




'AN INSPECTOR CALLS' - REVISION PACK

CONTEXT

To understand the *context* of the play, it's helpful to know a little about J B Priestley's life and his political views during the early 20th century - a time of great global change. He wrote *An Inspector Calls* after the Second World War and like much of his work contains controversial, politically charged messages. Keen to pioneer a new 'morality' in politics, Priestley's chief concerns involved social inequality in Britain and the need for nuclear disarmament.

The characters we see as the curtain rises are not the same as those at the plays conclusion. The events of the evening change everyone, as well as their

Play set in 1912	Play written in 1945	
<p>The First World War would start in two years. Birling's optimistic view that there would not be a war is completely wrong.</p>	<p>The Second World War ended on 8 May 1945. People were recovering from nearly six years of warfare, danger and uncertainty.</p>	
<p>There were strong distinctions between the upper and lower classes.</p>	<p>Class distinctions had been greatly reduced as a result of two world wars.</p>	
<p>Women were subservient to men. All a well off women could do was get married; a poor woman was seen as cheap labour.</p>	<p>As a result of the wars, women had earned a more valued place in society.</p>	
<p>The ruling classes saw no need to change the status quo.</p>	<p>There was a great desire for social change. Immediately after The Second World War, Clement Attlee's Labour Party won a landslide victory over Winston Churchill and the Conservatives.</p>	

expectations of the future. Inspector Goole is instrumental in disturbing the harmony; a purposeful, mysterious character who forces the characters to confront each other's social responsibility, snobbery and guilt. But is the inspector as genuine as he seems? All these changes take place because of the visit of Inspector Goole. But who is Inspector Goole? And who is the girl whose suicide he is apparently investigating?

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.

Political views

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 CND, hoping that Britain would set an example to the world by a moral act of nuclear disarmament.

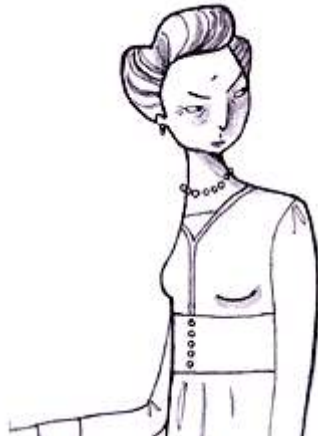
Mr Arthur Birling



Arthur Birling

- He is described at the start as a "heavy-looking, rather portentous man in his middle fifties but rather provincial in his speech."
- He has worked his way up in the world and is **proud** of his achievements. He boasts about having been Mayor and tries (and fails) to impress the Inspector with his local standing and his influential friends.
- However, he is aware of people who are his social superiors, which is why he shows off about the port to Gerald, "it's exactly the same port your father gets." He is proud that he is likely to be knighted, as that would move him even higher in social circles.
- He claims the party "is one of the happiest nights of my life." This is not only because Sheila will be happy, but because a merger with Crofts Limited will be good for his business.
- He is **optimistic** for the future and confident that there will not be a war. As the audience knows there *will* be a war, we begin to doubt Mr Birling's judgement. (If he is wrong about the war, what else will he be wrong about?)
- He is extremely **selfish**:
 - He wants to protect himself and his family. He believes that socialist ideas that stress the importance of the community are "nonsense" and that "a man has to make his own way."
 - He wants to protect Birling and Co. He cannot see that he did anything wrong when he fired Eva Smith - he was just looking after his business interests.
 - He wants to protect his reputation. As the Inspector's investigations continue, his selfishness gets the better of him: he is worried about how the press will view the story in Act II, and accuses Sheila of disloyalty at the start of Act III. He wants to hide the fact that Eric stole money: "I've got to cover this up as soon as I can."
- At the end of the play, he knows he has lost the chance of his knighthood, his reputation in Brumley and the chance of Birling and Co. merging with their rivals. Yet he hasn't learnt the lesson of the play: he is unable to admit his responsibility for his part in Eva's death.

