

# **‘An Inspector Calls’ revision booklet**

**By the playwright J.B.  
Priestley**

First published – 1945  
Set – 1912

**Use this pack to revise**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Below is a list of possible revision activities to complete for *An Inspector Calls*.**

As a rule, revision is most productive when you have to replicate what you are doing in the exam.

1) Re-read the opening of the play until the Inspector enters, focusing on foreshadowing
2) Re-read Act 2 – thinking about how the characters develop
3) Re-read Act 3 – thinking about the importance of the ending
4) Revise quotations using the cards
5) Cut your cards up and divide them into useful quotes for different characters and themes
<p>6) Take each character. Gerald, Sheila, Eva, The Inspector, Mrs Birling, Mr Birling, Eric. Take key themes – responsibility, social class, morality, political viewpoint of Priestley</p> <p>On A3 paper or a double page in your book, mindmap a question about either character or theme</p> <p>Have 6 boxes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What the character symbolises / represents</li> <li>2) Why Priestley has constructed them in this way</li> <li>3) The Openings / what ideas are foreshadowing later events</li> <li>4) Dramatic devices – why are they significant / symbolic of the character's traits</li> <li>5) Figurative language and symbolism</li> <li>6) Significance of the denouement (ending)</li> </ol>
7) Revise context – look at the back of your A3 sheets and youtube clips to add to your contextual knowledge
8) Add contextual information to the quotations on your cards from your A3 sheet or your planners
9) Repeat stage 4 mind maps, without notes, remembering quotations and what you would say around them
10) Speed planning – Look at the selection of questions below. Spend 5 minutes planning your response.
11) Introductions - add to your plan with a 2-3 sentence introduction, showing your understanding of why the character / theme is important
12) Write practice essays you have planned in timed conditions. Make sure you practice one on theme / one character / one on political viewpoints

- How does Priestley present **Gerald's relationships with women** in the play?
- How does Priestley present **Mr Birling** in *An Inspector Calls*?
- How does Priestley **use the character of Mr Birling to communicate his political views**?
- How does Priestley present different **ideas about blame and taking responsibility** in *An Inspector Calls*?
- How does Priestley present different **ideas about morality** in *An Inspector Calls*?
- How does Priestley present different **ideas about power and influence** in *An Inspector Calls*?

# Sample exam paper

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## Section A: Modern prose or drama

Answer one question from this section on your chosen text.

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JB Priestley: *An Inspector Calls*

EITHER

0 1

How and why does Sheila change in *An Inspector Calls*?

Write about:

- how Sheila responds to her family and to the Inspector
- how Priestley presents Sheila by the ways he writes.

[30 marks]  
AO4 [4 marks]

OR

Question 2

0 2

How does Priestley explore responsibility in *An Inspector Calls*?

Write about:

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

[30 marks]  
AO4 [4 marks]

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## **Key structure and stage directions**

When writing about a play it is important that you understand staging and structural devices which may help you to comment on themes or effects:

- **Exposition-** The opening is designed to provide a gentle introduction to the story, introducing characters and setting the scene.
- **Entrances and exits-** These are timed carefully so they heighten the tension and drama.
- **Obligatory scene-** These are scenes in a play that reveal a secret. These also increase suspense and tension.
- **The climatic curtain-** Many acts and/or scenes will end on a cliffhanger, a point where things are particularly tense or dramatic
- **Mistaken identity-** A case of mistaken identity or issues surrounding identity
- **Plot-** The plot is the main storyline of the play
- **The denouement-** The ending of a well made play is both logical and plausible. Why would Priestley have used a twist and broken away from this tradition?
- **Lighting-** The lighting of a play is always an important feature. Why does the lighting go from 'pink and intimate' to 'brighter and harder' when the inspector comes in?
- **Stage directions** are often used to give actors an idea of their non verbal body language. Here are some important examples from the play:  
Sheila is described as "gaily, possessively", giving us a hint about her relationship with Gerald  
Gerald and Birling laugh "mindlessly" providing a feeling of arrogance and irony for the audience.
- **Dramatic irony-** This is shown heavily throughout the play. It means that the audience know something that the characters in the play may not. It is often used to build tension or for comedic effect.

## **Plot summary**

One evening in the spring of 1912, the Birlings are celebrating their daughter Sheila's engagement to Gerald Croft, who is also present. Husband and wife Arthur and Sybil Birling, along with their son Eric, are pleased with themselves. Birling toasts the happy couple, and Gerald presents Sheila with a ring which absolutely delights her.

Birling makes a lengthy speech, not only congratulating Gerald and Sheila, but also commenting on the state of the nation. He predicts prosperity, particularly referring to the example of the "unsinkable" Titanic, which set sail the week earlier. Birling styles himself as a "hard-headed man of business."

The women leave the room, and Eric follows them. Birling and Gerald discuss the fact that Gerald might have "done better for [himself] socially": Sheila is Gerald's social inferior. Birling confides to Gerald that he is in the running for a knighthood in the next Honors List. When Eric returns, Birling continues giving advice, and he is passionately announcing his "every man for himself" worldview when the doorbell rings.

It is an Inspector, who refuses a drink from Birling. Birling is surprised, as an ex-Lord Mayor and an alderman, that he has never seen the Inspector before, though he knows the Brumley police force pretty well. The Inspector explains that he is here to investigate the death of a girl who died two hours ago in the Infirmary after committing suicide by drinking disinfectant. Her name was Eva Smith, and the Inspector brings with him a photograph, which he shows to Birling—but not to anyone else.

It is revealed that Eva Smith worked in Birling's works, from which she was dismissed after being a ringleader in an unsuccessful strike to demand better pay for Birling's workers. The Inspector outlines that "a chain of events" might be responsible for the girl's death, and—for the rest of the play—interrogates each member of the family, asking questions about the part they played in Eva Smith's life. We then discover that Sheila Birling encountered Eva Smith at Milwards, where Sheila jealously insisted that she was dismissed. Sheila feels tremendously guilty about her part in Eva's death. It becomes clear that each member of the family might have part of the responsibility.

Eva Smith then, we discover, changed her name to Daisy Renton—and it is by this name that she encountered Gerald Croft, with whom she had a protracted love affair. Sheila is not as upset as one might expect; indeed, she seems to have already guessed why Gerald was absent from their relationship last summer. He put her up in a cottage he was looking after, made love to her, and gave her gifts of money, but after a while, he ended the relationship. Gerald asks the Inspector, whose

control over proceedings is now clear, to leave—and Sheila gives him back his engagement ring.

The Inspector next interrogates Mrs. Birling, who remains icily resistant to accepting any responsibility. Eva Smith came to her, pregnant, to ask for help from a charity committee of which Mrs. Birling was chairperson. Mrs. Birling used her influence to have the committee refuse to help the girl. Mrs. Birling resists the Inspector's questioning, eventually forcefully telling him that the father of the child is the one with whom the true responsibility rests.

