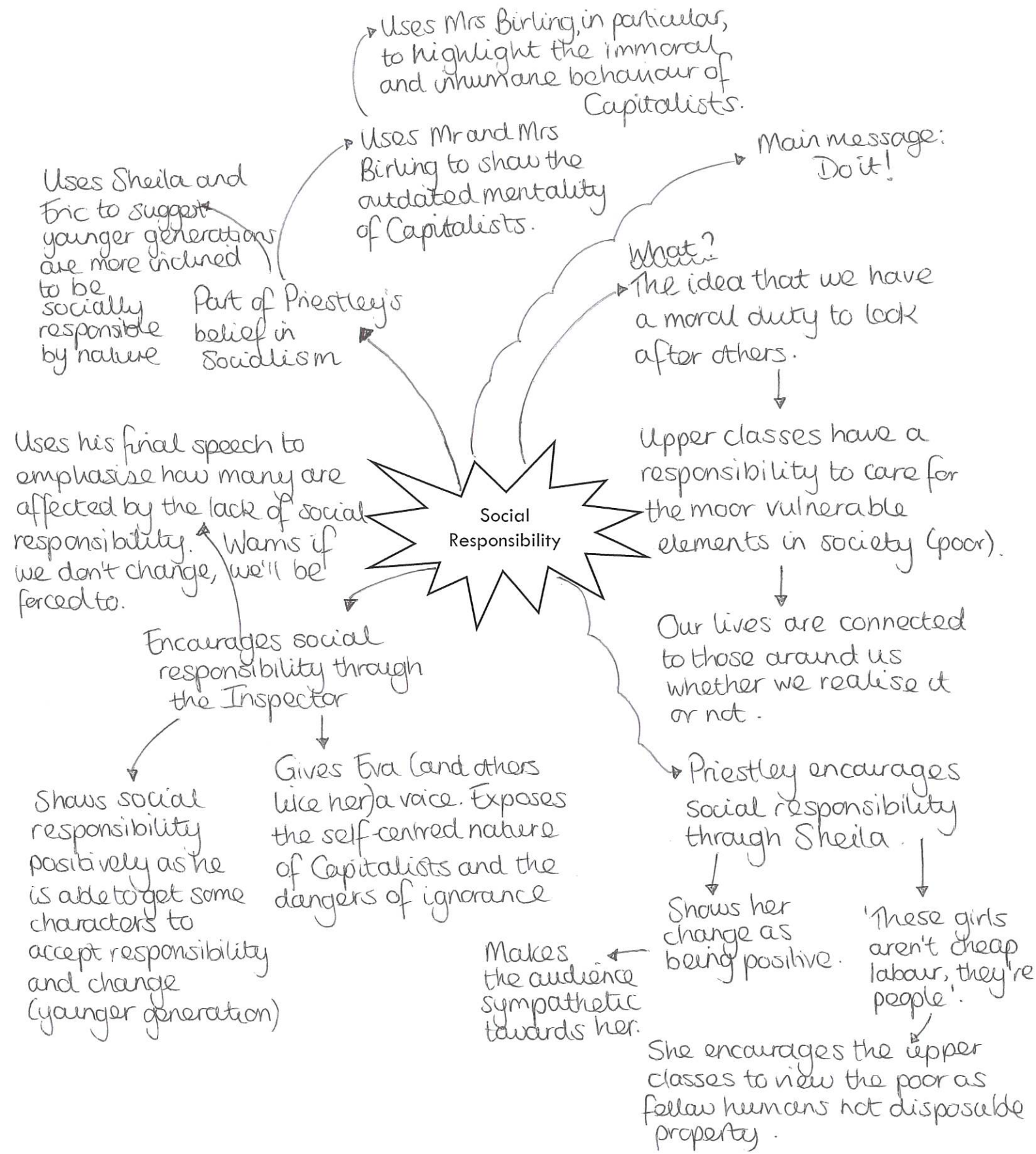


Essay Focus:

How does Priestley present the concept of social responsibility throughout the play?

Blurt

- What does he say about the theme or character?
- Where is it seen?



