

# An Inspector Calls

by

J. B. Priestley



## Revision Notes

## KEY POINTS

- Very **compact structure** to the play, nothing is allowed to distract the audience from the central theme. There is no sub-plot.
- The play takes place in just **one location**. The action is continuous.
- Act One begins by **introducing the characters and establishing the idea of a happy and united family** looking forward to the future with a degree of confidence. In retrospect, there are a number of hints that all is not as it seems but these are not particularly obvious until later in the play. There is nothing to warn us of the shock the Inspector's visit will cause.
- Events soon gather speed and it is not long before we are being informed of Birling and Sheila's involvement with Eva Smith.
- **Tension increases**, firstly as Gerald's affair is unveiled (and the scandal it would cause) and Sheila begins to realise that they are all implicated in some way *'he is giving us rope – so that we'll hang ourselves'*.
- Mrs Birling's attempts to shift the blame for the girl's suicide leads her to blame the father of the unborn child.
- The **tension is heightened** at this point by the **dramatic entrance** of Eric.
- With the **departure of the Inspector** it would appear that what follows will be something of **an anti-climax** as **the Inspector's identity is put into doubt** by a series of observations made by the Birling family and Gerald. Even the existence of Eva is called into question.
- However, **the tension remains** to some extent as the two generations confirm the differences as suggested by the Inspector - **the moral divide** is very great indeed.
- The **final denouement**, the phone call announcing that a police inspector is on his way to ask some questions about a girl who has just died in the infirmary is **as shocking as it is surprising** and ensures that the audience will leave the auditorium in a state of real shock.

## Quick Summary

## Act I

Sheila Birling has become engaged to Gerald Croft and as a result the Birling family have enjoyed a family dinner together. Mr Birling makes grand speeches giving his views on technology and industrial relations, emphasising his opinion that a man should only care about himself and his family and no-one else. Their evening is suddenly interrupted by the arrival of a police inspector by the name of Goole who is making enquiries into the suicide of a young woman called Eva Smith.

The inspector has a photograph of the woman and from it Mr Birling admits that he once employed her in his factory but had sacked her over an industrial dispute over wages. Gerald Croft backs Mr Birling's belief that he acted within reason. Sheila and her brother Eric react differently, feeling that their father was harsh in sacking her. However, upon seeing the photograph herself, Sheila realises that she also sacked the same woman from her job as a shop assistant.

During the course of Act I it becomes clear that the inspector has an uncanny knowledge about the family's dealing with the girl. He then announces that the girl has in fact changed her name from Eva Smith to Daisy Renton. The reaction that this causes in Gerald makes it obvious that he knows the girl also. By the time we reach the end of the act the inspector is already suggesting that many people share the responsibility for the miserable existence of the young girl which prompted her to take her own life.

## Quick Summary

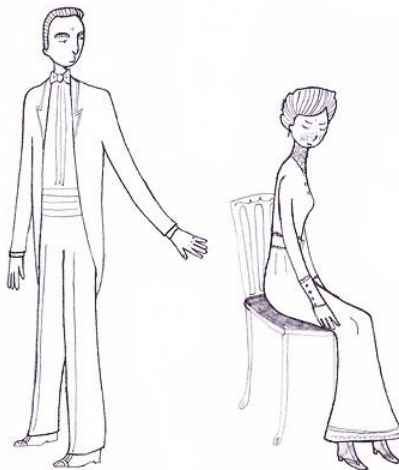
## Act II

There is by now an evident tension between Sheila and Gerald which becomes heightened when he admits that he had had an affair with Daisy Renton in the spring of the previous year. Whilst feeling angry with Gerald for his involvement with the girl she does have a certain respect for his openness and honesty with his admission. Mrs Birling makes attempts to intimidate the inspector and control the situation. Despite this, Sheila feels that it is foolish to try and hinder the inspector's enquiries and this appears to be well founded. At the point when Eric is out of the room Mrs Birling is forced to admit that she also has an involvement with the girl. Two weeks earlier she had refused the girl who had come to her seeking help. It is then revealed that the girl was pregnant and the suspicion now points at Eric as being the father of the unborn child.

Eric confesses that he was he who had got the girl pregnant. He also admits to having stolen money from his father's firm in an attempt to support her. When he hears that his mother refused to help the girl he is horrified and blames her for both the death of the girl and of the unborn child. At this point it becomes clear that nay family unity has now dissolved. The inspector has therefore done his job by showing each of them that they had a part to play in ruining the girl's life.

He then goes on to make a speech about the consequence of social irresponsibility which is in direct contrast to the speeches made by Mr Birling at the start of the play. The inspector then leaves. Gerald and Mr Birling begin to have doubts about the inspector's identity and are gradually able to prove that the man was not a real police inspector. This then raises further doubts between them all about whether they have been talking about the same girl or indeed whether any girl had actually killed herself at all. Gerald telephones the infirmary who confirm that they have no record of any girl dying there that afternoon. Naturally there is a general feeling of relief upon hearing this.