It transpires, to Mrs. Birling's horror, that Eric was, in fact, the father of the child, and she has just unwittingly damned her own son. Once Eric returns, the Inspector interrogates him about his relationship with Eva Smith. After meeting her in a bar when he was drunk (he has a drinking problem), he forced his way into her rooms, then later returned and continued their sexual relationship. He also gave her money that he had stolen from his father's works, but after a while, Eva broke off the relationship, telling Eric that he did not love her.

The Inspector makes a final speech, telling the Birlings, "We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other. And I tell you that the time will soon come when, if men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish." He exits.

After his exit, the Birlings initially fight among themselves. Sheila finally suggests that the Inspector might not have been a real police inspector. Gerald returns, having found out as much from talking to a policeman on the corner of the street. The Birlings begin to suspect that they have been hoaxed. Significantly, Eric and Sheila, unlike their parents and Gerald, still see themselves as responsible. "He was our police inspector all right," Eric and Sheila conclude, whether or not he had the state's authority or was even real.

Realizing that they could each have been shown a different photograph, and after calling the Chief Constable to confirm their suspicions, Mr. and Mrs. Birling and Gerald conclude that they have been hoaxed, and they are incredibly relieved. Gerald suggests that there were probably several different girls in each of their stories. They call the Infirmary and learn delightedly that no girl has died that night—the Infirmary has seen no suicide for months. Everyone, it seems, is off the hook, even if each of their actions was immoral and irresponsible. Only Sheila and Eric fail to agree with that sentiment and recognize the overall theme of responsibility. As Birling mocks his children's feelings of moral guilt, the phone rings. He answers it and is shocked, revealing the play's final twist: "That was the police. A girl has just died—on her way to the Infirmary—after swallowing some disinfectant. And a police inspector is on his way here—to ask some—questions—"

# **Tips – how to approach the ‘An Inspector Calls’ exam**

## **How do I plan my response?**

1. There will be two questions to choose from; pick one question
2. Read the question carefully and highlight/underline the key words
3. Try to think of five quotations that relate to the question – they could be one word quotations.
4. Bring in at least two relevant contextual references; anchor them to a relevant quotation

## **How do I achieve the top marks?**

- Do you know the play and characters really well?
- Do you mention Priestley’s name at least five times and identify the techniques he uses?
- Can you use five well chosen quotations?
- Can you form an argument and consider additional interpretations?
- Can you bring in relevant contextual references

## **How do I structure my essay?**

Paragraph 1 First impressions (initial description/stage directions)

Paragraph 2 Describe how this character treated Eva Smith/Daisy Renton

Paragraph 3 Describe how this character is treated by other people

Paragraph 4 Explain what this character symbolises

Paragraph 5 Explain what happens to the character at the end of the play

## **Highlight the essay with the following success criteria**

1. Topic sentence
2. Who, when, what is happening
3. Short quote
4. Use magic phrase ‘Priestley’s use of...’
5. Technique
6. Analysis/Explanation (comment on effect/connotation/image created by word)
7. Context
8. Repeat!



## Highlight these key quotes from 'An Inspector Calls' to make essay plans

### ACT ONE

*"Arthur Birling is a **heavy-looking**, rather **portentous** man... rather **provincial** in his speech. (Sybil Birling is) a rather **cold** woman and her **husband's social superior**. Sheila is a pretty girl... **very pleased with life**. Gerald Croft is... well-bred young **man-about-town**. Eric is... not quite at ease, **half shy, half assertive**."*

*"The lighting should be pink and intimate until the INSPECTOR arrives, and then it should be brighter and harder."*

BIRLING: "**Lower costs and higher prices.**" (Page 4)

BIRLING: "**Hard-headed** businessman." (Page 6)

BIRLING: "Nobody wants war." (Page 6)

BIRLING: "Unsinkable, **absolutely unsinkable.**" (Page 7)

BIRLING: "**Token of their self-respect.**" (Page 9)

BIRLING: "The way those cranks talk... as if we were all mixed up together **like bees in a hive.**" (Page 10)

*"An impression of **massiveness, solidity and purposefulness.**"* (Page 11)

INSPECTOR: "**Burnt her inside out**, of course." (Page 11)

INSPECTOR: "A **chain** of events." (Page 14)

BIRLING: "**Lively good-looking girl... good worker too.**" (Page 14)

BIRLING: "**Pitiful affair.**" (Page 15)

BIRLING: "**ring-leaders.**" (Page 15)

BIRLING: "If you don't **come down sharply** on some of these people, they'd soon be **asking for the earth.**" (Page 15)

INSPECTOR: "Died, after **several hours of agony**" (Page 17) ... "she wasn't pretty when I first saw her today... been pretty – **very pretty** (Page 18) ... "**few friends**, lonely, **half starved**, she was feeling desperate." (Page 19) ... "there are a lot of young women leading that sort of existence." (Page 19)

SHEILA: "These girls aren't **cheap labour** – they're people." (Page 19)

INSPECTOR: "Counting their pennies in their **dingy little back bedrooms** (Page 20) ... "looking at what was left of Eva Smith... **nasty mess.**" (Page 21)

SHEILA: "If she's been some **miserable little creature**, I don't suppose I'd have done it." (Page 24)

GERALD: "I don't come in to this **suicide business.**" (Page 26)

### ACT TWO

GERALD: "(Sheila's) had a long, exciting and tiring day." (Page 27)

INSPECTOR: "You think women ought to be **protected against unpleasant and disturbing things?**" (Page 27)

MRS SYBIL BIRLING: "You seem to have made a great impression on this child, Inspector." (Page 30)

SHEILA: "You mustn't try to **build up a** kind of **wall** between us and that girl." (Page 30 and Page 32)

SHEILA: "Stop these silly pretences." (Page 32)

SHEILA: "He's giving us the **rope** – so that we'll **hang ourselves**." (Page 33)

GERALD: "She was very pretty – soft brown hair and **big dark eyes**... young, fresh and charming." (Page 35)

GERALD: "I **insisted** in Daisy moving into those rooms." (Page 37)

INSPECTOR: "Your daughter isn't **living on the moon**. She's here in Brumley too." (Page 37)

SHEILA: "**Wonderful Fairy Prince**." (Page 38)

INSPECTOR: "(Massively) Public men, Mr Birling, have responsibilities as well as privileges." (Page 41)

MRS SYBIL BIRLING: "That was one of the things that prejudiced me against her." (Page 43)

MRS SYBIL BIRLING: "I used my influence to have it refused." (Page 44)

INSPECTOR: "She'd been **turned out and turned down** too many times. **This was the end**... alone, friendless, almost penniless, desperate....advice, sympathy, friendliness.... You **slammed the door** in her face." (Page 45)

