

## AN INSPECTOR CALLS KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

PLOT SUMMARY BY ACT		VOCABULARY	KEY THEMES		
<p><b>Act 1</b>—An inspector arrives at the Birling house. He tells them how a girl called Eva Smith has killed herself by drinking disinfectant - he wants to ask them some questions. The Inspector reveals that the girl used to work in Arthur Birling's factory and he had her sacked for going on strike. Mr Birling refuses to accept any responsibility for her death. The Inspector then reveals that Sheila thought that Eva had made fun of her, complained and got her sacked. Sheila is deeply ashamed and feels responsible for the girl's death.</p> <p><b>Act 2</b>—The Inspector forces Gerald to confess to an affair he had with Eva (who he knew as Daisy Renton). Sheila respects Gerald's honesty but still returns the engagement ring he gave her. It is revealed that Sybil Birling, in her role as head of a local charity, had refused to help the pregnant Eva. Mrs Birling was insulted by Eva using the alias 'Mrs Birling' (which foreshadows Eric's involvement) and refused her help. She shows no remorse at all as Eva was not a "deserving case" and begins to lecture the Inspector on the need for him to find the father and force them to take responsibility.</p> <p><b>Act 3</b>— It turns out that it was Eric who got Eva pregnant, and stole money from his father to help her. The Inspector delivers a speech on the need to take greater responsibility for each other and create a fairer and more equal society. He then leaves. It is suggested by Gerald that the Inspector is not a real policeman. The family ring the infirmary and there is no record of a girl dying from drinking disinfectant. Suddenly the phone rings, Mr Birling answers it, to his horror the phone call reveals that a young woman has just died from drinking disinfectant and the police are on their way to question them about it. The curtain falls and the play ends.</p>	<p><b>Act 1</b>—An inspector arrives at the Birling house. He tells them how a girl called Eva Smith has killed herself by drinking disinfectant - he wants to ask them some questions. The Inspector reveals that the girl used to work in Arthur Birling's factory and he had her sacked for going on strike. Mr Birling refuses to accept any responsibility for her death. The Inspector then reveals that Sheila thought that Eva had made fun of her, complained and got her sacked. Sheila is deeply ashamed and feels responsible for the girl's death.</p> <p><b>Act 2</b>—The Inspector forces Gerald to confess to an affair he had with Eva (who he knew as Daisy Renton). Sheila respects Gerald's honesty but still returns the engagement ring he gave her. It is revealed that Sybil Birling, in her role as head of a local charity, had refused to help the pregnant Eva. Mrs Birling was insulted by Eva using the alias 'Mrs Birling' (which foreshadows Eric's involvement) and refused her help. She shows no remorse at all as Eva was not a "deserving case" and begins to lecture the Inspector on the need for him to find the father and force them to take responsibility.</p> <p><b>Act 3</b>— It turns out that it was Eric who got Eva pregnant, and stole money from his father to help her. The Inspector delivers a speech on the need to take greater responsibility for each other and create a fairer and more equal society. He then leaves. It is suggested by Gerald that the Inspector is not a real policeman. The family ring the infirmary and there is no record of a girl dying from drinking disinfectant. Suddenly the phone rings, Mr Birling answers it, to his horror the phone call reveals that a young woman has just died from drinking disinfectant and the police are on their way to question them about it. The curtain falls and the play ends.</p>	Prejudiced	<p><b>Social Responsibility</b>— no welfare state in 1912 and no NHS. The poor often relied on charity. Priestley wanted to create change so the upper classes accepted responsibility for others. "We are responsible for each other" - Inspector. "Public men, Mr Birling, have responsibilities ." - Inspector. "It was what happened to that girl and what we did that matters" - Eric. Personal responsibility is also important in the play—who accepts responsibility for their actions.</p> <p><b>Class Divide: Rich and Poor.</b> Rigid class divide between wealthy and poor linked to "lower wages" and "higher prices". Edna's insignificance in the play and her lack of speech reflects the silencing of the lower classes—they didn't have a voice in an unequal society. Capitalism—a society based on production and private wealth. Priestley wanted wealth to be spread more equally – known as socialism.</p> <p><b>Generations: Young and Old.</b> Younger generation seen as 'most impressionable' with the greatest capacity to bring about social change. Older generation were largely entrenched in their pre-war views and were rigidly against social change. Priestley saw the young as the future.</p> <p><b>Misogyny and gender divides</b>— Women were expected to take on traditional domestic and maternal roles. They were seen as weak and in need of male protection. This is ironic as the men in the play certainly do nothing to protect women; they treat them as objects. Sheila and Eva Smith represent strong women who are fighting for social change. The influence of the Suffragette movement (fighting for women's rights) is apparent.</p>		