Mrs Sybil Birling



Mrs Sybil Birling

- She is described at the start as "about fifty, a rather cold woman and her husband's social superior."
- She is a **snob**, very aware of the differences between social classes. She is irritated when Mr Birling makes the social gaffe of praising the cook in front of Gerald and later is very dismissive of Eva, saying "Girls of that class."
- She has the least respect for the Inspector of all the characters. She tries - unsuccessfully - to intimidate him and force him to leave, then lies to him when she claims that she does not recognise the photograph that he shows her.
- She sees Sheila and Eric still as "children" and speaks patronisingly to them.
- She **tries to deny things** that she doesn't want to believe: Eric's drinking, Gerald's affair with Eva, and the fact that a working class girl would refuse money even if it was stolen, claiming "She was giving herself ridiculous airs."
- She admits she was "prejudiced" against the girl who applied to her committee for help and saw it as her "duty" to refuse to help her. Her narrow sense of morality dictates that the father of a child should be responsible for its welfare, regardless of circumstances.
- At the end of the play, she has had to come to terms that her son is a heavy drinker who got a girl pregnant and stole money to support her, her daughter will not marry a good social 'catch' and that her own reputation within the town will be sullied. Yet, like her husband, she refuses to believe that she did anything wrong and doesn't accept responsibility for her part in Eva's death.

Sheila Birling



Sheila Birling

- She is described at the start as "a pretty girl in her early twenties, very pleased with life and rather excited."
- Even though she seems very playful at the opening, we know that she has had suspicions about Gerald when she mentions "last summer, when you never came near me." Does this suggest that she is not as naive and shallow as she first appears?
- Although she has probably never in her life before considered the conditions of the workers, she shows her **compassion** immediately she hears of her father's treatment of Eva Smith: "But these girls aren't cheap labour - they're people." Already, she is starting to change.
- She is horrified by her own part in Eva's story. She feels full of **guilt** for her jealous actions and blames herself as "really responsible."
- She is very **perceptive**: she realises that Gerald knew Daisy Renton from his reaction, the moment the Inspector mentioned her name. At the end of Act II, she is the first to realise Eric's part in the story. Significantly, she is the first to wonder who the Inspector really is, saying to him, 'wonderingly', "I don't understand about you." She warns the others "he's giving us the rope - so that we'll hang ourselves" (Act II) and, near the end, is the first to consider whether the Inspector may not be real.
- She is **curious**. She genuinely wants to know about Gerald's part in the story. It's interesting that she is not angry with him when she hears about the affair: she says that she respects his honesty. She is becoming **more mature**.
- She is **angry** with her parents in Act 3 for trying to "pretend that nothing much has happened." Sheila says "It frightens me the way you talk:" she cannot understand how they cannot have learnt from the evening in the same way that she has. She is seeing her parents in a new, unfavourable light.

- At the end of the play, Sheila is much **wiser**. She can now judge her parents and Gerald from a new perspective, but the greatest change has been in herself: her social conscience has been awakened and she is aware of her responsibilities. The Sheila who had a girl dismissed from her job for a trivial reason has vanished forever.

Eric Birling



Eric Birling

- He is described at the start as "in his early twenties, not quite at ease, half shy, half assertive."
- Eric seems **embarrassed and awkward** right from the start. The first mention of him in the script is "Eric suddenly guffaws," and then he is unable to explain his laughter, as if he is nervous about something. (It is not until the final act that we realise this must be because of his having stolen some money.) There is another awkward moment when Gerald, Birling and Eric are chatting about women's love of clothes before the Inspector arrives. Do you feel that there is tension in Eric's relationship with his father?
- It soon becomes clear to us (although it takes his parents longer) that he is a **hardened drinker**. Gerald admits, "I have gathered that he does drink pretty hard."
- When he hears how his father sacked Eva Smith, he supports the worker's cause, like Sheila. "Why shouldn't they try for higher wages?"
- He feels **guilt and frustration** with himself over his relationship with the girl. He cries, "Oh - my God! - how stupid it all is!" as he tells his story. He is horrified that his thoughtless actions had such consequences.
- He had some innate **sense of responsibility**, though, because although he got a woman pregnant, he was concerned enough to give her money. He was obviously less worried about stealing (or 'borrowing' from his father's

office) than he was about the girl's future. So, was Eric, initially, the most socially aware member of the Birling family?