Sheila and Eric still feel guilty about their action although they seem to have been changed by the recent events. The others, however, feel a greater sense of relief and their confidence in the rightness of their own actions is restored. At that point the telephone rings and Mr Birling answers it. It is the police calling to say that a young woman has just died on her way to the infirmary and that an inspector is on his way to make enquiries about her death. The play therefore ends with the characters – and audience – knowing that all the events which have just occurred about to happen again, for real.



J.B. Priestley fought in WWI, and was a radio newscaster during WWII. He witnessed both of these wars that were being fought in order to save society

In *An Inspector Calls* written just after WWII, J.B. Priestley seems to ask “What kind of society are we fighting to save?” The social issues that were so prevalent in the labour strikes of 1912 were still important in 1946, because the very definition of society means that human beings don’t live alone and that each one is responsible for their actions towards the other. By setting his characters in a time of innocence and hope, Priestley can speak even more strongly to his audiences who have lived through a time of despair.

The pride and complacency of the Birlings seems all the more foolish to an audience who knows what is about to happen to the English people. The lessons that Eric and Sheila learn are even more poignant when one realizes that very soon all classes in England, upper, middle and lower, will be involved in the same tragic war.

When studying *An Inspector Calls* it is necessary and also highly important to look closely at the **setting** of it. The play is set in the **fictitious industrial city of Brumley**. Brumley, although not a real place, has a lot of background information given about it. Arthur Birling is hoping for a knighthood through his activity in local politics and having been Lord Mayor of Brumley.

There are clearly a **large number of poor and needy women** living in Brumley resulting in the Brumley Women’s Charity Organisation. At the time the play was set many such organisations existed and relied mainly upon financial support from wealthy people, such as Mrs Birling; help was given to individuals at the discretion and decision of those benefactors. Priestley makes other references, apart from the Birlings, towards social injustice.

As for **the action of the play** – it all happens in the Birling’s dining room. The room is described as being ‘*substantial and heavily comfortable, but not cosy and homelike*’. This description of the room **mirrors the lives of the Birlings**. They are **outwardly respectable** and enjoy a comfortable and well off way of life and yet **their relationships with one and other are not at all cosy and there are a great number of tensions between them**.

The **realism** of the stage set is **important** as it gives the audience a sense that they are in the safe confines of **normality**. This is something that Priestley often liked to begin his plays with. However, the mysterious role of the inspector and the telephone call at the end of the play suddenly introduce the audience to **an element of the unreal**.

A successful business man, a magistrate and someone who is active in local politics, Mr Birling has also had the honour of being Lord Mayor of Brumley. He hopes that all this will lead to him being given a knighthood and therefore becoming more socially acceptable to Sir George and Lady Croft, particularly considering his humble beginnings. His description is of a '*heavy-looking and portentous man*'. This description helps to give an impression of him being of a threatening appearance. He is pleased about the engagement of Sheila to Gerald Croft, as he believes it will be good for his business. It is central to the play that his attitude to business and the fact that a man should '*look after his own*' is discredited by the confessions that the inspector brings about.

Mr Birling strongly believes that '*a man has to make his own way*'. He does not consider the harm he may cause to other people because of his attitude. He is a '*hard headed business man*' and refuses to accept any responsibility for Eva's death. He is increasingly annoyed by the Inspector's questioning and Eric's unsympathetic attitude.

The most disturbing part of the play for Birling is the scene in which he learns that his own son is shown to be a thief, a drunkard and is responsible for fathering a child. When he learns of all this he *exclaims* '*You damned fool - why didn't you come to me when you found yourself in this mess?*'

Even at the end of the play, he continues to ignore the shameful things that his family has done. When it appears that the Inspector might be a hoaxer he happily believes everything is as it was a few hours ago. This is an example of pride coming before a fall, a moment later he is panicking as the phone rings again.

Sheila is the Birling's daughter and engaged to be married to Gerald Croft. She is in her early twenties and is described as '*pretty*'. The attention surrounding her important engagement gives her great pleasure, showing her to be somewhat self-centred. She thus starts the play as someone whom the audience would regard as superficial however, this changes once she hears of the girl's death and her potential part in it and becomes more caring and sensitive. She shows genuine remorse about the fact that it was her who caused the girl to lose her job at the shop. She learns of her responsibilities to others less fortunate than herself (the idea of the community) and is sensitive. Her readiness to learn from experience is in great contrast to her parents.