INSPECTOR: "Her position now is that she lies with a **burnt-out inside** on a slab." (Page 46)

MRS SYBIL BIRLING: "(Eric was) **silly and wild**." (Page 46)

MRS SYBIL BIRLING: "As if a **girl of that sort** would ever refuse money." (Page 47)

MRS SYBIL BIRLING: "Behaving like a hysterical child... make sure that he's **compelled to confess**." (Page 48)

*"She stops, and exchanges a frightened glance with her husband.... Eric enters looking extremely pale and distressed."* (Page 49)

### **ACT THREE**

ERIC: "Yes, I **insisted**" (I went to her lodgings). (Page 51)

ERIC: "I was in a state when a **chap easily turns nasty** – and I threatened to make a row... I didn't even remember... **hellish** thing... I couldn't remember her name...pretty and a good sport..." (Page 52)

INSPECTOR: "You'll be able to **divide the responsibility** between you when I'm gone." (Page 54)

ERIC: "**You killed them** both... your own grandchild." (Page 55)

INSPECTOR: "As if she was an animal, a thing, not a person...there are **millions and millions** of Eva Smiths and John Smiths left with us... We are **members of one body**.... if men will not learn the lesson, then they will be taught in **fire and blood and anguish**." (Page 56)

*Sheila is quietly crying. Mrs Birling has collapsed into a chair. Eric is brooding desperately. Birling... moves hesitantly... stops, looks gloomily... pours himself a drink... hastily swallows."* (Page 57)

SHEILA: "Mother **hardened her heart** and gave her the final push." (Page 59)

ERIC: "He was our police inspector all right." (Page 59)

BIRLING: "That fellow was a fraud and we've been hoaxed... if anybody's **up to their neck** in this business, you are (Eric) ... "all we have to do is keep our heads." (Page 64)

ERIC: "It's still the **same rotten story** whether it's been told to a police inspector or somebody else." (Page 64)





Lightning should be pink ... until the inspector arrives



Mr B: Unstoppable – absolutely unstoppable



Mr B: as if we were all mixed up together like bees in a hive



Inspector: a chain of events



Inspector: strong disinfectant



Inspector: you dommed the door in her face



Lower costs / higher prices



Inspector: fire and blood and anguish



Inspector: we are members of one body



Mr B: they'd soon be asking for the earth/ Inspector: better to ask for the earth than to take it



We'll have to show our guilt



Miss B: I accept no blame for it or all



Sheila: you mostn't try to build up a wall between us and that girl



Sheila: he's passing us the rope so that we'll hang ourselves



Sheila: about Gerald: wonderful fairy prince



Mr B: hard-headed man of business



Mr B: about Sheila: hysterical child



Inspector: there are millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths



Sheila: these girls own't cleanup labour – they're people

## An Inspector Calls - Essay structure and Quotations

<p>(Initially, Priestley uses the dramatic opening moments of the play to <b>foreshadow</b> (the theme of...../ key traits of the character of .....</p>	<p><b>Furthermore, Priestley uses symbolic stage directions and dramatic devices to reinforce</b> (the theme of...../ key traits of the character of .....) to the audience</p>
<p>"Arthur Birling is a <b>heavy-looking, rather portentous man... rather provincial</b> in his speech. (Sybil Birling is) a rather <b>cold</b> woman and her <b>husband's social superior</b>. Sheila is a pretty girl... <b>very pleased with life</b>. Gerald Croft is... <b>well-bred young man-about-town</b>. Eric is... <b>not quite at ease, half shy, half assertive.</b>"</p> <p>SHEILA: (<i>half serious, half playful</i>) Yes – except for that summer, when you never came near me. 'p.3 MRS BIRLING: What an expression. Sheila! Really the things you girls pick up these days. p.3</p> <p>BIRLING: "<b>Lower costs and higher prices.</b>" (Page 4)</p> <p>BIRLING: "<b>Hard-headed</b> businessman." (Page 6)</p> <p>BIRLING: "Nobody wants war." (Page 6)</p> <p>BIRLING: "Unsinkable, <b>absolutely unsinkable.</b>" (Page 7)</p> <p>BIRLING: "<b>Token of their self-respect.</b>" (Page 9)</p> <p>BIRLING: "that a man has to <b>mid his own business</b> and look after himself and his own – and....."</p> <p>BIRLING: "The way those cranks talk... as if we were all mixed up together <b>like bees in a hive.</b>" (Page 10)</p> <p>"An impression of <b>massiveness, solidity and purposefulness.</b>" (Page 11)</p> <p>INSPECTOR: "<b>Burnt her inside out</b>, of course." (Page 11)</p> <p>INSPECTOR: "A <b>chain</b> of events." (Page 14)</p> <p>BIRLING: "<b>Lively good-looking girl... good worker too.</b>" (Page 14)</p> <p>BIRLING: "If you don't <b>come down sharply</b> on some of these people, they'd soon be <b>asking for the earth</b>..... Inspector: 'It's better to ask for the earth than to take it" p.15</p> <p>INSPECTOR: "Died, after <b>several hours of agony</b>" (Page 17) ... "she wasn't pretty when I her saw her today... been pretty – <b>very pretty</b> (Page 18) ... "<b>few friends</b>, lonely, <b>half starved</b>, she was feeling desperate." (Page 19) ... "there are a lot of young women leading that sort of existence." (Page 19)</p> <p>SHEILA: "These girls aren't <b>cheap labour</b> – they're people." (Page 19)</p>	<p>'All three acts...take place in the dining room of the Birling's house in Brumley. It is an evening in Spring in 1912.'</p> <p>'good solid furniture...substantial and heavily comfortable but not cosy and homelike' p.1</p> <p>"The lighting should be pink and intimate until the INSPECTOR arrives, and then it should be brighter and harder."p.1</p> <p>'Arthur Birling at one end, his wife at the other' p.1.....Eric 'downstage' <b>Sheila:</b> (<i>half serious, half playful</i>)</p> <p>GERALD (taking out the ring)...SHEILA: 'isn't it a beauty... Now I feel really engaged' p5</p> <p>'We hear the sharp ring of a front door bell. p.10</p> <p>Inspector takes a photograph....the Inspector interposes himself between them and the photograph.p.12</p> <p>Sheila has now entered...(gaily) What's this about the streets?' p.16</p> <p>The other four exchange bewildered and perturbed glances. P.18</p> <p>He produces the photograph...(Sheila) give a 'half-stiffed sob'</p> <p>....Daisy Renton GERALD: (startled) What!</p> <p>'...looking steadily and searchingly at them' p.26</p> <p>Mrs Birling enters briskly and self-confidently p.29</p> <p>Inspector (massively takes charge) p.28</p> <p>"She stops, and exchanges a frightened glance with her husband.... Eric enters looking extremely pale and distressed. Curtain falls quickly" (Page 49)</p> <p>INSPECTOR: (<i>taking charge, masterfully</i>) p.55</p> <p>INSPECTOR: 'But just remember this...! .....'He walks straight out leaving them staring and wondering <i>Sheila is quietly crying. Mrs Birling has collapsed into a chair. Eric is brooding desperately. Birling... moves hesitantly... stops, looks gloomily... pours himself a drink... hastily swallows.</i>" (Page 57)</p> <p>(When Gerald rings the Infirmary) "<i>Birling wipes his brows, Sheila shivers, Eric clasps and unclasps his hands.</i>" (Page 70)</p> <p>BIRLING: (<i>looks in a panic-stricken fashion at the others</i>) "<i>The telephone rings sharply... As they stare guiltily and dumbfounded, the curtain falls.</i>" (Page 72)</p>
<p>Finally, Priestley uses the structural significance of the dramatic denouement to leave the audience with the sense that.....</p>	
<p>INSPECTOR: "As if she was an animal, a thing, not a person...there are <b>millions and millions</b> of Eva Smiths and John Smiths left with us... We are <b>members of one body</b>.... if men will not learn the lesson, then they will be taught in <b>fire and blood and anguish.</b>" (Page 56)</p> <p>SHEILA: "Mother <b>hardened her heart</b> and gave her the final push." (Page 59)</p> <p>ERIC: "He was our police inspector all right." (Page 59)</p> <p>BIRLING: on telephone finding out if there is a police inspector (He puts the phone down and looks at the others) There's no police inspector</p> <p>BIRLING: "That fellow was a fraud and we've been hoaxed... if anybody's <b>up to their neck</b> in this business, you are (Eric) ... "all we have to do is keep our heads." (Page 64)</p> <p>ERIC: "It's still the <b>same rotten story</b> whether it's been told to a police inspector or somebody else." (Page 64)</p> <p>BIRLING: "Some fathers I know would have <b>kicked you out of the house</b> anyhow by this time. So <b>hold your tongue</b> if you want to stay here." (Page 65)</p> <p>GERALD: "But how do you know it's the same girl?" (Looks around triumphantly at them...) p.66</p> <p>GERALD: "Everything's alright now, Sheila. (<i>Holds up the ring.</i>) What about this ring?" (Page 71)</p> <p>BIRLING: "Now look at the pair of them – the <b>famous younger generation</b> who know it all." (Page 72)</p> <p>BIRLING: A girl has just died – on her way to the Infirmary.....And a police inspector is on his way.' P.72</p>	