- He is appalled by his parents' inability to admit their own responsibility. He tells them forcefully, "I'm ashamed of you." When Birling tries to threaten him in Act III, Eric is aggressive in return: "I don't give a damn now." Do you think Eric has ever stood up to his father in this way before?
- At the end of the play, like Sheila, he is fully aware of his social responsibility. He is not interested in his parents' efforts to cover everything up: as far as he is concerned, the important thing is that a girl is dead. "We did her in all right."

Gerald Croft



Gerald Croft

- He is described as "an attractive chap about thirty, rather too manly to be a dandy but very much the easy well-bred man-about-town."
- He is an **aristocrat** - the son of Lord and Lady Croft. We realise that they are not over-impressed by Gerald's engagement to Sheila because they declined the invitation to the dinner.
- He is not as willing as Sheila to admit his part in the girl's death to the Inspector and initially pretends that he never knew her. Is he a bit like Mr Birling, wanting to protect his own interests?
- He did have some genuine feeling for Daisy Renton, however: he is very moved when he hears of her death. He tells Inspector Goole that he arranged for her to live in his friend's flat "because I was sorry for her;" she became his mistress because "She was young and pretty and warm-hearted - and intensely grateful."
- Despite this, in Act 3 he tries to come up with as much evidence as possible to prove that the Inspector is a fake - because that would get him off the hook. It is Gerald who confirms that the local force has no officer by the name of Goole, he who realises it may not have been the same girl and he who finds out from the infirmary that there has not been a suicide case in

months. He seems to throw his energies into "protecting" himself rather than "changing" himself (unlike Sheila).

- At the end of the play, he has not changed. He has not gained a new sense of social responsibility, which is why Sheila (who has) is unsure whether to take back the engagement ring.

Inspector Goole



Inspector Goole

- He is described on his entrance as creating "an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness. He is a man in his fifties, dressed in a plain darkish suit. He speaks carefully, weightily, and has a disconcerting habit of looking hard at the person he addresses before actually speaking. "
- He works very **systematically**; he likes to deal with "one person and one line of enquiry at a time." His method is to confront a suspect with a piece of information and then make them talk - or, as Sheila puts it, "he's giving us the rope - so that we'll hang ourselves."
- He is a figure of **authority**. He deals with each member of the family very firmly and several times we see him "massively taking charge as disputes erupt between them." He is not impressed when he hears about Mr Birling's influential friends and he cuts through Mrs Birling's obstructiveness.
- He seems to **know and understand** an extraordinary amount:
- He knows the history of Eva Smith and the Birlings' involvement in it, even though she died only hours ago. Sheila tells Gerald, "Of course he knows."
- He knows things are going to happen - He says "I'm waiting...To do my duty" just before Eric's return, as if he expected Eric to reappear at exactly that moment

- He is obviously in a great hurry towards the end of the play: he stresses "I haven't much time." Does he know that the real inspector is shortly going to arrive?
- His final speech is like a sermon or a politician's. He leaves the family with the message "We are responsible for each other" and warns them of the "fire and blood and anguish" that will result if they do not pay attention to what he has taught them.
- All this **mystery** suggests that the Inspector is not a 'real' person. So, what is he?
- Is he a ghost? Goole reminds us of 'ghoul'.
- Is he the voice of Priestley?
- Is he the voice of God?
- Is he the voice of all our consciences?
- Do you have any other suggestions?