## Characters

## Mrs Birling

Owing to her coldness and lack of conscience, Mrs Birling is seen as being unsympathetic and out of touch with reality. It is this lack of understanding that leads to her making several snobbish comments and even to be unaware of her own son's heavy drinking. She is described as a '*rather cold woman and her husband's social superior*'. She is led by the Inspector to condemn her own son, when she tries to blame the young man who got her pregnant, for Eva's death. This dramatic irony is very powerful in showing that gain she does not think of the consequences of her actions. She is too busy trying to protect herself from blame that she fails to see the trap into which she is led. However, she shows signs of weakening when she realises that her actions had resulted in the death of her own grandchild. Once the inspector leaves though, she quickly recovers her old self, emphasising her harsh and uncaring nature.

## Characters

## Eric Birling

Eric is an opposite of his sister and '*not quite at ease*'. His father does not approve of him and his mother cannot see his faults one of which is a drink problem. He has made the dead girl pregnant and he has also stolen money from his father to support her. Like his sister, however, he feels both a strong sense of guilt and real sympathy towards Eva Smith. He is very willing to take responsibility for his actions, whilst also blaming his mother in particular for what she has done. Even when it seems as if they are all 'off the hook' he is not willing to forget what he has done and this makes him quite an admirable character: he does not take the easy way out.

## Characters

## Gerald croft

Sheila's fiancé and the son of her father's industrial rival. He is respected by Mr Birling with whom he shares an opinion on the way to conduct business. Self confidence and at ease with anyone he comes into contact with are his main traits. He is courteous and tactful towards the Birlings. It comes to light that he has had an affair with the dead girl who had changed her name to Daisy Renton at the time. Of all the characters, he seems to be the only one who treated Eva/Daisy with some degree of kindness, offering protection and some temporary happiness, but he still leaves her in the end. He is also the character who first works out that the Inspector is not real, and like the older Birlings, seems to think this lets everyone off the hook.

The Inspector, named 'Goole', is described as creating '*an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness*'. His role grows as the play unfolds and the story of each character is revealed. Whilst they are broken down he remains solid and despite attempts from the others to distract him from his purpose he stays this way throughout. He is the one who makes things happen in the play. Were it not for him none of the secrets that the others have would be revealed and it is he who demonstrates how people are responsible for the affect they have on the lives of others. His sombre appearance in the play is in direct contrast to the Birling family. There is an air of celebration in the room until he enters bringing with him the news of the dead girl. From then on it is he who controls everything.

He manipulates each character skilfully, to ensure they reveal the truth about their involvement with Eva. With some he is encouraging, with others he is aggressive and demanding. This is determined by each character's willingness to accept responsibility.

The most important theme of the play, it could be argued, is responsibility. At the beginning of the play Mr. Birling gives his (limited) view of responsibility in a long speech.

Mr. Birling's definition of responsibility is immediately followed by the arrival of the Inspector.

The Inspector gives his (very wide) explanation of responsibility immediately before he leaves.

He leaves the play with perhaps the most important speech:

*"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."*

**The play is about social responsibility.** Priestley uses the play to present his ideas on responsibility and society. He uses the **character of the Inspector as a mouth-piece for his ideas.** Priestley is suggesting that we **should all look after one another**, and that those who have power over others should use it for the common good, not just for their own benefit. It is clear by the end of the play that these are Priestley's views.



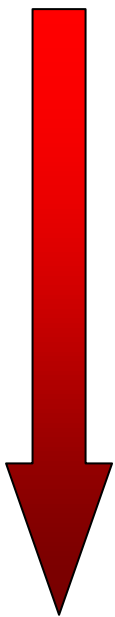
## Characters

## Eva Smith/Daisy Renton

We never see the character of Eva Smith, but the play revolves around her. She is linked to all the other characters, except for the inspector and Edna, who all seemed to have played a part in her downfall. Her existence and death are in direct contrast with the wealthy lives of the Birlings and Gerald Croft.

The Inspector tells Mr. Birling that Eva Smith/Daisy Renton “*left a letter...and a sort of diary*”, which could explain how he knows so much about Eva and her connections with the Birlings and Gerald.

## Eva's Timeline



September 1910 Eva sacked by Birling & Co.

December 1910 Eva employed by Milwards.

Late January 1911 Eva sacked by Milwards.

March 1911 Eva becomes Gerald's mistress.

Early September 1911 Gerald breaks off the affair.

Eva leaves Brumley for two months.

November 1911 Eric meets Eva.

December 1911/January 1912 Eva finds she is pregnant.

Late March 1912 Mrs. Birling turns down Eva's application for help.

Early April 1912 Eva's suicide/the Inspector calls

Priestley uses a range of dramatic devices for different purposes. For example, **set, lighting, sound effects, props, characterisation, timing and dramatic irony.**

## Dramatic Devices

## Stage Directions

At the beginning of Act 1 he uses **stage directions** to **set the scene and give us information about the Birling family** before we even see them. We can tell that the **Birling family are a comfortably off** middle to upper middle class family. We can also tell that they are **all feeling relaxed** and **confident** at the beginning of the play.