## Highlight these contextual references and add them to your plans

Q – What is context?

A – Context is the background to the play. Context is fact. It is what would have influenced J.B. Priestley when he wrote *An Inspector Calls*. You could argue that *An Inspector Calls* is a reflection of society in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Q – How many references do I need to use?

A – At least two. Ideally, you would end each paragraph with context.

Q – How do I add context?

A - Use phrases like ‘This could have reflected...’ ‘Perhaps Priestley was inspired by...’ ‘This may link to...’ ‘This may represent the arrogance/selfishness of people like...’

Q – Are there different types of context?

A – Yes, it is not just biographical. Context has been sub divided into different categories. Try to use a mixture of the different types.

### Biographical (context about Priestley’s life)

1. J.B Priestley was born in Bradford, an industrial area that would have had a lot of factories in.
2. His father was a socialist (a belief in caring about everyone in society) and would listen to his father and his friends discussing politics.
3. During World War II, he broadcast a weekly radio show called ‘Postscripts’ where he would often attack the Conservatives (Labour’s rivals, and a more right wing party).
4. Priestley’s radio show was cancelled as he was so controversial.
5. In his radio show he criticised for the government for paying sailors in the navy such a low salary. This is another example of him highlighting the inequality that the working class had to suffer.
6. Priestley set the play in 1912. Two years later, World War I would break out (1914-1918).
7. Priestley fought in World War I and was nearly killed twice. He said he was very ‘lucky’ to have survived it. He would have seen the dangers of war.
8. Priestley himself had affairs even though he was married. Perhaps Gerald is a representation of himself?
9. Some critics (Katie Gray) think his plays were ‘often essays in disguise’ and were just an extension of his views.

### Genre

The play is a modern day morality play. In the middle ages, this genre was very popular. Morality play’s purpose was to teach the audience how to behave and show them the consequences if they sinned.

In Year 7, you studied ‘A Christmas Carol’ by Charles Dickens. ‘An Inspector Calls’ follows the same plot: an immoral man is visited by a spirit and taught to think of the consequences of his actions.

The Seven Deadly Sins come from old fashioned Christian beliefs. It could be argued that each of the characters are guilty of one of the Seven Deadly sins:

1. Pride (Mrs Birling)
2. Sloth (Eric)
3. Gluttony (Eric and Mr Birling)
4. Greed (Eric and Mr Birling)
5. Jealousy (Sheila)
6. Lust (Eric and Gerald)
7. Anger (Sheila and Mrs Birling)

### **Political/philosophical context**

1. JB Priestley was a socialist. This means he believed in equality and believed that society had a responsibility to look after each other. The Inspector represents Priestley's socialist views.
2. Capitalism is a right wing ideology – it's based on the idea that business and profit is very important; perhaps more important than caring for others in society who are not as successful. Birling is obviously a capitalist.
3. Some critics believe Priestley's purpose was to get the audience thinking about inequality in society.
4. Some critics believe Priestley's purpose was to make the audience happy that life in 1948 was better than it was in 1912; however, he also wanted them to think how things could be improved further.
5. Some critics believe Priestley is asking the audience to unite to improve society.
6. Some critics think that Priestley wanted the audience to question 'not only the complacency of the Birlings' generation, but also their own' (Gray).
7. Some critics believe that the apparent respectability of an Edwardian upper middle class is shown to be a sham.

### **Literary tradition (famous writers that would have influenced Priestley at that time)**

1. HG Wells and GB Shaw were also writers who held socialist beliefs (Birling criticises both in his early speech).
2. George Orwell was another satirist (someone who criticised society). He wrote books called 'Animal Farm' and '1984' where he also criticised society.
3. 'The Linden Tree' was also written by J.B. Priestley. It was published in 1948 (three years after 'An Inspector Calls') and it is considered to be his finest play. The play is about the Linden family, an affluent middle class family. Both 'The Linden Tree' and 'An Inspector Calls' teach the audience the effect an individual's actions can have over a passage of time.

### **Historical context in 1912 (when the play is set)**

1. In 1912, it was the Edwardian era so you could use phrases like 'the events take place in a suburban Edwardian house'.
2. In 1912, Germany was expanding its empire and this would cause World War I
3. In 1912, women were not seen as equal to men. They would not win the right to vote until 1918.
4. In 1912, there was a huge strike by coal miners for better wages.
5. In 1912, The Titanic sank in April (the play is set in March 1912)
6. Priestley perhaps set his play in this era because it was one where he was influenced by what was going on around him; it was this decade that 'set their stamp' on him

### **Social context in 1912 (when the play is set)**

1. In 1912, the middle and upper classes had a very comfortable life.
2. In 1912, family members were expected to know their role and be content with their position. Parents were in charge of the family and would not expect to be questioned.