Eva Smith



Eva Smith

- Of course, we never see Eva Smith on stage in the play: we only have the evidence that the Inspector and the Birlings give us.
- The Inspector, Sheila Gerald and Eric all say that she was "pretty." Gerald describes her as "very pretty - soft brown hair and big dark eyes."
- Her parents were dead.
- She came from outside Brumley: Mr Birling speaks of her being "country-bred."
- She was working class.
- The Inspector says that she had kept a sort of diary, which helped him piece together the last two years of her life:
- However, in Act 3 we begin to wonder whether Eva ever really existed. - Gerald says, "We've no proof it was the same photograph and therefore

no proof it was the same girl." - Birling adds, "There wasn't the slightest proof that this Daisy Renton really was Eva Smith." Yet the final phone call, announcing that a police inspector is shortly to arrive at the Birlings' house to investigate the suicide of a young girl, makes us realise that maybe Eva Smith did exist after all. What do you think?

- Think about Eva's name. *Eva* is similar to *Eve*, the first woman created by God in the Bible. *Smith* is the most common English surname. So, *Eva Smith* could **represent** every woman of her class.

STAGE DIRECTIONS

In the course of *An Inspector Calls* the Birling family and Gerald Croft change from a state of great self-satisfaction to a state of extreme self-doubt. The play is in 'real time' - in other words, the story lasts exactly as long as the play is on the stage. So, what happens in a comparatively short time to create such a dramatic **contrast**? How is the drama maintained and the audience involved? Think about these points.

Setting and Subtle Hints

The **Setting** and **Lighting** are very important. Priestley describes the scene in detail at the opening of Act 1, so that the audience has the immediate impression of a "heavily comfortable house." The setting is constant (all action happens in the same place). Priestley says that the lighting should be "pink and intimate" before the Inspector arrives - a rose-tinted glow - when it becomes "brighter and harder." The lighting reflects the mood of the play.

The dining room of a fairly large suburban house, belonging to a prosperous manufacturer. It has good solid furniture of the period. At the moment they have all had a good dinner, are celebrating a special occasion, and are pleased with themselves.

There are **subtle hints** that not is all as it seems. For example, early on we wonder whether the happy atmosphere is slightly forced. Sheila wonders where Gerald was last summer, Eric is nervous about something, Lord and Lady Croft did not attend the engagement dinner. This arouses interest in the audience - we want to find out what is going on!

Dramatic Irony and Tone

There is **dramatic irony**. For instance, the audience knows how wrong Mr Birling is when he makes confident predictions about there not being a war and is excited about the sailing of The Titanic: famously, the ship sank on her maiden

voyage. This puts the audience at an advantage over the characters and makes us more involved.



The Birlings' Living Room

- There is a lot of **tension** as each member of the family is found to have played a part in Eva's death. New pieces of information contribute to the story being constructed. The audience is interested in how each character reacts to the revelations.
- **Inspector** himself adds drama:
- 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 I 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.

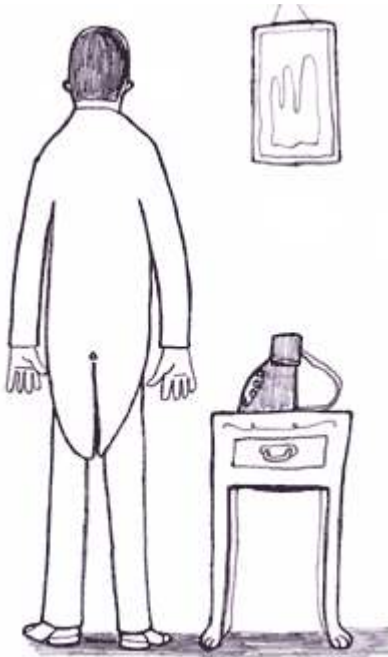
Tension and Timing

There are numerous changes in **tone**. For instance, Mr Birling's confidence is soon replaced - first by self-justification as he tries to explain his part in Eva's death, and then by anxiety.

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."