- set - *large suburban house*
- furniture - *'solid ...but not cosy and homelike'*
- props – suggests wealth *'champagne glasses', 'decanter of port'*
- costume *'evening dress of the period'* white tie and tails – a formal occasion
- lighting – *'pink and intimate'*
- characters and how they are described by Priestley

At the start of the play the Birlings are seated and relaxed. By the end all standing and shouting/crying.

## Dramatic Devices

## Staging

All the action takes place in one room- it is claustrophobic and intense- the pressure builds within the closed room. Birlings are shown to live in a closed, protected world and the Inspector is not welcomed from the outside.

### **The entrance of the inspector**

- **Sound Effect**-There's a **'sharp ring of a front door bell'** and Edna interrupts Birling in the middle of his speeches. The **'sharp'** ring would startle the audience – and suggests that the Inspector may be a 'sharp' (as in intelligent and possibly aggressive) person. The ring also interrupts Birling suggesting that the Inspector will have power and control over Birling.
- There is a **change of lighting from pink and intimate' to 'brighter and harder'** when the inspector arrives. This suggests again that the Inspector is a 'hard' character who will wreck the cosy world the Birlings live in.
- His name 'Inspector Goole' also suggests something unpleasant/interesting about the inspector – e.g. 'ghoul' means ghost

(when an audience knows more about the characters/action than the characters on stage). Priestley uses **dramatic irony to show how ridiculous and wrong Birling's opinions are**. E.g.:

- **Birling says war won't happen** 'I say there isn't a chance of war' but audience knows there were **two World Wars about to happen**
- Birling says that the **Titanic won't sink** – 'unsinkable' – we know **it did, later that year**.
- Birling thinks **there'll be no tension between employers and employees** 'you'll be living in a world that will have forgotten all these Capital versus Labour agitations' but there were strikes in 1907-1912 because of poor conditions and the **General Strike of 1926**
- The dramatic irony makes the audience think **Birling is foolish and lacking in knowledge about the future**. It also makes his political opinions seem wrong. Priestley is also showing an audience his concern that such idiotic people have some degree of power in this society. Could you relate this to his Priestley's experiences?

### 1. The inspector develops the dramatic tension

The inspector '*creates at once an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness*'. He also speaks '*carefully, weightily*' and '*has a disconcerting habit of looking hard at the person he addresses before actually speaking*'. This interests an audience – **we want to know why he is there and how people will react** to his questioning.

The Inspector 'inspects' or interrogates each person in turn. He shows a photo of Eva Smith to each character in turn that only they see. The **audience is intrigued** and wants to know what this is.

- Interrogation of Birling. Birling feels uncomfortable and tries to threaten Goole with his friendship with Colonel Roberts. Audience think Birling is selfish and arrogant.

- Beginnings of **conflict between younger generation** (Sheila) and older generation (Birling). Sheila responds much more instinctively and emotionally to the report of Eva Smith's death. This creates tension and the audience feel some sympathy for Sheila.
- Inspector leaves the room, having introduced Eva Smith's change of name to Daisy Renton. **Audience want to know why this has occurred.**
- Look at the final exchange between Sheila and Gerald. In a sense, Sheila begins the inspector's task. The fact that the audience knows that Gerald is involved (the third out of five characters) **suggests to the audience that the momentum will continue and that all the characters will be involved.**
- The inspector returns at the end of the scene and asks his question 'Well?' This is a **cliff-hanger – audience want to watch on to see how Gerald and Sheila react.**
- **Act 2 also ends with CLIFF HANGER. The front door slams, announcing Eric's return, but the audience have to wait until Act 2 for his confession.**
- **(The front door bangs every time someone enters or leaves the house. The characters and audience can hear this, and wonder who enters the house- effective sound effect in creating tension.)**

## 2. Timing

- **Timing** of entrances and exits is crucial. For example, the Inspector arrives immediately after Birling has told Gerald about his impending knighthood and about how "a man has to look after himself and his own."
- **Sheila runs off stage when she realises she is the reason Eva was sacked - creates intense atmosphere.**
- **Sheila and Gerald are left alone to discuss Daisy Renton- this draws information out for audience.**
- **A great deal of tension has been created for the audience by the end of Act 1** and they have the desire to know how all the characters were involved. By having a break at this point between Acts One and Two and creating a **dramatic pause** Priestley creates **tension for the rest of the play**. Act 1 ends with the Inspector asking, "Well?" This builds suspense for the start of act 2 which begins with the same question and we are desperate for the answer.
- Tension is further created by the way **information is gradually revealed**, one person at a time. The audience and characters are kept on their toes.