3. In 1912, there were very clear class divisions. The working class were very poor and were often exploited. It was impossible for them to break into the middle classes.
4. In 1912, people were expected to look after themselves. There was no such thing as benefits, like job seekers allowance.
5. In 1912, some working class people (like Edna) were servants for the higher classes.
6. Brumley is perhaps Birmingham, as it was very industrial in 1912 and would have had a lot of factories. A lot of the working class workers would have suffered poor pay and living conditions.

**Historical context in 1946 (when the play was first performed)**

1. World War II had just ended very recently (1939-1945) and theatres were beginning to show plays again (they would have shut during the war).
2. Labour (a socialist party) had just won the general election when the play was published. The NHS (free health care for all) was just one of their socialistic policies.
3. The NHS was also the government's way of saying thank you to the public for their help in winning World War II.
4. World War II brought the classes together as they fought side-by-side, therefore breaking down barriers. Women also gained more power as they filled important roles on the 'Home Front'.



## Arthur Birling

Who, what, when, where?	Quote	Explanation – language technique, what does it suggest/imply about the topic (title of this page)		
		What is the technique?	What is Priestley saying about the character?	Why is Priestley saying this?
	<b>"Heavy-looking, rather portentous man</b> ( <i>Stage directions</i> )			
	<b>"I've got to cover this up as soon as I can."</b> ( <i>About Eric's theft</i> )			
	<b>"Unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable."</b> ( <i>About the Titanic</i> )			
	<b>"Laughs complacently"</b> ( <i>talking to Gerald about avoiding trouble with the police</i> )			
	<b>"Like bees in a hive"</b> ( <i>describing Socialists</i> )			
	<b>"The famous younger generation who know it all"</b> ( <i>describing Sheila and Eric</i> )			

## Sybil Birling

Who, what, when, where?	Quote	Explanation – language technique, what does it suggest/imply about the topic (title of this page)		
		What is the technique?	What is Priestley saying about the character?	Why is Priestley saying this?
	<b>"A rather cold woman and her husband's social superior"</b> (Stage directions)			
	<b>"Girls of that class"</b> (About Eva)			
	<b>"Arthur Birling at one end, his wife at the other"</b> (Stage directions)			
	<b>"Enters, briskly and self-confidently"</b> walking in during Inspector's questioning			
	<b>"I accept no blame for it at all"</b> (To inspector)			
	<b>"You don't get drunk"</b> (To Eric)			

## Sheila Birling

Who, what, when, where?	Quote	Explanation – language technique, what does it suggest/imply about the topic (title of this page)		
	<p><b>"A pretty girl in her early twenties, very pleased with life"</b> (Stage directions)</p>	What is the technique?	What is Priestley saying about the character?	Why is Priestley saying this?
	<p><b>"Half serious, half playful"</b> (Stage directions when talking to Gerald)</p>			
	<p><b>"But these girls aren't cheap labour- they're people"</b> (To inspector about Eva)</p>			
	<p><b>"I know I'm to blame"</b> (To Inspector)</p>			
	<p><b>"You mustn't try to build up a wall between us and that girl"</b> (To Mrs B)</p>			
	<p><b>"He's giving us the rope- so that we'll hang ourselves"</b> (To Mrs B)</p>			

## Eric Birling

Who, what, when, where?	Quote	Explanation – language technique, what does it suggest/imply about the topic (title of this page)		
	<p><b><i>"In his early twenties, not quite at ease, half shy, half assertive."</i></b> (Stage directions)</p>	What is the technique?	What is Priestley saying about the character?	Why is Priestley saying this?
	<p><b><i>"Eric downstage"</i></b> (Stage directions)</p>			
	<p><b><i>"I call it tough luck"</i></b> (About Mr B firing Eva)</p>			
	<p><b><i>"You're beginning to pretend now like nothing's really happened"</i></b> (To Mr and Mrs B)</p>			
	<p><b><i>"You're not the kind of father a chap can go to when he's in trouble"</i></b> (To Mr B)</p>			
	<p><b><i>"His whole manner ...shows his familiarity with quick heavy drinking"</i></b> (Getting a drink)</p>			

## Gerald Croft

Who, what, when, where?	Quote	Explanation – language technique, what does it suggest/imply about the topic (title of this page)		
	<p><b><i>“An attractive chap about thirty, rather too manly to be a dandy but very much the easy well-bred man-about-town.”</i></b> (Stage directions)</p>	What is the technique?	What is Priestley saying about the character?	Why is Priestley saying this?
	<p><b><i>“Gerald upstage”</i></b> (Stage directions)</p>			
	<p><b><i>“She was young and pretty and warm-hearted - and intensely grateful”</i></b> (Eva)</p>			
	<p><b><i>“They’d all be broke- if I know them”</i></b> (About the strike at Birling Co.)</p>			
	<p><b><i>“She’s had a long, exciting and tiring day”</i></b> (On behalf of Sheila)</p>			
	<p><b><i>“I don’t want to”</i></b> (About knowing the details of Eric and Mrs B’s involvement)</p>			

## Inspector Goole

	<b><i>“An impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness”</i></b> <i>(Stage directions)</i>	What is the technique?	What is Priestley saying about the character?	Why is Priestley saying this?
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	<p><b>"Lighting should be pink and intimate until inspector arrives and it should be brighter and harder"</b> (Stage directions)</p>			
	<p><b>"Dressed in a plain, darkish suit"</b>(Stage directions)</p>			
	<p><b>"Public men have responsibilities as well as privileges"</b>(To Mr B)</p>			
	<p><b>"We don't live alone. We are members of one body"</b> (Final speech)</p>			
	<p><b>"And I tell you that the time will soon come when, if men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught in fire and blood and anguish"</b>(Final speech)</p>			

## How Does Priestley Present the Change in Sheila During the Play *An Inspector Calls*?

Introduction- You must outline your argument here.

Topic sentence- Identify how this paragraph will answer the question. In this case, 'Sheila is presented as flawed at the start'

Who, what, when,

Embedded quote

Technique

Analysis- What is Priestley trying to say? Why is he doing this?

Who, what, when,

Embedded quote

Technique

Analysis- What is Priestley trying to say? Why is he doing this?

Context

Of all the characters in *An Inspector Calls*, Sheila is the one that is supposed to resonate with us the most. She undergoes a drastic change and ends up agreeing with the Inspector and finding the actions of her and her family deplorable. The Inspector acts as Priestley's mouthpiece throughout the play and by Sheila agreeing with the Inspector at the end, Priestley shows how dramatically Sheila's views have changed, as well as showing his faith in the younger generation.

