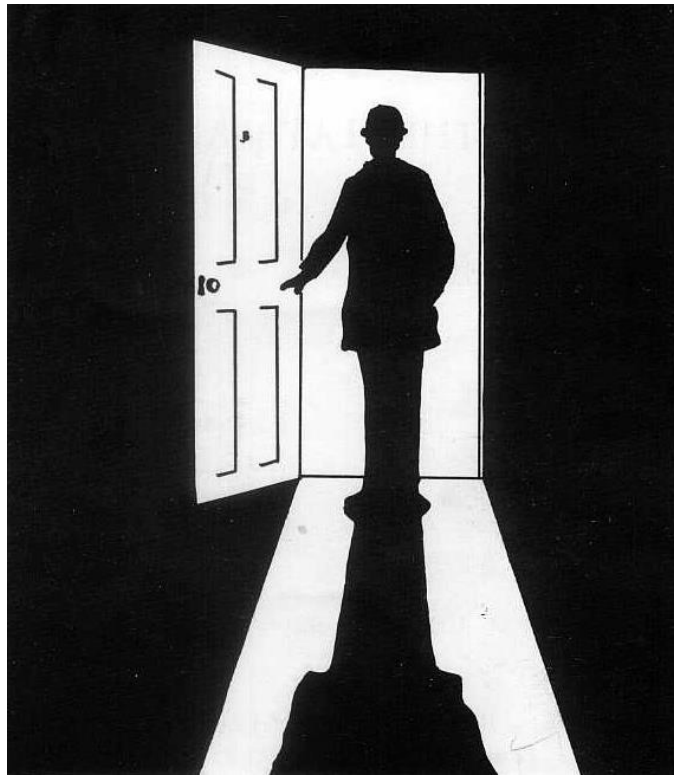
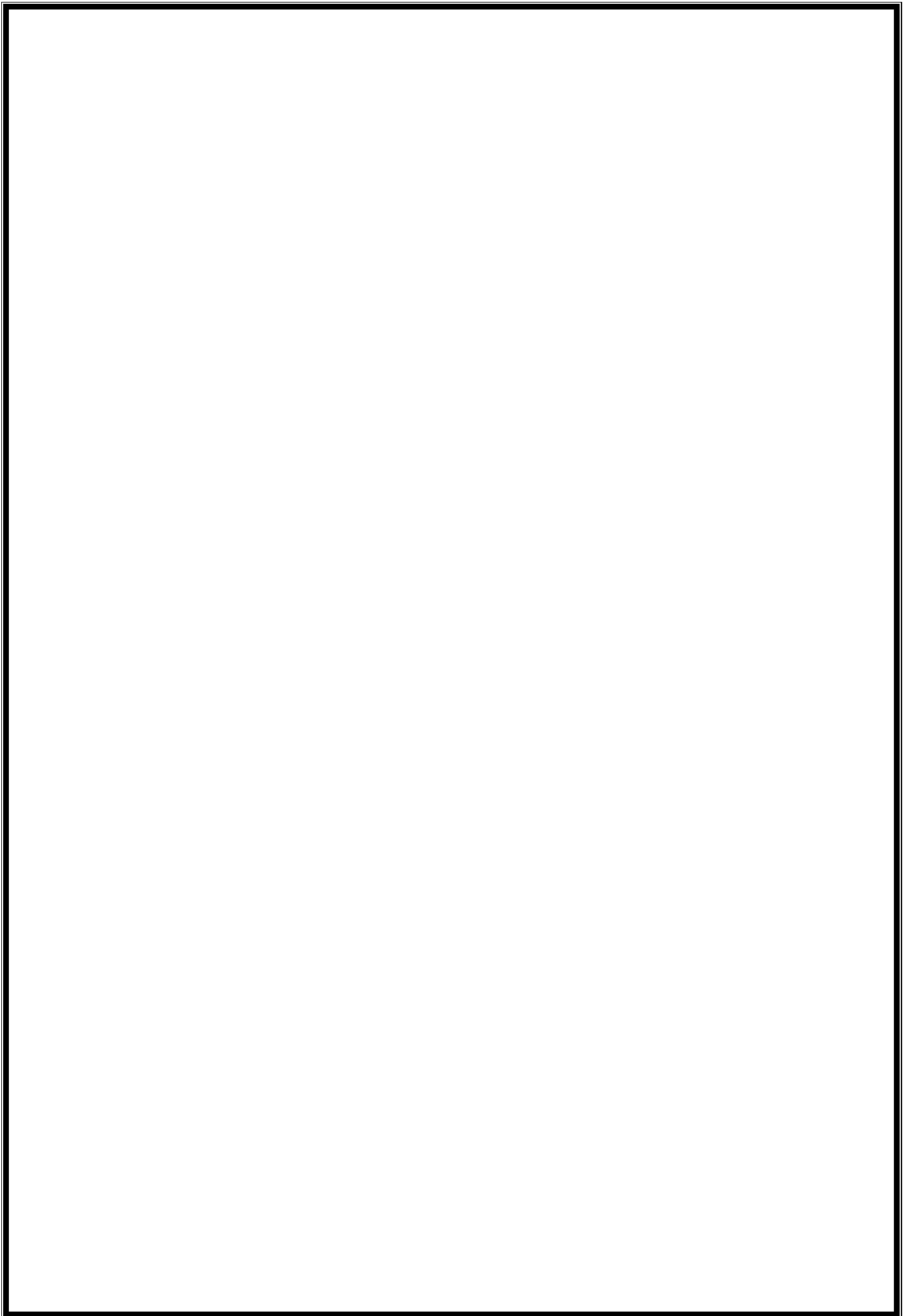