		Oblivious			
		Materialistic			
		Social responsibility			
		Forthright			
		Moral			
		Omniscient			
		Authoritative			
		Hypocritical/hypocrisy			
		Judgemental			
		Misogynistic			
		Naïve			
CHARACTERS + FUNCTION		Capitalism	KEY QUOTATIONS		
The Inspector	Priestley's mouthpiece on stage, representing Priestley's views. Very moral man—a man of few words. What he does say really matters. His arrival signals the end of the "pink and intimate" lifestyle the Birlings have. Speaks about Eva's death in a graphic way to make characters take responsibility. Carefully controls and manipulates the order of events on stage. Leaves a final message about social responsibility before his exit.	Socialism	"Pink and intimate..."brighter and harder" "substantial...not cosy and homelike"	"Heavy looking...rather portentous...provincial in his speech"	"a rather cold woman...her husband's social superior"
Eva Smith/Daisy Renton	The victim of the Birling family's various misdeeds. Acts with integrity throughout—refusing money from Eric for example when she knows it's stolen. Believer in what's right—asks for a pay rise as it's fair. Challenges the status quo; pays for it by being fired. Represents the underclass of British society and the continuing struggles they face. Her death is hugely painful and lonely—symbolic of her struggle in life. No voice in the play.	Oppressed	"very pleased with life and rather excited"	"the easy well-bred man about town"	"not quite at ease, half-shy, half assertive"
Mrs Birling	Represents the entrenched prejudices of the upper classes. Cold-hearted and hypocritical—outwardly supports charity yet refuses it to Eva Smith. Cares more about status than anything else. Does not feel remorse for her actions.	Vulnerable	"an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness"	"I'm talking as a hard-headed, practical man of business"	"I say there isn't a chance of war...unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable"
Mr Birling	Obsessed with money and status—wants to be "knighted". Represents the arrogance of the upper classes and the problems with capitalism. Wants to make money regardless of human cost. Doesn't see his workers as people. Priestley constantly undermines him using dramatic irony—shown to be foolish. Misogynistic views.	Exploited	"If you don't come down sharply on these people, they'll soon be asking for the earth"	"It's better to ask for the earth than to take it"	"a man has to mind his own business and look after his own...(sharp ring of the doorbell)"
Gerald	Highest status of all the characters—from the aristocracy. Represents privileged upper class males. Wants to go into business with Birling and agrees with his views "higher prices". Protects Eva from Alderman Meggarty and listens to her—provides her with accommodation. However, takes advantage of her by sleeping with her and raising her hopes of a relationship. Stuck between older/younger generation. Takes some responsibility—but does not learn a lesson.	Impressionable	"You and I aren't the same people who sat down to dinner here"	"Each of you helped kill her. Remember that. Never forget it."	"Sorry—I –well—I've suddenly realised— taken it in properly. That she's dead"
		Injustice	"Unlike the other three, I did nothing I'm ashamed of"	"Then—you killed her. She came to you to protect me, and you turned her away"	"We don't live alone. We are members of one body."
Sheila	Young and naïve at the start of the play. However by the end she has matured and taken responsibility—she represents the capacity for young people to change. Begins to grow tired of her parents and their attitudes and questions them as the play goes on. Refuses Gerald's ring at the end—symbolic of her journey of growth.	Narrow-minded	"if man won't learn that lesson he will be taught it—in fire and blood and anguish"	"there are millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths...their lives entwined with ours"	"Claiming elaborate fine feelings and scruples that were simply absurd in a girl in her position"
		Dramatic irony	"Girls of that class..."	"I was in that state when a chap easily turns nasty..."	There'll be a public scandal... and who here will suffer for that more than I will?
Eric	'half shy/half assertive' character—not comfortable in his own skin. Immature and drinks too much—seems very unhappy. Disagrees with his father's views on money and how to treat the workforce. Seems to be hemmed in by his parents. Accepts responsibility and matures throughout the play. Represents young people's capacity to change.	Entrenched attitudes			
		Arrogant/arrogance			
		Self-serving			
		Gender			
		Aristocracy			
		Integrity			