Firstly, Priestley presents the change in Sheila by emphasising her flaws at the very beginning of the play. In the opening stage directions, the family are simply sat around in their opulent dining room, celebrating Sheila and Gerald's engagement. During this exposition, Sheila is clearly positioned to show that she is 'Pleased with life'. Priestley's use of stage directions present Sheila as a privileged girl who has very few cares: she has clearly not experienced hardship. This is later juxtaposed when Eva, a girl of similar age to Sheila, is introduced and the story of her tragic life is unveiled. She is also outlined in the stage directions as a 'pretty girl'. By describing her as a 'girl', Priestley's use of childish noun highlights her immaturity. As an audience, we soon become aware that the only reason Sheila is 'pleased with life' is because of the wealth she has received from her father and her engagement to Gerald. This dependence on the men in her life, again present Sheila to be an immature and sheltered 'girl' who has no true concept of what life is like. Priestley presents 1912, when the play was set, as a claustrophobic and naïve environment for upper class women. At this time, women were not seen as equal in society, no matter what class they belonged to; upper class women were expected to marry 'well' and stay at home to be the doting wife. This changed after women of all classes were called upon to help in the war effort. This aims to help support Priestley's overriding motivation for writing the play: the hypocritical views of the Capitalists.

Although Sheila is presented as naïve, Priestley does show signs that she is not altogether happy in the opening Act of the play. Sheila is getting engaged and is shown to be very excited about her engagement ring, although Priestley uses stage directions to hint that there is a more serious side to her 'half serious, half playful'. Priestley's use of contrasting emotions shows that Sheila isn't totally relaxed and potentially is on edge about her upcoming nuptials. Because of what we, the audience, later find out about Gerald and his similarity to Birling, Priestley could be highlighting that Sheila is in fact quite wise and has good instincts. Priestley could be hinting here that Sheila has the potential to learn from her mistakes. Throughout Act One there is a constant sense that Sheila is trying to put on an act in front of her materialistic family. When she is joking with Gerald about his emotional remarks, she is highlighted as 'trying to be light and easy'. Priestley's use of tone of voice shows that although Sheila appears to be 'pleased with life', she may sense that something is not quite right.



Priestley is trying to suggest to the audience that Sheila is 'trying' to put on an act and again highlight his political agenda and emphasis early on in the play Sheila's potential to change.

Furthermore, Sheila's treatment of Eva Smith in Act One further proves to highlight her petty attitude and her sheltered view of the world around her. Sheila has gone clothes shopping with her mother and suffers a perceived embarrassment at the hands of Eva Smith, who now works at Milwards. Sheila explains that she was unhappy about 'that girl's' conduct and demanded that the manager fire her. Priestley's continuous use of the personal pronoun 'I' throughout her explanation in Act One highlights her selfishness during this incident. Priestley could potentially be reflecting the Capitalist views that the Birling family hold and have become prevalent throughout Act One: Capitalists look after number one and 'make their own luck'. This is also reflected when Sheila describes Eva as being 'lucky' to get the job at Milwards. Whilst Sheila is describing what happened, she repeats that she is 'furious'. Priestley's use of exaggerated adjective over a seemingly petty matter, highlights Sheila's sheltered upbringing and her lack of understanding for the hardship that some women suffered in 1912.

Once the Inspector has arrived, Sheila is presented as being more assertive and questioning her own decisions. When the other family members are being questioned in Act Two, Sheila identifies that the Inspector is 'giving them the rope so they can hang themselves'. Priestley's use of metaphor suggests that she has done wrong and that she is guilty. Priestley's metaphor could also have connotations of justice from when people were hanged for crimes; because Sheila is guilty for what she's done, she acknowledges that she should be punished. Priestley's use of metaphor to demonstrate change highlights the difference in Sheila. Priestley is telling the audience that chaos and suffering will occur if they do not take heed of past events: World War I, World War II, Depression etc. He is therefore highlighting his Socialist views and saying that we should all take responsibility for each other. Sheila is also shown to be assertive when she questions her father over his dismissal of Eva by saying that they are 'people'. Priestley's use of generalisation shows Sheila is acknowledging that in fact, they are all the same. Sheila is no longer 'pleased with life' as she is now experiencing hardship through the eyes of someone else: she can see that they are not separate entities but are all part of the same community. Sheila later gets angry at Gerald, warning him 'you'll see...you'll see'. Priestley's use of repetition shows the emphasis of Sheila's understanding of the Inspector and his ability to almost see into the future. The audience can sympathise with this as they are also from the future- the play was written in 1945- and can see Priestley's desperation for change.

By the end of the play, Sheila is presented as being rather pensive and reflects solemnly on the family's involvement with Eva Smith. She accuses her mother as 'building up a wall' between themselves and the girl. Priestley's use of metaphor highlights the class structure that was prevalent at the time. Sheila can now acknowledge that they are all part of the same community and in reality, after their paths have crossed so many times, there is little difference between the lower class Eva Smith and the upper class Birlings. Sheila confesses to the Inspector 'I know I'm to blame'. Priestley's use of repeated personal pronoun shows that Sheila is reflecting on her own behaviour. It could also suggest that she is distancing herself from her family; a family that she seemed smothered and dependent on at the start of the play. Towards the end of Act Three, Sheila sarcastically confronts her parents by stating 'I suppose we are all nice people now'. Priestley's use of tone shows just how much Sheila has grown over the course of the play and has started to distance herself from the self-serving views of her family. Sheila demands that they start to 'face facts'; a message that is mirrored by Priestley

who believes that as a community we now take heed of past events and look to working together in the future.

## Mark scheme to assess GCSE English Literature (8702)

- AO1 Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to: maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response; use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations
- AO2 Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meaning and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate
- AO3 Show understanding of the relationship between texts and the contexts in which they were written
- AO4 Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation (Only R&J and AIC will be assessed for this in the exam; however, always assess – award mark out of 4)