An Inspector Calls

by J.B. Priestley



A drama unit for National 5 English



AN INSPECTOR CALLS

Aims and objectives:

- ❖ The aim of this unit is to provide you with a general introduction to An Inspector Calls
- ❖ You will look at the historical and moral contexts for the play.
- ❖ You will be guided through the three acts, and will look at the key characters.
- ❖ You will analyse the language used in the dialogue of the play.

At the end of this unit you will:

- ❖ understand the social and political messages of the play.
- ❖ know something about J.B. Priestley's own life.
- ❖ be able to contextualise some of the major themes of An Inspector Calls.
- ❖ have a clear understanding of the key characters, relationships and conflicts.
- ❖ have sufficient understanding to write a broad-ranging essay in the National 5 examination.

THE PLOT

An Inspector Calls is a play about social responsibility – how much we must look after others. The story is a fiction, but encourages the audience to directly consider their own attitudes.

It is set just before the First World War, and the sense of a society moving towards disaster pervades the text.

At the start of the play, the wealthy Birling family have gathered to celebrate an engagement which will connect them to another, richer, family. However, a mysterious inspector arrives and exposes a number of secrets the family have been trying to hide.

J. B. PRIESTLEY: A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Life

John Boynton Priestley was born in Yorkshire in 1894. He knew early on that he wanted to become a writer, but decided against going to university as he thought he would get a better feel for the world around him away from academia. Instead, he became a junior clerk with a local wool firm at the age of sixteen.

When the First World War broke out, Priestley joined the infantry and only just escaped death on a number of occasions. After the war, he gained a degree from Cambridge University, then moved to London to work as a freelance writer. He wrote successful articles and essays, then published the first of many novels, *The Good Companions*, in 1929. He wrote his first play in 1932 and went on to write fifty more. Much of his writing was ground-breaking and controversial. He included new ideas about possible parallel universes and strong political messages.

During the Second World War he broadcast a massively popular weekly radio programme which was attacked by the Conservatives as being too left-wing. The programme was eventually cancelled by the BBC for being too critical of the Government.

He continued to write into the 1970s, and died in 1984.

Politics

During the 1930's Priestley became very concerned about the consequences of social inequality in Britain, and in 1942 Priestley and others set up a new political party, the Common Wealth Party, which argued for public ownership of land, greater democracy, and a new 'morality' in politics. The party merged with the Labour Party in 1945, but Priestley was influential in developing the idea of the Welfare State which began to be put into place at the end of the war.

He believed that further world wars could only be avoided through cooperation and mutual respect between countries, and so became active in the early movement for a United Nations. And as the nuclear arms race between West and East began in the 1950s, he helped to found C.N.D., hoping that Britain would set an example to the world by a moral act of nuclear disarmament.

1912 and 1945

Priestley deliberately set his play in 1912 because the date represented an era when all was very different from the time he was writing. In 1912, rigid class and gender boundaries seemed to ensure that nothing would change. Yet by 1945, most of those class and gender divisions had been breached. Priestley wanted to make the most of these changes. Through this play, he encourages people to seize the opportunity the end of the war had given them to build a better, more caring society.

TASK ONE

1. What is meant by "left-wing" and "right-wing"?

2. What is the "Welfare State"?

3. Why would C.N.D. have been such an important group to Priestley?

4. What is "socialism"?

5. How do you think could we make our society fairer to ALL of its inhabitants?

LANGUAGE

TASK TWO

Look at the words in bold type. Check that you understand their meanings, as used here, then complete the definitions in the box below.

Naturalism is a term applied to a drama which unfolds before our eyes with events following on **chronologically** from each other, with characters talking more or less in a life-like manner, in settings that seem realistic. Most soap-operas are naturalistic in these terms.

More specifically, though, the play is considered to be a **social-realist** drama. This kind of art was intended to show the difficult circumstances in which the poor live, in an attempt to provoke real change.