The Ending

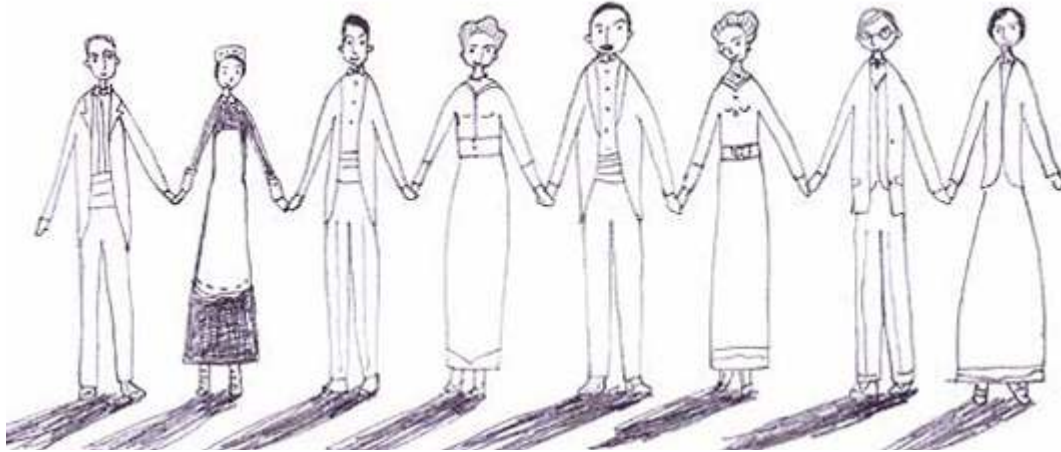
The **ending** leaves the audience on a cliff-hanger. In Act 3 the Birlings believed themselves to be off the hook when it is discovered that the Inspector wasn't real and that no girl had died in the infirmary. This releases some of the tension - but the final telephone call, announcing that a real 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.



THEMES

In *An Inspector Calls*, the central theme is responsibility. Priestley is interested in our personal responsibility for our own actions and our collective responsibility to society. The play explores the effect of class, age and sex on people's attitudes to responsibility, and shows how prejudice can prevent people from acting responsibly. In addition, the play also considers the following themes of morality and lies and deceit.

RESPONSIBILITY



Everyone in society is linked...

The words **responsible** and **responsibility** are used by most **characters** in the play at some point.

Each member of the family has a different attitude to responsibility. Make sure that you know how each of them felt about their responsibility in the case of Eva Smith.

The Inspector wanted 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.

The Inspector is talking about a **collective responsibility**, everyone in society is linked, in the same way that the characters are linked to Eva Smith. Everyone is a part of "one body", the Inspector sees society as more important than individual interests. The views he is propounding are like those of Priestley who was a socialist. Remember at the time the ethos was based on the individualism ethos of **laissez faire** (leave alone), Priestley wanted the characters to consider a social conscience and to embrace a collective responsibility.

He adds a clear warning about what could happen if, like some members of the family, we ignore our responsibility:

And I tell you that the time will soon come when, if men will not learn that lesson, when they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish.

What would Priestley have wanted his audience to think of when the Inspector warns the Birlings of the "fire and blood and anguish"?

Probably he is thinking partly about the world war they had just lived through - the result of governments blindly pursuing 'national interest' at all costs. No doubt he was thinking too about the Russian revolution in which poor workers and peasants took over the state and exacted a bloody revenge against the aristocrats who had treated them so badly.

CLASS

Apart from Edna the maid, the cast of the play does not include any lower class characters. We see only the rich, upwardly mobile Birlings and the upper class Gerald Croft. Yet we *learn* a lot about the lower class as we hear of each stage in Eva's life and we see the attitude the Birlings had for them.

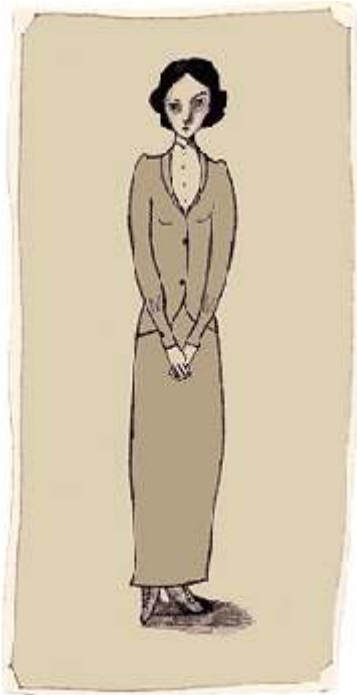
This table looks at the way the Birlings saw lower-class Eva when they came into contact with her, and the way that they see themselves within their own class.

