clothing – the Birlings and Gerald are wearing evening dress, the men in tails and wigs showing celebration, not simple formal dinner attire. This clothing juxtaposes with plain darkish suit and wig of the Chambermaid.
- Alcohol – is only very expensive and in abundance – port and whiskey in decanter of wealth, but paradoxically, Eric's coping method for despair and the other characters.
- Cigar, cigarettes – similar to alcohol these are used as symbols of wealth, especially imported from somewhere exotic like Cuba.
- The doorbell – this is crucial in 'ringing in' changes – the Inspector's arrival in Act One or Gerald's return in Act Three to expose the hoax.
- A photograph (or photographs), of Eva Smith / 'Mrs Birling' (but not of Daisy Renton) from Mr Birling, Sheila and Mrs Birling and crucial to the hoax. The photograph(s) are a character at a time, for one line of enquiry at a time.

Themes**Discussion Point 1**

1. This is the final event that ultimately leads to Eva/Daisy's suicide. She has no money and was her final hope of survival.
2. Specifically, the class system that the ruling classes control the lives of the workers' life; and also the need for social change.
3. She is indifferent to the working class, until her authority is challenged by one of them. She mutters under their breath at Mrs Birling. I mean really...

Discussion Point 2

The ruling classes, such as the Birlings, see the working classes as the tools to keep the working classes in check. The Inspector, see socialism as a means of distributing wealth in

Active Learning Task 1

Requires a personal response.

Active Learning Task 2

Requires a personal response.

Extended Essay Question 1

AO1/AO2

Responses may include:

- Initially all of the characters attending the celebration have very little concept of responsibility.
- The Inspector is instrumental in changing this lack of responsibility by representing the working class.
- Mr Birling feels he has little or no responsibility to his workers as he pays them the minimum wage and is responsible for keeping his business profitable.
- Mr Birling sees himself as the head of the household and, therefore, providing the food, expensive port and strong advice but not love or affection that his son, Eric, needs.
- Mrs Birling explains she has a responsibility to 'do good cases' while chairing her own personal feelings only allow her own opinion as to who is deserving and she uses her influence to get members into voting her way.
- Gerald's responsibility is a bit more problematic – did he take responsibility for his actions and his wife's? Or was it to serve his own self?
- In getting Sheila sacked, Sheila showed no responsibility in allowing her feelings to dictate her actions and taking responsibility for her actions.
- Eric has no sense of responsibility at all, he drinks, parties, drinks more and parties more pregnant and tries to pay them off to leave him alone.

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Ideas and Messages

Discussion Point 1

For the simple reason, they would lose power and control of wealth. Wealth breeds wealth and power and control of land and production, the ruling classes would lose control.

Active Learning Task 1

Requires a personal answer.

Form and Structure

Active Learning Task 1

Responses may include:

- Requires a very tight plot – clearly tight plot – dinner party excess, then Inspector character, the Inspector's message, and ends with aftermath.
- A climax in the plot which takes place near, or very near, to the end of the final act – climaxes to the plot – the Inspector's final speech.
- Key information is kept from all, or some, of the characters, to be revealed as the plot involvement in the death of Eva/Daisy is revealed, forcibly, by the Inspector.
- The main storyline of the play occurs before the opening of the play and is referred to as the actual play – the play is a revelation of previous events concerning the characters' involvement.
- The plot is divided up into a chain of events to be revealed as the play progresses – taken in turn to show the chain of events leading to Eva's death.
- The climax is where a central character, against adversity, accomplishes that which the Inspector's final speech.
- The climax usually ends with a resolution of the issues – there is a kind of resolution of their involvement, but differ in their concern over the death.

Active Learning Task 2

Responses may include:

- Unity of Time – here the tragedy should only recount the story happening in one day – runs in real time of about an hour and a half.
- Unity of Space – there should be only one scene/setting – the dining room of Mr Birling.
- Unity of Action – there should be a tight and fast-paced plot with no subplots or side plots or contribute to the plot. Each character is taken in turn to show their involvement relevant to the play's death.

Extended Essay Question 2

A01/A02

a) Responses may discuss:

- A retrospective play in three Acts
- That it is a well-made play
- That it follows the structure of a Greek tragedy
- Has the hallmarks of a detective, whodunit, novel.

b) Responses may discuss:

- The use of a chain of events to build tension
- The use of retrospective to place the play in 1912, more than thirty years previous
- The use of end of scene/beginning of scene cliffhangers
- The use of entrances and exits

The Writer's Use of Language

Discussion Point 1

This is perhaps more difficult for students to see they need to interpret the written word. Watching a television drama is a useful way to see how a play's director and cast interpret it. Responses should focus on characters and could include Mr Birling having a provincial sound to his voice, the ruling classes not having this. This makes him appear somewhat stupider perhaps than he is. Priestley deliberately written in by Priestley against the working classes by the accent. This is in contrast to the ruling classes and pronounces the King's English as the King would speak.

Active Learning Task 1

Requires a personal response.

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Extended Essay Question 1

AO1/AO2

- a) Responses could include:
- The play is set in 1912, but written as a retrospective in 1945 allowing the audience to know what the Inspector knows.
 - The Inspector knows all the answers it seems and is simply confirming his suspicion that there were no diary, would he be so well-informed?
 - Mr Birling's speeches in Act One are masterfully written by Priestley to show the businessman's beliefs.
- b) Responses could include:
- Euphemisms are used by the cast to talk about something that has an unpleasant meaning.
 - It is an attempt to avoid upsetting the young or females in the play, who would find such words as 'intercourse' or 'prostitute'! Example such as 'went away' by the other members of the cast.
 - In the end, the Inspector does not generally use euphemisms, as his language has to be clear much time after all and his questions need to be clear and without any ambiguity.

Context**Active Learning Task 1**

Personal response is required.

Discussion Point 1

The strike at Birling's had to fail in order for Priestley to be able to explain Eva Smith's sad time of the play were successful, so Priestley was simply being historically as well as open to interpretation.

Discussion Point 2

1. Mr Birling is quite correct about the importance of the motorcar and of the aeroplane and understands what will sell. However, he is completely incorrect about the *Titanic* about the ship's unsinkability.
2. This requires a personal response.
3. This requires a personal response.

Extended Essay Question 1

AO1/AO2

- a) See Plot Summary and Active Learning Task above for some suggested ideas.

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