An Inspector Calls is a naturalistic play in this sense, but Priestley is concerned with changing the audience's attitudes; in this, the drama is a *morality play*. *It is a play with a very direct message.*

Priestley helps to establish the **setting** by showing the Birling family's existence in a very grand, rich household. The setting in time is made clear by references to historical events, and through some of the vocabulary the characters use, which is no longer in common usage.

The **dialogue** is the main way in which we learn about the characters and their personal histories. As the play goes on, the **veneer** of responsibility is gradually eroded, until the characters are exposed for what they really are.

Naturalist drama is...

Chronological means...

Social-Realism is...

Setting is...

Dialogue is...

Veneer is...

BACKGROUND

TASK THREE

Read the following information, then complete the box below.

Social Class

Social position was far more important in 1912 than it is today. Industrial production expanded massively in the nineteenth century and many industrialists made huge fortunes. Men such as Arthur Birling may have come from humble backgrounds but this new wealth allowed them to climb up the social ladder. Marriages between these *nouveaux riches* families and aristocratic (but often impoverished) land-owning families helped to secure new social positions.

The Labour Party, which was founded by James Kier Hardie in 1893, was only just beginning to make an impact on the political life in the country and the rights of workers, such as Eva Smith, were still not taken seriously by many employers in 1912.

Industrial Setting

Priestley has set the play in the fictional industrial city of Brumley. Brumley would have been typical of many towns where the factory owners, who provided much-needed employment, were able to run their businesses exactly as they wanted to.

At the time, there were many women who were poor and needed help; this is indicated and acknowledged by Priestley by the existence of the Brumley Women's Charity Organisation. Charities like this were dependent on the support of rich people and were often found in the large, industrial cities. It is interesting that whether someone received help depended on whether the women like Mrs Birling thought that they deserved help or whether they deserved to suffer.

Do you think our society is more equal than that of England in 1912? Give three reasons to support your answer.

THE THEMES OF THE PLAY

A **theme** is the underlying message of a novel, poem, play or short story.

Aspects of **character, structure, setting** and **plot** do not exist independently of the theme.

For example, a particular character may be used to illustrate the theme by his or her actions or behaviour.

Think about these statements:

“You show me a capitalist, and I'll show you a bloodsucker” –
Malcolm X

“When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask
why the poor have no food, they call me a communist.” – Hélder
Câmara

“There is nobody in this country who got rich on their own.
Nobody. You built a factory out there - good for you. But I want to
be clear. You moved your goods to market on roads the rest of us
paid for. You hired workers the rest of us paid to educate. You
were safe in your factory because of police forces and fire forces
that the rest of us paid for. You didn't have to worry that
marauding bands would come and seize everything at your
factory... Now look. You built a factory and it turned into
something terrific or a great idea - God bless! Keep a hunk of it.
But part of the underlying social contract is you take a hunk of
that and pay forward for the next kid who comes along.” –
Elizabeth Warren

“I saw America's economy last night, people raiding dumpsters at
a higher rate than normal in my home town. Digging through
garbage shouldn't be a career.” — Carroll Bryant

Priestley is interested in several things in this play. He is interested in how the rich acquire their wealth, how they use (or abuse) their advantaged position in society, how some take responsibility for their actions while others do not, and how we should treat those less fortunate than ourselves.

Key themes in this play include:

- Social responsibility/ duty
- The dangers of large wealth
- The importance of open justice
- Class
- The difference between youth and age
- Cause and effect

Act One



TASK FOUR

Fill in the gaps to complete this summary of the first act.

When the play opens the Birling family are celebrating the _____ of Sheila and Gerald _____. The mood seems to be _____ friendly and happy. Arthur Birling hopes that the marriage will help his _____. Birling's social aspirations become apparent when he tells Gerald that he might be in line for a _____. He says that 'a man has to make his _____'.

Inspector Goole arrives immediately after this and announces that he is investigating the suicide of a girl named _____ who killed herself by swallowing _____. He says that she left a diary and a _____. With the arrival of the Inspector a note of _____ and menace is introduced, and the audience expects the complacency of the Birlings to be _____.

The Inspector shows Birling a photograph and he then recognises her as the girl he _____ after a dispute over wages. The inspector soon adopts a very _____ tone which continues throughout the play. Birling tries to defend himself by referring to his friendship with _____.

Sheila is the next to be interrogated. She admits _____ to the manager at Milward's because she thought Eva was _____ at her when she tried on a dress. As a result of this, Eva, or Daisy Renton was _____. Sheila feels very _____ about her behaviour and feels _____ towards Eva Smith. She is open and _____ about her involvement with the girl.

When Gerald hears the name Daisy Renton he reacts so _____ that his own involvement with the girl is _____. At the end of Act I he admits to _____ that he was having an _____ with Daisy Renton over the _____.