Priestley has already **suggested to the audience some of the themes** that he develops later in his play: e.g. the idea that **those in power are often undeserving of that power and foolish** (as shown in his presentation of Birling in particular) and that the **younger generation are more open to positive change** (as in his presentation of Sheila's remorse). Most importantly he has suggested that the Inspector is going to be the character to question the arrogant self-confidence that the Birlings have, just as he as a playwright confronts his audience's own prejudices about power in society.

### 3. The Ending

The **ending** leaves the audience on a cliff-hanger. In Act 3 the Birlings believed themselves to be off the hook when it is discovered that the Inspector wasn't real and that no girl had died in the infirmary. This releases some of the tension - but the final telephone call, announcing that a real inspector is on his way to ask questions about the suicide of a young girl, suddenly restores the tension very dramatically. It is an unexpected final twist.

### 4. Dramatic Structure/Genre

Follows the rules of **Greek Drama**- the three unities of **place, action and time are kept to in a realistic manner**. i.e. The Drama all unfolds in one place- Birling's Dining room. Action all takes place in one evening, time passes in the same way as in real life. This makes the play realistic.

The **Inspector acts like a Greek chorus (Narrator)**. He sums up what has happened, and explains to both actors and the audience the lessons we must learn.

Equally might be seen as a simple **crime/ mystery play**- 'Who dunnit?'

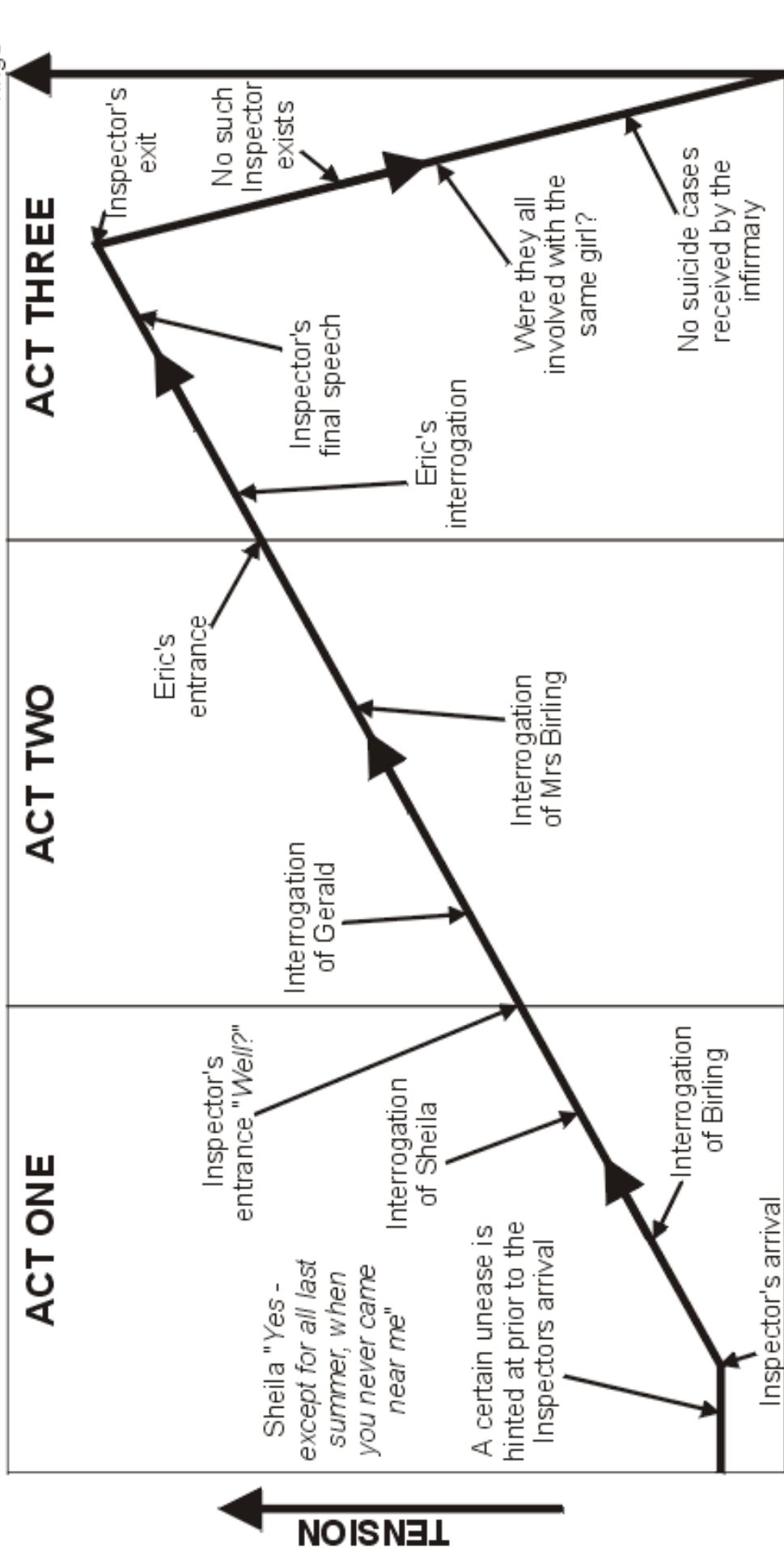
Furthermore, The play has **myth-like quality in that it carries a moral message** that we should take better care of our fellow human beings, so in some ways is like a **parable**.