Knowledge Nugget

Social responsibility is a key theme in *An Inspector Calls*. The play highlights how people's actions affect others around them and how society is connected even though we may not notice it – this can be seen in the Inspector's reference to a 'chain of events' when relaying what caused Eva's death. The play suggests that everyone has a duty to help improve the world around them or at the very least, not cause harm to it. The Inspector encourages the characters to face their mistakes and think about the impact of their behaviour; this is seen as social responsibility as he is holding each of them to account for the choices that they have made. He challenges their selfish attitudes and promotes the idea that we should care for others (ignorance to the plight of others is not excusable). Through this, Priestley criticises the belief in individualism (closely linked to Capitalism) and supports a more collective, caring approach to society (largely through Socialist beliefs). In the final lines, the Inspector warns that if people don't learn to take responsibility, serious consequences will follow.

Exam Questions/Initial Ideas

How does Priestley present the idea of social responsibility throughout the play?

How does Priestley promote the concept of social responsibility in the play?

How is the theme of social responsibility important to the play as a whole?

The Inspector says, 'We are all members of one body. We are responsible for each other.' How does Priestley show that looking after each other is important throughout the play?

The easiest way to approach a theme question is through the characters. Use the order in which they appear as your chronology.

Plan

Introduction What is your overall answer to the question based on the whole text. What is the general answer or your line of argument?	• Priestley uses AIC to promote the idea of social responsibility. • Criticising Capitalists as selfish and ignorant. • Shows the benefits of becoming more socially responsible through younger generation and the consequences of not through Eva. • Inspector is the mouthpiece promoting social responsibility.
Main Idea 1 Approach your ideas in chronological order covering the beginning, middle and end of the play. Try to support each idea with 2-4 quotes. Analyse language in at least one per section.	Mr BIRLING. - Constructed to criticise Capitalism and individualist ideas. Shows him to be foolish and wrong/contrasts the sympathetic presentation of Sheila. - Contrast social responsibility 'a man has to look after himself'. - Defends firing Eva (despite what happens) - looks cruel. Fails to take responsibility. - As the Inspector promotes the ideology, Mr B makes fun of it: 'community and all that nonsense'.
Main idea 2	- Mrs B mirrors his beliefs/behaviour but amplifies it. SHEILA. - Shows an early understanding of social responsibility. 'these girls aren't cheap labour'. - Initially shame as selfish and lacking awareness of the world: quickly becomes a 'second Inspector' showing benefits of social responsibility → hope for the future. - Quick to accept responsibility but crucially wants to correct them/make sure she doesn't repeat them.
Main idea 3	INSPECTOR - Promotes social responsibility and, more widely, Socialism. - Gives voice to the voiceless - acts for justice. - Moral enforcer towards Birlings - exposing their mistakes and true nature. - 'chain of events' - shows social responsibility goes beyond material things it is about being responsible for your words and actions. ['I'll never do it again!' - Final warning
Main idea 4	EVA SMITH. - Represents the consequences of having a society without social responsibility. - See the consequences through all parts of her journey but particularly when Mrs B's charity denies her help (quite harrowing for the audience) highlighting how society has failed due to wealthy ego. - She is one of many suffering.
Conclusion Authorial intent and key message.	• There are millions suffering unjustly like Eva but, if we act now, we can save some. • Capitalism creates morally corrupt societies and citizens with little respect for human life. • Social responsibility - 'Do It'!

Fab Five

Mr Birling

'A man has to make his own way-has to look after himself.'

↑
Indicative of the selfish nature of Capitalists

↓
Highlights individualism

↓
Only references family later.

All Inspector Goole.

'What happened to her then may have determined what happened to her afterwards, and what happened to her afterwards may have driven her to suicide. A chain of events.'

↗ We never know the role we play in the lives of others.

↖ We need to be socially aware and responsible with our words and actions.

↘ Can not escape the fact that we are inter-connected as a society.

'We have to share something. If there's nothing else, we'll have to share our guilt.'

↓
Society should be based on sharing: resources, respect, kindness etc

↓
If we can't learn to share these things (Capitalism/Individualism)

↓
When our behaviour (knowingly or otherwise) causes tragedies

'We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other.'

↓
We are all humans. We all compose a society (metaphor).

↓
We have a moral duty to actively not harm others (through our choices).

'If men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish.'

↓
Choosing not to (ignorance)

↓
Imperative (no longer a choice).

↓
Metaphor for war. Triple to emphasise horrors. Using post-war fatigue to motivate audience to change.