Est grades - 1: 1-5; 2: 6-10; 3: 11-14; 4: 15-16; 5: 17-18; 6: 19-20; 7: 21-23; 8: 24-27; 9: 28-30	
Level and Mark	Typical features
<b>Level 6</b> <b>Convincing, critical analysis and exploration</b> <b>26 – 30 marks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AO1 – Critical, exploratory, (poetry – comparison.) conceptualised response to task and whole text</li> <li>• AO1 – Judicious use of precise references to support interpretation(s)</li> <li>• AO2 – Analysis of writer’s methods with subject terminology used judiciously</li> <li>• AO2 – Exploration of effects of writer’s methods on reader</li> <li>• AO3 – Exploration of ideas/perspectives/contextual factors shown by specific, detailed links between context/text/task</li> </ul>
<b>Level 5</b> <b>Thoughtful, developed consideration</b> <b>21 – 25 marks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AO1 – Thoughtful, developed (poetry – comparison.) response to task and whole text</li> <li>• AO1 – Apt references integrated into interpretation(s)</li> <li>• AO2 – Examination of writer’s methods with subject terminology used effectively to support consideration of methods</li> <li>• AO2 – Examination of effects of writer’s methods on reader</li> <li>• AO3 – Thoughtful consideration of ideas/perspectives/contextual factors shown by examination of detailed links between context/text/task</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4</b> <b>Clear understanding</b> <b>16 – 20 marks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AO1 – Clear, (poetry – comparison.) explained response to task and whole text</li> <li>• AO1 – Effective use of references to support explanation</li> <li>• AO2 – Clear explanation of writer’s methods with appropriate use of relevant subject terminology</li> <li>• AO2 – Understanding of effect of writer’s methods on reader</li> <li>• AO3 – Clear understanding of ideas/perspectives/contextual factors shown by specific links between context/text/task</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3</b> <b>Explained, structured comments</b> <b>11 – 15 marks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AO1 – Some explained (poetry – comparison.) response to task and whole text</li> <li>• AO1 – References used to support a range of relevant comments</li> <li>• AO2 – Explained/relevant comments on writer’s methods with some relevant use of subject terminology</li> <li>• AO2 – Identification of effects of writer’s methods on reader</li> <li>• AO3 – Some understanding of implicit ideas/perspectives/contextual factors shown by links between context/text/task</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2</b> <b>Supported, relevant comments</b> <b>6 – 10 marks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AO1 – Supported (comparison.) response to task and text</li> <li>• AO1 – Comments on references</li> <li>• AO2 – Identification of writer’s methods</li> <li>• AO2 – Some reference to subject terminology</li> <li>• AO3 – Some awareness of implicit ideas/contextual factors</li> </ul>
<b>Level 1</b> <b>Simple, explicit comments</b> <b>1 – 5 marks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AO1 – Simple comments relevant to (poetry – comparison.) task and text</li> <li>• AO1 – Reference to relevant details</li> <li>• AO2 – Awareness of writer making deliberate choices</li> <li>• AO2 – Possible reference to subject terminology</li> <li>• AO3 – Simple comment on explicit ideas/contextual factors</li> </ul>

## **Sophisticated vocabulary to use when describing characters**

Mr Birling	portentous, prosperous, capitalist, egotistical, affluent, presumptuous, riled, arrogant, elitist, self-important
Mrs Birling	self-righteous, opinionated, hypocrite, moralistic, naïve, aesthetic, prejudiced
Sheila Birling	materialistic, impressionable, responsibility, moral, strong-minded, egocentric, vacuous, perturbed, altered, matured, remorseful
Eric Birling	affable, wayward, impetuous, directionless, misguided, impulsive, reformed
Gerald Croft	masculine, privileged, gentleman, exploitative, compartmentalised
Inspector Goole	omniscient, impertinent, officious, incorruptible, rational, mouthpiece, conscience, scrutinising, socialist, moralistic, reproachful, unmoveable, principled, parity, justice, integrity

**Priestley criticises the selfishness of the upper classes. What methods does he use to present this selfishness?**

**Plan**

**Opening:** - characterisation of Mr Birling in the opening – his selfishness is foreshadowed and then confirmed by his firing of Eva

**Dramatic devices** - dramatic irony – Mrs Birling is juxtaposed with Sheila

**Fig lang** – Inspector’s speech reflects on the consequences of selfishness -

**Endings** – The Birlings are punished for their selfishness and refusal to accept responsibility

In *An Inspector Calls*, Priestley uses his play to expose the selfishness of the Birling family, in order to offer a critique of the upper classes and to promote his socialist message. Priestley uses the characterisation of Mr and Mrs Birling and juxtaposes their selfish thinking with the Inspector and towards the end of the play, Sheila and Eric.

Initially, Priestley uses the dramatic opening moments of the play to foreshadow the theme of selfishness as being at the heart of the Birling family. Through the characterisation of Mr Birling, Priestley makes it clear very early on that the ‘heavy-looking, rather portentous man’ is preoccupied with only his concerns and this is made clear as the Inspector arrives. Priestley presents Birling as taking pride in his selfishness when he states proudly he is a ‘hard-headed businessman’. Priestley’s use of metaphor could convey how Birling is willing to make tough decisions. Furthermore, Priestley could be foreshadowing his lack of humanity and compassion later on in the play. The adjective ‘hard-headed’ could suggest his pride in rational thinking without emotion. Priestley presents Birling as the stereotypical Edwardian capitalist and the audience are positioned to disagree with his viewpoint. His selfishness is further conveyed in how much he talks, dominating the conversation with his inaccurate predictions of future events – ‘Titanic, unsinkable.’ Following the Inspector’s interrogation, Birling’s lack of concern for others is apparent as he justifies his decision to fire Eva the ‘ringleader’. In a heated exchange with the Inspector he announces, ‘If you don’t come down sharply on some of these people, they would soon be asking for the Earth...’ Priestley’s use of metaphor could convey his lack of remorse. The exaggerated noun ‘Earth’ could convey how unreasonable Birling truly believes Eva’s request was for a small pay rise ‘twenty-five shillings a week,’ further conveying his selfishness. Furthermore, the Inspector’s response: ‘It is better to ask for the Earth than to take it,’ allows Priestley to criticise the uncaring nature of the wealthy in society, advocating his socialist message. Overall, Birling’s character personifies the selfishness in the upper classes.

Furthermore, Priestley uses dramatic devices and structure to convey how the selfishness of the upper classes in society is more ingrained within the older generation. By juxtaposing Sheila and Mrs Birling, Priestley makes it clear that there is hope in the younger generation. The contrast in their reactions to the Inspector’s questioning reveals this. As Sheila sees the photograph she gives a ‘half stifled sob and then runs out.’ Priestley’s use of significant exit from the stage could convey how Sheila is horrified about her involvement. Priestley’s presentation of Sheila as ‘naïve’ and ‘pleased with life’ is quickly dispelled as we see her breaking free of her sheltered privileged life and accepting social responsibility. Furthermore, the remorse she feels contrast noticeably with Mrs Birling whose initial response that she accepts ‘no blame at all’ reflects her lack of compassion. Priestley’s use of dramatic irony at the end of Act 2 allows Mrs Birling’s

selfishness to be punished as she realises Eric was the father: ‘ She stops and exchanges a frightened glance with her husband.’ The adjective ‘frightened’ could convey her fear of the shame about Eric’s involvement. Furthermore, by juxtaposing these two characters, Priestley highlights the stark hypocrisy of upper class women who pretended to be charitable in nature to the lower classes but in reality held deep rooted class prejudice.