### 5. The Inspector himself adds dramatic tension:

- He controls the **pace** and **tension** by dealing with one line of enquiry at a time. Slowly the story of Eva's life is unravelled, like in a 'whodunnit'.
- He is in command at the end of Act 1 and the start of Act 2, and the end of Act 2 and the start of Act 3. He is a brooding, inescapable presence, very much in control.

The telephone rings

# TENSION GRAPH OF 'AN INSPECTOR CALLS'



**TENSION** ↑

**TIME** →

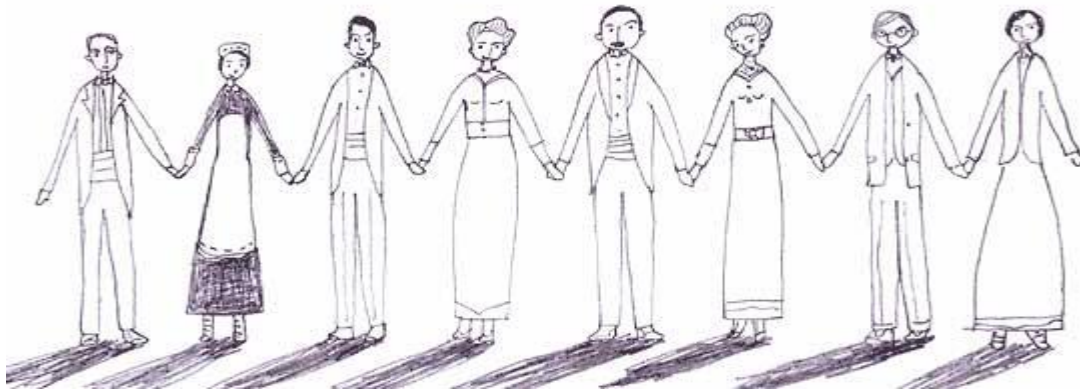
This resource was found at [www.englishresources.co.uk](http://www.englishresources.co.uk)

## Themes

## Responsibility

The Inspector wants each member of the family to share the responsibility of Eva's death: he tells them, *"each of you helped to kill her."* However, his final speech is aimed not only at the characters on stage, but at the audience too:

***"One Eva Smith has gone - but there are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths still left with us, with their lives, their hopes and fears, their suffering and chance of happiness, all intertwined with our lives, and what we think and say and do."***



## Themes

## Class

Priestley is trying to show that the upper classes are unaware that the easy lives they lead rest upon hard work of the lower classes. They're selfish/uncaring and immoral.

ATTITUDES to LOWER CLASS		ATTITUDES to UPPER CLASS
To this character, Eva was...		At the start of the play this character was...
cheap labour	Mr Birling	keen to be knighted – to cement his hard-fought rise to upper class
someone who could be fired out of spite	Sheila	happy spending time/money in expensive shops
a mistress ho could be discarded when it suited	Gerald	prepared to marry Sheila, despite her lower social position
easy sex at the end of a drunken night	Eric	awkward and secretive
insolent and acting above her position in life	Mrs Birling	Socially superior

**Make a similar table for the END of the play.**

The older generation and the younger generation take the Inspector's message in different ways. While Sheila and Eric accept their part in Eva's death and feel huge guilt about it, their parents are unable to admit that they did anything wrong.

The Old (Mr and Mrs Birling)	The Young (Sheila and Eric)
<p>The old are set in their ways. They are utterly confident that they are right and they see the young as foolish.</p>	<p>The young are open to new ideas. This is first seen early in Act 1 when both Eric and Sheila express sympathy for the strikers - an idea which horrifies Birling, who can only think of production costs and ignores the human side of the issue.</p>
<p>The old will do anything to protect themselves: Mrs Birling lies to the Inspector when he first shows her the photograph; Mr Birling wants to cover up a potential scandal.</p>	<p>The young are honest and admit their faults. Eric refuses to try to cover his part up, saying, "<b><i>the fact remains that I did what I did.</i></b>"</p>
<p>They have never been forced to examine their consciences before and find they cannot do it now - as the saying goes, 'you can't teach an old dog new tricks.'</p>	<p>Sheila and Eric see the human side of Eva's story and are very troubled by their part in it. They <i>do</i> examine their consciences.</p>
<p>Mr and Mrs Birling have much to fear from the visit of the 'real' inspector because they know they will lose everything.</p>	<p>Sheila and Eric have nothing to fear from the visit of the 'real' inspector because they have already admitted what they have done wrong, and will change</p>
<p><b>Gerald Croft</b> is caught in the middle, being neither very young nor old. In the end he sides with the older generation, perhaps because his aristocratic roots influence him to want to keep the status quo and protect his own interests.</p>	

