**How does Priestley present the character of Sheila?**

* Sheila is one of the most changed characters throughout the play, she went from being a childish, silly little girl into a very mature young lady wanting to help Eva Smith and understanding what lower class woman have to go through.

**Who does she represent in society at the beginning of the play?**

* She is a typical young, rich girl of 1912 who has lived in a protective bubble all her life, unaware of poverty, injustice and changes going on in society.

**Description**

* Sheila is *“a pretty girl in her early twenties, very pleased with life and rather excited.”*
* At the beginning of the play she seems childish and spoilt. She is used to having decisions made for her: *'Oh Gerald, is it the one you wanted me to have?'*
* She has a quick temper and gets jealous easily seen by her squabbles with Eric and demanding the sacking of Eva from Milwards
* Sheila is very sensitive and easily moved, as we can tell from her reaction to the death of Eva Smith.
* She is also observant and intelligent; she is the first to realise that he is no ordinary Inspector. *'You know (She goes close to him wonderingly.) I don't understand about you.'*

**Observation until inspector arrives:**

* The play begins at the engagement party of Sheila and Gerald. Everyone is feeling *'very pleased with themselves'.*
* We can tell that Sheila is suspicious about why Gerald neglected her over the summer and was actually working when she says *“last summer, when you never came near me.”*

**How does she react to, and what blame does she take for her part in Eva's suicide?**

* Sheila clearly has a guilty conscience*: “When was this?”* Following the realisation that she is involved, her fear and nerves increase: *“What – what did this girl look like?”*
* Sheila was in a bad mood and jealous of Eva as she was pretty and looked better than she did holding up the dress so had her sacked out of spitefulness.

**What criticism is Priestley making of this type of character**?

* Priestley uses Sheila to show how the upper classes used their power and influence to control and hurt poor powerless people like Eva.
* *'In fact, in a kind of way, you might be said to be jealous of her.'*
* *'And so you used the power you had, as a daughter of a good customer and also of a man well known to the town, to punish the girl just because she made you feel like that?'*

**How Sheila responds and her attitudes shown to the interrogation of other characters**

* Sheila instantly accepts that what she did was wrong; she did not need the inspector to point this out:
* *'But it didn't seem so terrible at the time. Don't you understand? And if I could help her now I would -'*
* *“I felt rotten about it at the time and now I feel a lot worse.”*
* She feels full of guilt for her jealous actions and blames herself as *“Really responsible.”*
* About her father: *“Oh – how horrible! Was it an accident?” 'But these girls aren't cheap labour - they're people.*
* About Gerald: *''It was my fault really that she was so desperate when you first met her.'*
* About her mother: *'Mother, I think it was vile and cruel.'*

**Has she learnt her lesson?**

* Sheila grows up once she takes responsibility and opens her eyes to what is really going on in the world
* *'I'm not a child, don't forget. I've a right to know.'*
* She is more moral that the other characters (except Eric) and this can be seen throughout her questioning of other characters, stepping in to help the inspector, and refusing to let her parents off the hook for what they've done..

**Her reaction when she finds out the inspector wasn’t real.**

* Sheila is the first character in the play to realise the inspector wasn’t a real inspector. Sheila clearly believes that it doesn’t matter whether the inspector is real or not.
* *“It’s you two who are being childish – trying not to face the facts.”*
* Unlike her mother, father and Gerald, Sheila doesn’t try to forget about everything that has come out. She is angry with her parents for acting as if they haven't done anything wrong.
* *'I behaved badly too. I know I did. I'm ashamed of it. But you're beginning all over again to pretend that nothing much has happened -'*

**What does Sheila represent by the end of the play?**

* Sheila is young and open-minded so is easily influenced by the Inspector.
* Priestley is saying that she and women of her age can change society for the better. The audience of 1946, particularly young women who now had earned greater freedom and respect from men after their supportive role through two world wars, would see the need for women to make a stand and not rely on men to make a better world.
* The audience could imagine her in the future campaigning for women's rights, particularly of the underprivileged in society like Eva Smith
* Priestley uses the character of Sheila as a symbol of the hope for a better future that lies in the younger generation.