TASK FIVE

Discuss the events of the first act with your colleagues, then answer the following questions.

1. How does Priestley show the confidence of the Birlings in their position?

2. What is the difference in the reactions to the Inspector's questioning, of Arthur Birling and Sheila Birling.

3. The mood in this Act changes from relaxed to tense. Explore the ways Priestley transforms the tone throughout the Act.

4. How does Priestley hint at the tensions within the group at this stage?

TASK SIX

Write a short analysis for each of these quotations; you should refer to as many of the following aspects as possible:

Characterisation; conflict; poetic technique; theme; motif; tension; historical context; punctuation; tone; symbolism...

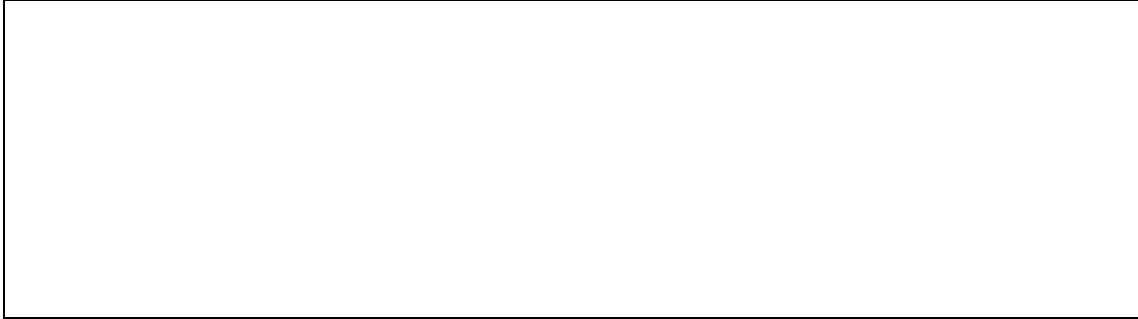
“You’re squiffy” – Sheila to Eric

“I speak as a hard-headed business man.” – Mr. Birling

“If you don’t come down hard on these people they’ll soon be asking for the earth!” – Mr. Birling

“Unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable.” Mr. Birling

“But take my word for it, you youngsters - and I've learnt in the good hard school of experience - that a man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own” Mr. Birling



“Why - you fool - *he knows*. Of course he knows. And I hate to think how much he knows that we don't know yet. You'll see. You'll see. *She looks at him almost in triumph.*” - Sheila



Act Two



TASK SEVEN

Fill in the gaps to complete this summary of the second act.

Gerald knows that the inspector's questions will _____ his involvement with Daisy Renton. He wants _____ to leave but she insists on staying. Mrs. Birling enters and meets the inspector for the first time. she tries to make light of the situation which she refers to as 'this _____ business.' Sheila realises that her mother's _____ and uncaring attitude will eventually be turned against her and tries to _____ her. We realise that the family really know very _____ about each other. At this point, for example, Mrs. Birling discovers that Eric has been _____ heavily for years.

The inspector questions Gerald who admits that he know Daisy Renton. He met her at the _____ at the Palace Variety Theatre in Brumley. Gerald explains that Alderman Meggarty was _____ Daisy and he _____ her. He set her up as his _____ until _____ when the affair came to an end. He seems genuinely _____ about the girl's death, particularly as Eva was very _____ when he broke off the relationship. Sheila then gives Gerald back her _____ .

After some prompting Mrs. Birling admits that the girl had approached the _____ organisation which she is involved with. Eva, who was _____, had unfortunately called herself _____ when she first met the committee which _____ Mrs. Birling against her. Mrs. Birling _____ the committee not to help her and told her to go and look for the _____ of her _____. The inspector traps Mrs. Birling into stating that the man should be made an _____ of. Mrs. Birling is a _____ character who remains _____ throughout.

TASK EIGHT

Discuss the events of the second act with your colleagues, then answer the following questions.

1. What do we learn about Eva Smith from Act II? How does Priestley contrast her behaviour with that of the Birling family and Gerald Croft?

2. Act II ends with Mrs. Birling finally weakening. What is the cause of this? How does the inspector trap her into condemning her own son?

3. Compare the reactions of Gerald Croft and Mrs. Birling to interrogation by the inspector.

4. How has Eric's guilt been suggested by Priestley in Acts I and II?

TASK NINE

Write a short analysis for each of these quotations; you should refer to as many of the following aspects as possible:

Characterisation; conflict; poetic technique; theme; motif; tension; historical context; punctuation; tone; symbolism...