Moreover, Priestley uses figurative language effectively throughout the Inspector’s speech to allow audiences to reflect on the consequences of their selfishness. The Inspector’s speech allow him to act as Priestley’s socialist mouthpiece, conveying ideas similar to his radio programme, ‘Postscripts’. He states ‘We are members of one body.’ Priestley’s use of metaphor conveys the importance of not being selfish and taking on board responsibility for others. Furthermore, Priestley’s key moral message about treating people fairly would have been presented to an audience in 1946 who may well desire change or hold similar views to Birling. The plural pronoun ‘we’ includes the audience in this sense of responsibility. His stark warning is powerful before he exits the stage that if ‘man will not learn that lesson – they will be taught in fire and blood and anguish.’ Priestley’s use of triplet here reminds the audience in 1946 of the horrors they have witnessed post World War Two. By setting the play in 1912, Priestley is able to show the audiences how far society has moved on but also to serve as a reminder that a backward step into inequality and selfishness will have consequences.

Finally, Priestley uses the structural significance of the dramatic denouement to leave the audience with the sense that the selfishness of the Birling family will be punished. Birling quickly leaps on the possibility that the ‘photograph’ was not of the same girl and explains ‘We’ve got to keep our heads’. Priestley use of metaphor reflects back to his ‘hard headed’ unemotional response to difficulties in business. Furthermore, his selfishness is sharply juxtaposed with Eric and Sheila ‘the famous younger generation.’ At the end of the play the telephone rings ‘sharply’ and Birling announces ‘A girl has just died.....a police inspector is on his way.’ Priestley’s enigmatic ending could suggest to the audience that the Birling family will have to relive the events of the evening because of their selfishness and refusal to take on board responsibility for their actions. Priestley explores the lack of morality in the older generation and suggests this will be punished. Hope for change and a less selfish attitude lies firmly with the younger generation.

In conclusion, Priestley explores the selfishness at the heart of the wealthy and the capitalist system through the characterisation of the Birling family. Priestley’s intention was for audiences to learn from the ‘rotten story’ of their involvement with Eva Smith and to reflect on their own values and treatment of others.

**AN INSPECTOR CALLS - PAST QUESTIONS**  
**from the New Specification**

**June 2017**

EITHER

0 1 How far does Priestley present Mrs Birling as an unlikeable character?

Write about:

- what Mrs Birling says and does in the play
- how Priestley presents her by the ways he writes.

[30 marks]

**OR**

0 2 How does Priestley use the character of the Inspector to suggest ways that society could be improved?

Write about:

- what society is shown to be like in the play and how it might be improved
- how Priestley presents society through what the Inspector says and does

**Either – June 2018**

0 1 How far does Priestley present Eric as a character who changes his attitudes towards himself and others during the play?

Write about:

- what Eric says and does throughout the play
- how far Priestley presents Eric as a character who changes his attitudes.

[30 marks]

**OR**

0 2 How does Priestley explore the importance of social class in An Inspector Calls?

Write about:

- some ideas about social class in the play
- how Priestley presents the importance of social class.

## Past Questions OLD SPECIFICATION – An Inspector Calls

### **EITHER**

Question 17

1 7 How does Priestley show that tension is at the heart of the Birling family? (30 marks)

### **OR**

Question 18

1 8 Priestley criticises the selfishness of people like the Birlings. What methods does he use to present this selfishness?

17 An Inspector Calls has been called ‘a play of contrasts’.

Write about how Priestley presents some of the contrasts in the play. (30 marks)

### **OR**

Question 18

1 8 How does Priestley present the change in Sheila during the course of the play An Inspector Calls? How do you think this change reflects some of Priestley’s ideas? (30 marks)

### **EITHER**

Question 17

1 7 How does Priestley present the Inspector in An Inspector Calls?

Write about:

- what the Inspector says and does
- the methods Priestley uses to present the Inspector. (30 marks)

### **OR**

Question 18

1 8 Write about the differences between Arthur Birling and Eric Birling in the play An Inspector Calls.

You should write about:

- what Arthur and Eric Birling are like
- their different attitudes
- the methods Priestley uses to present Arthur and Eric Birling.

### **OR**

Question 17

1 7 What do you think is the importance of Inspector Goole and how does Priestley present him? (30 marks)

### **OR**

Question 18

1 8 Remind yourself of the stage directions below from the start of Act 1.

The dining-room of a fairly large suburban house, belonging to a prosperous manufacturer. It has good solid furniture of the period. The general effect is substantial and heavily comfortable, but not cosy and homelike. (If a realistic set is used, then it should be swung back, as it was in the production at the New Theatre.



By doing this, you can have the dining-table centre downstage during Act One, when it is needed there, and then, swinging back, can reveal the fire replace for Act Two, and then for Act Three can show a small table with telephone on it, downstage of fire replace; and by this time the dining-table and its chairs have moved well upstage. Producers who wish to avoid this tricky business, which involves two re-settings of the scene and some very accurate adjustments of the extra flats necessary, would be well advised to dispense with an ordinary realistic set, if only because the dining-table becomes a nuisance. The lighting should be pink and intimate until the INSPECTOR arrives, and then it should be brighter and harder.)

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

In the rest of the play, how does Priestley present and develop some of the ideas shown here?

**OR**

Question 17

17 In Act 2 of *An Inspector Calls*, Sheila says to her mother, Mrs Birling, "But we really must stop these silly pretences".

How does Priestley show, in his presentation of Mrs Birling, that she often pretends to be something she is not? (30 marks)

**OR**

Question 18

18 How important do you think social class is in *An Inspector Calls* and how does Priestley present ideas about social class? (30 marks)

Question 17

17 Remind yourself of the ending of the play from 'The telephone rings sharply.....' to '.....the curtain falls'.

How do you respond to this as an ending to *An Inspector Calls* and how does Priestley make you respond as you do by the ways he writes? (30 marks)

**OR**

Question 18

1 8 In the opening stage directions, Priestley refers to Eric as ‘not quite at ease, half shy, half assertive’.

How does Priestley present these and other ideas about Eric in An Inspector Calls?  
(30 marks)

**OR**

Question 17

1 7 How does Priestley present ideas about gender in An Inspector Calls?

[30 marks]

**OR**

Question 18

1 8 What do you think is the importance of Eva Smith in An Inspector Calls and how does Priestley present her?

Question 17

1 7 Arthur Birling describes himself as ‘a hard-headed, practical man of business’.

How does Priestley present this and other views of Arthur Birling in An Inspector Calls?

[30 marks]

**OR**

Question 18

1 8 How does Priestley present ideas about inequality in An Inspector Calls?

[30 marks]

**OR**

Question 17

1 7 How does the relationship between Gerald and Sheila change in An Inspector Calls and how does Priestley show the changes?

[30 marks]

**OR**

Question 18

1 8 How does Priestley present conflict in An Inspector Calls?

[30 marks]