Characters	Attitudes to the lower class:	Attitudes to the upper class:
	At the start of the play, this character was:	To this character, Eva was...
Mr Birling	keen to be knighted to cement his hard-fought rise to the upper class	cheap labour
Sheila	happy spending a lot of time in expensive shops	someone who could be fired out of spite
Gerald	prepared to marry Sheila, despite her lower social position	a mistress who could be discarded at will
Eric	awkward about his 'public-school-and-Varsity' life	easy sex at the end of a drunken night out
Mrs Birling	socially superior to her husband, and embarrassed at his gaffes	a presumptuous upstart

- The Palace Variety Theatre was a music hall. It was not seen as quite 'respectable' entertainment - probably not somewhere where Sheila would have gone. The **stalls** bar of the Palace Variety Theatre, where Eva Smith met both Gerald and Eric, was the bar for the lower classes and a favourite haunt of prostitutes. We could ask what Gerald and Eric were there in the first place! Alderman Meggarty, a local dignitary, also went there a lot.

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.

GENDER



Eva Smith

Because Eva was a woman - in the days before women were valued by society and had not yet been awarded the right to vote - she was in an even worse position than a lower class man. Even upper class women had few choices. For most, the best they could hope for was to impress a rich man and marry well - which could explain why Sheila spent so long in Milwards.

For working class women, a job was crucial. There was no social security at that time, so without a job they had no money. There were very few options open to women in that situation: many saw no alternative but to turn to prostitution.

Look at these quotations, showing the attitude to women of some characters:

- Mr Birling is dismissive of the several hundred women in his factory: "We were paying the usual rates and if they didn't like those rates, they could go and work somewhere else."
- Gerald saw Eva as "young and fresh and charming" - in other words, someone vulnerable he could amuse himself by helping.
- Mrs Birling couldn't believe that "a girl of that sort would ever refuse money." Her charitable committee was a sham: a small amount of money was given to a small amount of women, hardly scratching the surface of the problem.
- Why did Priestley decide to hinge his play on the death of a young working class woman rather than the death of a young working class man?

AGE

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.

This table looks at these contrasting ideas:

The Old (Mr and Mrs Birling)	The Young (Sheila and Eric)
The old are set in their ways. They are utterly confident that they are right and they see the young as foolish.	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.
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.	The young are honest and admit their faults. Eric refuses to try to cover his part up, saying, <i>"the fact remains that I did what I did."</i>
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.'	Sheila and Eric see the human side of Eva's story and are very troubled by their part in it. They do examine their consciences.
Mr and Mrs Birling have much to fear from the visit of the 'real' inspector because they know they will lose everything.	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.

Gerald Croft 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.

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

EXAM QUESTION PRACTICE

1. The mood in this Act 1 changes from relaxed to tense. Explore the ways Priestley transforms the tone throughout the Act.
2. How does Priestley hint at the tensions within the group that later become more clear in Act 1?
3. How does Priestley present the Inspector as an unusual policeman in the play?
4. 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?
5. 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?
6. Compare and contrast the reaction of Gerald Croft and Mrs. Birling to interrogation by the inspector.
7. How has Eric's guilt been suggested by Priestley in Acts I and II?
8. Write about Inspector Goole's role in the play. How far is he a believable policeman? How does Priestley use the inspector in the play?
9. Write about the way the relationship between Gerald and Sheila develops during the play.
10. *An Inspector Calls* is full of lies and deceit. Write fully about the way Priestley exposes weakness and wickedness, not only in the characters on stage, but also in society.
11. Write fully about ONE of the characters in the play. Take into account what they have done before the play begins as well as their actions, words and attitudes during the course of the play. Write about the way attitudes, moods and opinions change and develop during the course of the action on stage.
12. The Inspector's inquiries make the Birlings quarrel among themselves. How does Priestley develop these internal conflicts during the play?