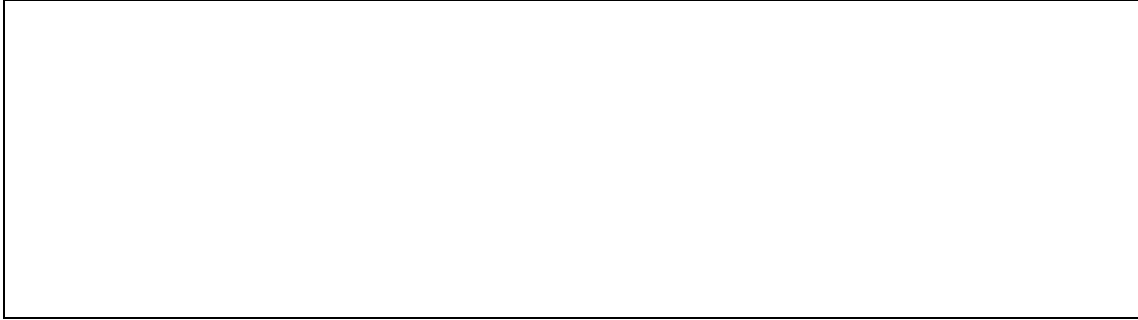
“We really must stop these silly pretenses.” Sheila to Mrs. Birling

“Girls of that class.” Mrs. Birling to Inspector Goole

“She was very pretty – soft brown hair and big dark eyes.” Gerald

“You’re not the kind of father a chap could go to when he’s in trouble.” Eric

“I happened to look in, one night, after a rather long dull day, and as the show wasn't very bright, I went down into the bar for a drink. It's a favourite haunt of women of the town” Gerald

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“She kept a rough sort of diary. And she said there that she had to go away and be quiet and remember ‘just to make it last longer.’ She felt there'd never be anything as good again for her - so she had to make it last longer.” Inspector Goole

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, positioned below the second text block.

Act Three



TASK TEN

Fill in the gaps to complete this summary of the third act.

Eric first met Eva Smith in _____. Eric met Eva in the _____ bar. Eric was drunk and _____ to make a row. Eva told Eric that she thought she was going to have a _____. Eric was very _____ about it. Eva did not want Eric to _____ her. Eric started to give Eva _____ money. Eric gave Eva about _____ pounds. He had stolen money from his father's _____. Eric said he did mean to _____ the money back. Eric said he couldn't go to his _____ when he was in trouble. Eva would not take any more stolen _____ from Eric. Eva asked Mrs. Birling's _____ for help. They _____ to help her. Eric said his mother had killed her _____. Eric was very angry with his _____.

The inspector said it was too _____ to help Eva Smith. The Inspector said, 'We are _____ for each other'. Mr. Birling said he _____ Eric for the trouble. Mr. Birling said there would be a public _____. Eric's father said he had to pay the _____ back. Eric said he was _____ of his parents. Mrs. Birling said the inspector was _____ and assertive. Sheila said the Inspector had made them _____. Mrs. Birling thought that she had only done her _____. Gerald said he had asked a police _____ about inspector Goole. Mr. Birling _____ the Chief Constable. The Chief Constable was called Colonel _____.

Eric and Sheila still felt _____ about what they had done. Eric said they had all helped to _____ Eva. His father told him to hold his _____. Gerald said the Inspector might have had more than one _____. Mr. Birling said there was no _____ that Daisy Renton was really Eva Smith. Gerald said that perhaps no one committed _____. He rang the _____ in Brumley. At the end of the play another _____ was on his way.

TASK ELEVEN

Discuss the events of the final act with your colleagues, then answer the following questions.

1. What is the twist in the tale?

2. Why do Mr. Birling and Gerald believe the Inspector was a fake?

3. Explain the division between Sheila/ Eric and the rest of the characters.

4. Was Goole a real inspector? Give three reasons for your answer.

TASK TWELVE

Write a short analysis for each of these quotations; you should refer to as many of the following aspects as possible:

Characterisation; conflict; poetic technique; theme; motif; tension; historical context; punctuation; tone; symbolism...

“We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other.” Inspector Goole

“Everything’s all right now, Sheila.” Gerald to Sheila

“Each of you helped to kill her.” Inspector Goole

“Look Inspector, I’d give thousands...” Birling to Inspector Goole

“We are responsible for each other.” Inspector Goole

“Look at the way he talked to me...” Birling

“That doesn’t matter to me.” Eric

“By Jingo! A fake!”

“How do you know it’s the same girl?”

“I suppose we’re all nice people now.” Sheila

TASK THIRTEEN

Now you have finished reading the play, answer the following questions in the boxes below:

Which characters did you feel sympathy for?

Which characters did you find unsympathetic?

Which scene did you find most dramatic, and why?

Which theme do you feel is the most important to the play, and why?

Which quotation do you feel is the most memorable in the play?