Ultimately, we can be optimistic that the young - those who will shape future society - are able to take on board the Inspector's message.



## Key Quotations

## Prompt Cards

Transfer the following quotations and analysis onto prompt cards to help with your revision.

You might want to add one or two more of your own!

## Key Quotations

## The Inspector

**Mystical and ghostly figure who calls to reveal to the Birlings how dangerous, selfish and immoral their lifestyles are.**

Quotation	Analysis
<i>It's better to ask for the earth than to take it.</i>	The Insp's lesson to Mr B is that at least Eva Smith only asked for a rise. Mr B just takes all of his money without asking anyone.
<i>There are a lot of young women... if there weren't the factories and warehouses wouldn't know where to look for cheap labour. Ask your father.</i>	The Insp shows he knows how business works and how the workers are exploited by Mr B.
<i>Sometimes, there isn't as much difference as you think ... I wouldn't know where to draw the line.</i>	Gerald points out that they are respectable citizens, not criminals - Insp.'s reply suggests that even though no legal crime has been committed, they <u>are</u> guilty of a moral crime.
<i>You were annoyed with yourself and passed the annoyance onto her</i>	The Insp knows why Sheila did what she did to Eva Smith
<i>She wanted to keep this youngster out of any more trouble – isn't that so?</i>	Eva Smith wouldn't accept any more money from Eric because she thought he'd get into trouble for it. Eva is morally superior to her superiors – irony.
<i>You're offering the money at the wrong time, Mr Birling</i>	The Insp offers moral, not legal lessons. Mr Birling appears not to know the difference.
<i>One Eva Smith has gone... but there are millions... of Eva Smiths... all intertwined with our lives... if men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish.</i>	The message Priestley wanted to put across when he wrote the play?!

## Key Quotations



## Mr Birling

**Bullying, mean head of the family who sees his employees as expensive machinery rather than human beings.**

Quotation	Analysis
<i>look forward to a time when Croft's and Birling's are no longer competing but working together – for lower costs and higher prices.</i>	Mr B may only want Gerald to marry his daughter for business purposes.
<i>The Germans don't want war... the Titanic, she sails next week... and unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable.</i>	Mr B is wrong about the war and the Titanic. This is how the writer tells us he is wrong in the way he treats people too – dramatic irony to 1945 and modern audience. This links to pages 9/10 and his views, which the audience will also see as wrong.
<b>Good evidence to show you understand 'structure'.</b>	
<i>The way some of these cranks talk now, you'd think everybody has to look after everybody else.</i>	Mr B can only ever think of looking after himself.
<i>But it doesn't convey anything to me.</i>	Mr B doesn't even remember sacking Eva Smith until reminded about it.
<i>Public men, Mr Birling, have responsibilities as well as privileges.</i>	Insp. suggesting that Mr B has a 'duty of care' to his employees – something we take for granted in 2012.

## Key Quotations



## Mrs Birling

**A snobbish woman who judges everyone character.**

**Financial situation, not by their**

*Girls of that class...*

... looks at everyone as members of various classes, not human beings.

*Alderman Meggarty... we are learning something tonight.*

Mrs B realizes that people she thought were civilised are corrupt and immoral. Suggests the wealthy are remote from reality? Link to today?

*She seemed to me to be not a good case – and so I used my influence to have it refused.*

Mrs B admits turning the girl away but refuses to accept that this was wrong. Very matter of fact language.

*Some drunken young idler, then that's all the more reason why he shouldn't escape.'*

Mrs B doesn't yet know that the drunken idler is her own son. As a hypocrite, she doesn't say the same when she finds out!

## Key Quotations



**Sheila**

A basically warm hearted girl who admits she eventually realises that they did wrong



uffers from sudden jealousies. Eric, unlike her parents.

Quotation	Analysis
<i>She was a very pretty girl too... and that didn't make it any better... I couldn't be sorry for her</i>	Sheila admits to being jealous of Eva Smith – to explain why she had Eva sacked.
<i>...talked about building up a wall that's sure to be knocked flat</i>	As one of the more intelligent characters, Sheila suspects that it is useless to try and fool the inspector.
<i>I don't care about that, the point is that you don't seem to have learnt anything.</i>	Sheila reveals her generous nature and that she knows that whether the girl died or not, the sins they committed are still with them / have taken place.
<i>I suppose we're all nice people now.</i>	As above. Ironic tone.