13. Compare and contrast the attitudes of Birling and the inspector throughout the play.
14. How does Priestley show the confidence of the Birlings in their position?
15. Compare and contrast the reaction of Arthur Birling and Sheila Birling to interrogation by the Inspector.
16. Who do you believe is responsible for the death of Eva Smith?
17. How are views on gender presented in the play?
18. How are the views of the youthful characters contrasted with the older characters and how does this reflect the social context of the play?
19. How is the theme of gender inequality explored in the play?
20. What is revealed about family relationships through the events of the play?
21. How does the Inspector build sympathy with the character of Eva Smith throughout the play?
22. How does the play portray the themes of morality and responsibility?
23. How do the dramatic devices help to add suspense to the action of the play?
24. How does the play portray social attitudes and political views of the time?
25. How is the theme of class represented in the play?

When writing answers for essay questions- use the guide below to help test your skills.

<u>SELF ASSESSMENT- ENGLISH LITERATURE EXAM ANSWERS</u>			
Question Title:	Not confident/ Not attempted	Attempted and ok	Secure- can do this well
1. Have I attempted to focus on the question throughout by using the language of the question at the start and finish of my paragraphs?			

2. Have I used quotes to back up my points?			
3. Have I analysed the language in the quotes I've used to show my understanding of the character/ theme or sub plot?			
4. Have I shown an awareness of the sub text?			
5. Have I discussed how meaning is conveyed through language, structure or style?			
6. Have I discussed alternative interpretations of events, characters or scenes?			
7. Have I shown understanding of dramatic devices?			
8. Have I considered a variety of ways in which effects are achieved?			
9. Have I discussed the relationships between characters/ situations or events?			
10. Can I comment on the social, historical and contextual features?			
11. Have I used paragraphs correctly?			
12. Have I used a range of vocabulary, sentence structures and punctuation?			

TARGET FOR EXAM

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

TEST YOURSELF- HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE PLAY?

ACT 1-Find quotes to back up your answer

1. Why is Mr Birling particularly pleased to be celebrating Sheila's and Gerald's engagement?
2. Why is Mr Birling's speech ironic on page 6 and 7?
3. How does Mr Birling show a dismissive attitude to Eric on page 6?
4. What is Mr Birling referring to when he states, " We can't let these Bernard Shaws and H G Wellses do all the talking?" page 7
5. Why does Birling think that Lady Croft may object to Sheila? page 8
6. How does Birling try to promote his social status to Gerald and why would he feel the need to do this? page 8
7. How does Birling show his laissez faire attitude in his speech on page 10?
8. How does the sound of the door bell work as a dramatic device considering its position in the script? Page 10
9. How does Birling respond when he first hears of the arrival of the inspector in order to assert his authority in front of Gerald?
10. How does Birling try to assert his authority and status over the Inspector? Page 11
11. How did Eva Smith die? - page 11
12. Why does the inspector chose to only show one person the photograph at time? Page 12
13. How is tension shown between Birling and Eric on page 13?
14. Why does Birling deliberately introduce Gerald to the Inspector on page 13?
15. How does Birling show that he has no sense of collective responsibility on page 14?
16. How does Birling describe Eva on page 14?
17. How does Eric show a sense of social compassion on page 15 and 16?
18. How does Birling try to intimidate the Inspector on page 16 and 17?
19. How does Gerald try to assert his social superiority on page 22?
20. Why did Sheila make the complaint against Eva in Milwards? Page 24
21. How does Gerald inadvertently show that he knew Eva Smith on page 25?
22. How does Gerald explain his acquaintance with Eva/ Daisy on page 26?

ACT TWO-Use quotes to back up your answers to each question

1. How would you describe the mood in the dining room at the beginning of Act Two?
2. Why is Sheila described as 'hysterical'?
3. How does the inspector constantly remind the audience and the Birlings of the fate of Eva?