CHARACTERS

MR BIRLING

Birling is a **snob** and a **social climber**, very aware of his position in society, especially as his wife is higher up the social scale than him, as are the Crofts, Gerald's parents. He tries to impress and **intimidate** the inspector by mentioning having been mayor, emphasising his connections to the Crofts and his friendship with the Chief Constable. Birling is **pompous** and makes **speeches** revealing a **selfish and arrogant attitude** towards others. His proclamations about the Titanic, the state of the nation and the impossibility of war are all designed to make him look **foolish** in the eyes of the audience who would have the benefit of hindsight. Birling believes that each person is responsible only for himself and his family and denies any collective or social responsibility. More **worried about scandal** and his reputation than other people's feelings, Birling shows a **callous and unsympathetic** attitude towards Eva Smith. He is very **impressed** by Gerald and is **indulgent** towards his affair with Eva Smith even though it is his own daughter who has been betrayed.

MRS BIRLING

An even bigger **snob** than her husband, Mrs Birling is described in the opening stage directions as a 'cold woman, and her husband's social superior'. She is **narrow-minded** and **judgmental** about the 'lower classes' without really understanding how other people live. She has **no insight** and is genuinely unaware that her son is a heavy drinker. Her life is governed by her notion of **correctness** and whilst her daughter is behaving in an appropriate way, she seems to get on with her but when Sheila expresses opinions she doesn't approve of she reprimands her. Her **arrogant** and **patronising** attitude towards the inspector means that she falls a victim to his questioning despite Sheila's warnings. Although she chairs the committee of a charitable organisation, Sybil Birling is **not a charitable person**; she is **smug** and **self-satisfied** and only serves on the committee out of a sense of duty rather than a genuine desire to help those less fortunate than herself. Because she only hears what she wants to, she is **easily offended**. It is because Eva Smith had the impertinence to use the Birling name that Mrs Birling refused to help her. She is delighted when it seems that the inspector is a fraud because she feels that she was the only one who didn't give in to him. She does not change her attitude, has **no sense of empathy** and shows **no remorse** for her role in Eva Smith's death.

SHEILA

At the beginning of the play, Sheila is presented as rather pleased with herself but also rather shallow. She makes **inconsequential remarks** and speaks in a **rather childish** way: she calls her mother 'mummy' and uses words like 'squiffy' and 'jolly well'. However, she is the only one to immediately accept responsibility for her role in Eva Smith's death and she is, therefore, probably the **most sympathetic character** in the play. She is **genuinely remorseful** for her actions and is very affected by details of the girl's terrible death. She shows **perception** in her attitude towards the inspector, realising that he already knows much of what he is asking them and showing **intuition** about what his questioning is leading to. She is the first to realise that Eric is the father of Eva's baby and tries to stop her mother from making it worse for Eric. This intuition is also evident in the fact that before information about Gerald's affair came out, she was **suspicious** about his behaviour when she speaks to him 'half serious, half playfully' about it. Although she acted out of spite and jealousy in getting Eva sacked, she has more of a **conscience** than any of the other characters and we believe her when she says that she will never do anything like it again. She has more **empathy** for Eva, recognising her as a person not just as a worker. She is therefore very different from her father and mother and nearer to the inspector in terms of her **social conscience**. Of all the characters, Sheila is **most changed** by the inspector's visit. She is more **honest** and **outspoken** than at the beginning of the play, often shocking her mother with her remarks. Sheila **represents hope** that people can change.

ERIC

Eric is rather **awkward** and **ill at ease** with himself and others. He is described as 'half shy, half assertive' **immature** and **weak**. He is presented as a **drunk** who does not stand up for himself against his father. Neither of his parents know him well or understand him and he seems to be lacking their regard and affection. Birling makes it clear that Gerald is the type of son he would have chosen for himself. His liaison with Eva Smith was possibly as a result of his parents' lack of understanding but he did not treat her well at the time and the revelations that he is a **thief** compound our view of him as a weak and spoilt young man. He is, however, **genuinely sorry** about Eva and **horrified** by the revelations that his mother had turned her away. The audience feels a certain sympathy for him, particularly because he does **redeem himself** towards the end of the play when he seems to have learnt his lesson.

GERALD CROFT

Gerald is the upper class fiancé of Sheila Birling; unlike Eric, he is at **ease with himself** and others and has the **self-confidence** of a young man of his class and upbringing. He is more like Mr Birling in his views and outlook on life than he is Sheila or Eric to whom he is nearer in age. He agrees with the way Mr Birling handles the sacking of Eva Smith and when questioned by the inspector, like Mr and Mrs Birling, his **first impulse is to deny** everything. However, unlike them, he **shows remorse** for his actions when he realises what has happened to the girl. He tries to **protect** Sheila from the revelations about his affair with Eva and once he has begun his confession, he admits what he did. However, he is the one who **acts on his suspicions** about the inspector and begins the chain of events which result in the revelation that the inspector is a fraud or impostor. Once he realises this, like the Birlings, he reverts to a light-hearted attitude which shows that he has **not learned anything from the events of the evening**.