## Key Quotations



**Eric**

A basically pleasant young man but he is not hard enough. He eventually realizes that



inks too much and doesn't work hard the girl badly.

<i>She wouldn't take any more and she didn't want to see me again.</i>	Eric explains how Eva/Daisy behaved more decently, even in poverty, than any of the Birlings did. Wouldn't accept stolen money
<i>and the child she'd had too – my child – your own grandchild – you killed them both – damn you...</i>	Eric reveals the Insp's ability to turn them against themselves. Hyphens used to show his distress – harsh language used. Don't forget to look at the stage directions as well!
<i>The money's not the important thing. It's what happened to the girl and what we all did to her that matters</i>	Eric proves that he is good at heart and understands that they were morally very bad to the girl.

## Key Quotations



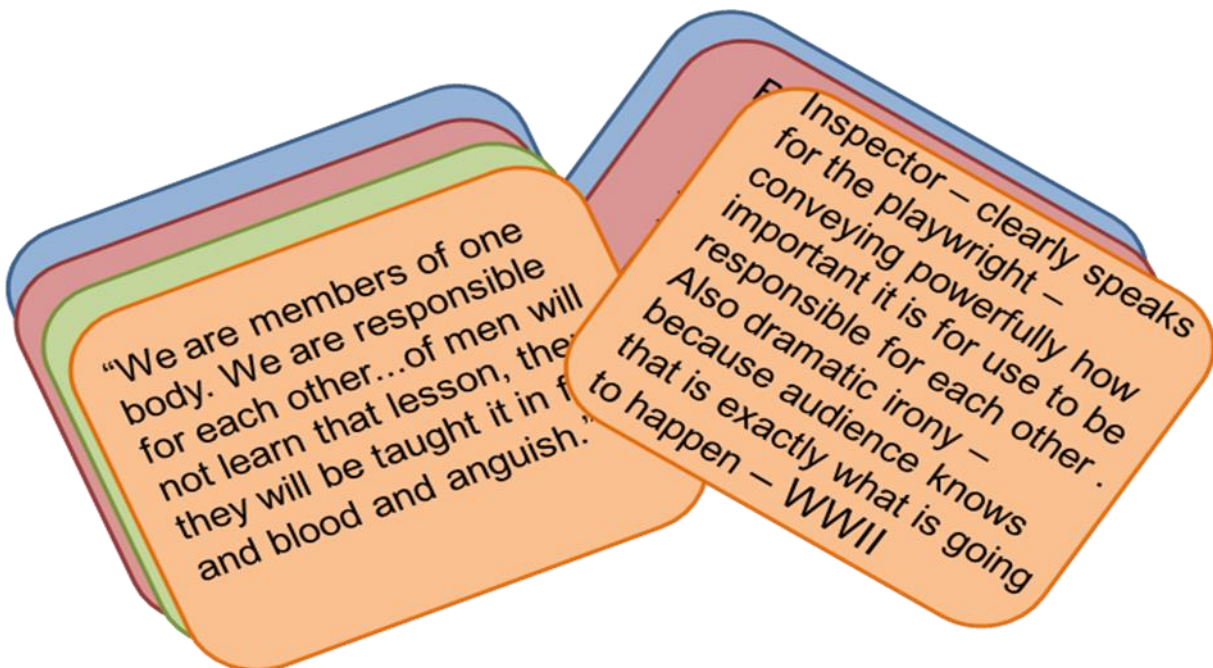
**Gerald**

Another gentle character who might have superiority over her to lead to sex. Perhaps happen to the girl when his help stopped,



in generosity but allowed his help to be taken away. He should have considered what would happen to the girl when his help stopped, as it was always going to.

Quotation	Analysis
<i>And I've told you – I was awfully busy at the works all that time.</i>	Gerald proves that he is capable of being so dishonest to someone he should respect, i.e. Sheila.
<i>I didn't install her there so I could make love to her... I was sorry for her.</i>	Gerald may have tried to help her but he never considered what would happen when he took the help away.
<i>She told me she'd been happier than she'd ever been before.</i>	As above. Gerald's sense of generosity is not only providing him with sex without responsibilities, it is also misplaced.
<i>...it may all have been nonsense.</i>	Gerald is trying to prove no one died – he thinks that will make everything all right – forgetting that they all treated Eva/Daisy very badly.



Practise answering some of the exam questions under timed conditions – 45 minutes. Although we'll at least one in class, the more you do, the better you'll get. Hand in for marking and feedback.

See the **Critical Essay PowerPoint** for some sample questions.