4. How does the Inspector remind Sheila of her guilt on page 29 in such a way as to be protecting her? How is this a clever technique?
5. How does Mrs Birling try to assert her authority on page 29 , 30 and 31?
6. Why and how does Sheila try to change her mother's approach?
7. What does Mrs Birling reveal about her view when she says, 'girls of that class...'?
8. What does Mrs Birlings being 'staggered' about Eric's drinking reveal about their family relationship?
9. How does the conversation about Eric foreshadow later events and create suspense?
10. Why does Sheila respond 'wildly with a laugh' No he's giving us the rope- so that we'll hang ourselves'? What does she mean by this and what is implied by the way she states it?
11. Why does Gerald become distressed as he recounts his story and how might he be feeling?
12. What is the Inspector suggesting about class and the Birling's parenting techniques when he states, 'Your daughter isn't living on the moon. She's here in Brumley too.'?
13. Why do you think Daisy Renton knew the affair with Gerald 'couldn't last'?
14. What does Sheila mean when says, ' You and I aren't the same people who sat down to dinner here'? What could she be saying about Gerald and about herself?
15. How does Sheila show a sense of collective responsibility on page 41?
16. Why was Mrs Birling so prejudiced against Eva Smith when she appealed to the charity?
17. How does the Inspector's attitude start to change as the act progresses?
18. How does the inspector trick Mrs Birling into condemning her own son?
19. What makes Sheila suddenly aware of Eric's involvement?
20. Why does Mrs Birling react in a 'frightened' way?
21. How would you describe the mood as Eric enters at the end of the scene?

ACT THREE- Use quotes to back up your points

1. What do the first three pages reveal about the family relationships?
2. How does the Inspector over rule Birling on page 51?
3. What do we learn about Eric from his story?
4. How do the family react to Eric's story?
5. What is Birling's reaction when he hears how Eric obtained the money and what does he plan to do?
6. What do we learn about Eric's relationship with his parents?
7. How should each character react to the Inspector's final speech?

8. What message is the Inspector trying to communicate when he states, " We don't live alone. We are members of one body."?
9. How do the family react to each other once the Inspector has left?
10. What are Birlings and Mrs Birlings priorities?
11. Why does it 'not much matter' to Sheila if the Inspector was not a policeman?
12. What evidence do the family base their judgement on that the Inspector may not have been a real policeman?
13. How does each member of the family react to Gerald's news?
14. How does Gerald's news make each character feel about their part in Eva's life?
15. How should each character react to Gerald's theory about the photograph?
16. How does the atmosphere change as the scene progresses?
17. How do the characters react to the information received from Gerald's phone call?
18. How has each character been affected by the evening's events?
19. What is the effect of the final telephone call on the characters?
20. How should the final telephone call affect the audience?
21. Who do you think Inspector Goole was?
22. What message is the playwright trying to communicate to the audience throughout the play?
23. What is your lasting impression of each character?
24. How is the play 'a moral mystery'?

General questions

1. When is the play set?
2. Why is the date of the play important?
3. When was the play written?
4. What was happening at that time in history?
5. Name two historical events Mr Birling refers to
6. What does this show about Mr Birling?
7. What is the name of the Inspector?
8. Why might this name be important?
9. Write down 2 reasons that Mr Birling is pleased his daughter is marrying Gerald Croft
10. How can we tell that Mr and Mrs Birling come from different backgrounds?
11. How can we tell that the Inspector does not think much of Mr Birling?
12. What was Mr Birling's involvement with Eva Smith?
13. How can we tell that he does not regret what he did?
14. Does Gerald agree with Mr Birling or the Inspector?
15. What was Sheila's involvement with Eva Smith?
16. How can we tell that Sheila regrets what she did?

17. What was Eric's involvement?
18. How can we tell that Mrs Birling has a blinkered view of the world?
19. Which character has most regret for what they did?
20. Which character has least regret?
21. Who do you think the Inspector is and what is his message?
22. How do the younger and older generations react differently to his visit?
23. How do you think the play should be staged - in a traditional way around a table, or in an experimental way?
24. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the experimental setting?
25. In what ways is the play still relevant to us today?