INSPECTOR GOOLE

The inspector is described as creating 'an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness'. As each of the characters part in the death of Eva Smith is revealed, he remains **constant** and unmoving. Although he is described variously as speaking 'calmly' and 'steadily', he also speaks 'sternly' and 'grimly'. There are several references to his **taking control** and **intervening**. The inspector could be said to be a **mouth-piece** for Priestley's own opinions and as a contrast with the views of Birling; he has also been called merely a **dramatic device** to move the plot along. Certainly it is the inspector who makes things happen and takes control of how and when the revelations occur. He decides the order in which each character is questioned. The fact that he is quite **ordinary in appearance** underlines the fact that he is not ordinary in the way he asks questions and his attitude towards the other characters. He is **direct** and **takes charge** on a number of occasions. Both Birling and Mrs Birling remark on his rudeness. He is very **single-minded** and seems very **certain** of himself and his facts. He also seems to be **omniscient** [all-knowing] and Sheila is the one who recognises this most. He is a **catalyst** who seems able to get characters to reveal their involvement with Eva Smith because he seems to **already know** what they are going to say. Some critics have argued that he is like a **confessor figure** with the characters revealing their sins to him just as they might to a priest. He does not make things easy for them and he does pass judgment on them aloud, unlike a real police inspector although unlike a priest, he neither forgives them nor punishes them. Goole seems to be working to a very **tight time-scale** and makes a number of remarks about being **in a hurry**.

There are various possibilities for who or what Inspector Goole represents:

- Priestley
- God
- The voice of conscience
- A dramatic device
- A 'ghoul' or evil spirit
- A forewarning of what the characters will face on Judgment Day

The power of Inspector Goole's character lies in not knowing exactly who he is or what he represents. Priestley gives us no clues and deliberately leaves it open at the end because he does not want to impose just one interpretation of the inspector.

When he is uncovered at the end as not being a real inspector, it makes a huge difference to Mr and Mrs Birling and Gerald because not only have they avoided a scandal but they are also very aware of status, whereas for Sheila and Eric it makes no difference: 'he inspected us all right'.

TENSION IN 'AN INSPECTOR CALLS'

- there is a 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** and takes place over **one evening**
- 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 of the Inspector's visit
- events soon gather speed and it is not long before we are being informed of **Birling and Sheila's involvement** with Eva Smith
- tensions increase, 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'. As reader/audience we realise that all the characters are going to have secrets to reveal under the clever questioning of the inspector; the **anticipation** of the audience raises the level of tension
- Mrs Birling's attempts to shift the blame for the girl's suicide lead her to **blame the father** of the unborn child. Despite Sheila's attempts to prevent her from digging herself deeper into a hole, **Mrs Birling ploughs on relentlessly** adding to the dramatic tension as the audience waits to see what will happen
- 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 show a split in their attitudes, confirming **the differences highlighted by the Inspector's questioning** - 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

DRAMATIC DEVICES

- **stage directions** are used at the beginning of the play to **give information about the set**; it tells us that the Birlings are well off and middle class [it is 'a fairly solid suburban house' with 'good solid furniture' which is 'substantial and heavily comfortable' rather than cosy]
- stage directions are used at the beginning of the play to **give information about characters**; Priestley tells us not only about their appearance but also about their character [Birling is 'heavy-looking' and 'rather portentous' (it means self-important or pompous); Mrs Birling is 'rather cold', Sheila is a 'pretty girl...very pleased with life and rather excited'; Gerald is an 'attractive chap' whilst Eric is 'not quite at ease, half shy, half assertive'; when the inspector enters, we are told that he 'has a disconcerting habit of looking hard at the person he addresses before actually speaking']
- stage directions are widely used to give information about the feelings or actions of the characters which would help the actors playing the characters ['bitterly', 'distressed', 'after a pause, with a touch of impatience', 'massively taking charge']
- **lighting** is used to create effect – at the beginning the lighting is described as 'pink and intimate'; after the inspector enters there is a reference to his moving 'nearer a light – perhaps a standard lamp'. This suggests that the inspector is shining a harsh light on the Birlings and Gerald Croft
- sparing use of **sound effects** help to enhance the drama – the doorbell in the first act and the ringing of the telephone in the final moments of the play are both highly significant
- Priestley frequently makes use of the **dash** – to show a character's emotional state; the dash represents the fact that the character is speaking in a disjointed rather than a flowing and articulate way.
- not all the characters are on stage all the time; **exits and entrances** are cleverly used to create **dramatic tension** [see separate notes about this]with some characters being unaware of what has happened whilst they were out of the room [examples include; the entrance of the inspector shortly after Birling has made his pompous speeches; Mrs Birling's not knowing that the inspector is implicating everyone with his clever questioning techniques and Eric's re-appearance at the end of Act 2 just at the moment when the audience and the characters on stage realise that Eric is the father of Eva Smith's baby]

- **dramatic irony** – this is particularly evident in Birling’s speeches at the beginning of the play when he makes pronouncements about war, the state of the nation in 30 years’ time and, more immediately, the unsinkable nature of the Titanic; compare this apparent foolishness with the inspector’s talk of ‘blood and anguish’. An audience seeing this immediately after the second world war with knowledge of the first war would think of Birling as a fool and the inspector as a prophet
- the **major dramatic device** used by Priestley is that of the Inspector himself. He is used to good effect to **move the plot along, controlling the pace of events and deciding in which order the characters are questioned**. He is also used to **voice Priestley’s socialist views and opinions**
- **contrast** between characters is another effective dramatic device - the **juxtaposition** of Birling and the inspector provides an effective contrast of beliefs; the attitudes of Sheila and her father to the fate of Eva Smith also provides effective contrast
- **symbolism** is a further dramatic device used by Priestley: Birling **represents capitalism** whilst the inspector as a mouthpiece for Priestley himself **represents socialism**. Mr and Mrs Birling and Gerald Croft represent the old order of things whilst Sheila and Eric are **symbolic of hope** for the future
- **cliff-hangers** – Priestley uses this device several times to make the audience wait in anticipation for what they know will happen: The end of Act 1 and beginning of Act 2 begin with the inspector saying ‘Well?’ to Gerald; the beginning of Act 3 is ‘exactly as at the end of Act 2’

TASK FOURTEEN
Revision Quiz

1. What is the name of the playwright?

2. When was the play written?

3. When is the play set?

4. Where is the play set?

5. How many Acts are in the play?

6. At the opening of the play, what is happening?

7. Who has become engaged to who? (Both names, in full)

8. What are the names of the other characters at the table? (Full names)

9. Why does Mr. Birling believe Gerald will like the port he offers him?

10. What is suggested about Eric in the opening scene?

11. What dramatic technique is being used when Birling says that there will not be a war?

12. Which character introduces the Inspector to the family?

13. What is the inspector's name?

14. What does he claim a young woman has used to commit suicide?

15. What was the name of the young woman?

16. Why did Birling fire Eva from his factory?

17. How does Birling threaten the Inspector?

18. Where did Eva work after the Birling factory?

19. Why did Sheila lodge a complaint about Eva?

20. How does Sheila feel about her involvement in the incident?

21. What did Eva change her name to after she was dismissed from this second job?

22. What was Gerald's connection to the girl?

23. How did Gerald initially "save" her?

24. Where did Gerald meet her?

25. How did the inspector know what she had done?

26. What occurred between Eric and the girl?

How did Mrs. Birling affect the girl's life?

27. How did Mrs. Birling contribute to a tragedy for her family?

28. What did Mrs. Birling find so offensive about the Inspector?

29. How does the play conclude?

Complete the following quotations:

30. "You're _____"

31. "I speak as a hard-headed _____ man."

32. "If you don't come down hard on these _____ they'll soon be asking for the earth!"

33. "We really must stop these silly _____."

34. "Girls of _____ class."

35. "She was very _____ - soft brown hair and big dark eyes."

36. "You're not the kind of father a _____ could go to when he's in trouble."

37. "We are _____ of one body. We are responsible for each other."

38. "_____ of you helped to kill her."

39. "We are _____ for each other."

40. "I _____ we're all nice people now."

41. "That was the police. A girl has just died - on her way to the _____."

42. Name three themes the play addresses.

43. What is the Titanic a metaphor for?

TASK FIFTEEN

In the National 5 examination you must answer a question on literature.

As practice for that part of the examination, and as a way of reviewing *The Crucible* as a whole, choose one of the following questions and write at least two sides of A4 on it.

Answers to questions in this section should refer to the text and to such relevant features as: characterisation, key scene(s), structure, climax, theme, plot, conflict, setting . . .

1. Choose a play which deals with a close relationship within a family or community.

By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the portrayal of this relationship helps in your understanding of the central concerns of the play.

2. Choose a scene from a play in which tension or suspense is built up.

By referring to appropriate techniques, show how this tension or suspense is built up, and explain what effect the scene has on the play as a whole

3. Choose a scene from a play in which there is an important incident which leads to a turning point in the action.

Explain what happens in the scene, and then go on to say how it affects the outcome of the play.

4. Choose a play which has a surprising ending.

Show how the ending of the play results from the strengths and/or weaknesses of the main character(s).

