

# AN INSPECTOR CALLS

## Characters

## Context

## Key Terms

<b>Mr Birling</b>	Arrogant and Capitalist businessman who hates social equality and loves money. Sacks Eva from his factory when she asks for equal pay for women and threatens a strike.
<b>Mrs Birling</b>	Snobbish and cold-hearted Capitalist who believes everyone is responsible for themselves. Doesn't help Eva when she comes to the charity for help.
<b>Inspector</b>	Priestley's mouthpiece (represents JBP's ideals), keen Socialist who fights for community responsibility and gets the Birlings to face up to what they have done.
<b>Sheila</b>	The daughter. Gets Eva sacked from the shop for smirking at her. Starts off as a spoilt rich girl but quickly changes her views, feels sorry for Eva Smith and starts to become Socialist as the play progresses. Is ashamed of her parents at the end.
<b>Eric</b>	The son. Typical young man – drinks too much and has a one-night stand with Eva. Ends up getting her pregnant and steals from his dad to give Eva money. Regrets his actions and changes his ways. Ashamed of his parents at the end.
<b>Gerald</b>	Sheila's fiancé. Businessman who has Capitalist ideals and is similar to Mr Birling politically. Shows some regret for his affair with Eva, but happy to act like nothing has happened when it suits him.

<b>1912</b> – when the play was set. Just before WW1 and the sinking of the Titanic. JBP wanted to make sure audiences in 1945 recognised the problems in society in 1912 before the wars (class system, Capitalism, sexism) and weren't tempted to go back to living like that. He wrote the play to highlight the dangers of the Capitalist lifestyle.
<b>1945</b> – when the play was written and performed. After WW2, society changed for the better. The benefit system started to be introduced, and we had more equality for women and less of a class divide because of different classes and different genders mixing in the war effort. JBP supported and encouraged these changes and wanted to make sure he promoted them in his play by making Capitalists like the older Birlings appear ignorant and selfish.
<b>Socialism</b> – JBP was a keen socialist. This meant that he wanted everyone to look after each other rather than just caring about themselves. He was trying to promote this with the play, by making the Socialist characters like the Inspector much more respectable than the Capitalist ones.
<b>Capitalism</b> – JBP hated Capitalists – those who thought that everyone should only care about themselves and that making money was more important than human rights. He created Mr and Mrs Birling as Capitalists, in order to make Capitalism seem out-dated and selfish. Mr and Mrs B are portrayed in a negative way by JBP for this reason.
<b>Outdated ideas</b> – In 1912, the social classes were segregated, women got paid less than men for the same work, there was no benefit system or help with unemployment or housing. Society was patriarchal (men ruled).

Dramatic Irony
Real Time
Tension / suspense
Monologue
Capitalist
Socialist
Modal verbs
Imperative verbs
Interruptions
Metaphor
Inequality
Stage Directions
Patriarchy
Contrast
Direct Address
Pause
Priestley's Mouthpiece
Repetition
Playwright
Audience

## Plot

## Key themes

<b>ACT 1</b>	The family are celebrating Sheila and Gerald's engagement. Birling makes speeches saying there will be no war, and the Titanic is unsinkable. An Inspector arrives and tells them Eva Smith has committed suicide. He gets Mr B to admit sacking her. He doesn't take blame. Inspector gets Sheila to admit getting her sacked for laughing. She feels guilty and ashamed of herself.
<b>ACT 2</b>	Inspector gets Gerald to admit having an affair with Eva Smith (now called Daisy Renton after a name change). Sheila is upset and questions her relationship with Gerald. Inspector gets Mrs B to admit not helping Eva when she came to Mrs B's charity for help when she became pregnant. Mrs B says it should be the father's responsibility. At the end of the Act, we realise that the father of Eva's baby was Eric.
<b>ACT 3</b>	Eric's involvement with Eva is revealed and a possible rape is hinted at, as he says he forced Eva. The Inspector gives his final speech about fire, blood and anguish. He is warning the family that if they don't start to take responsibility for others, they will live to regret it. Inspector then leaves. Gerald finds out that the Inspector wasn't a real inspector. Mr B rings to check and there is no Inspector Goole. Also, there is no dead girl! Mr and Mrs B (and Gerald) celebrate and act like nothing has happened. Sheila and Eric still feel guilty and can't go back to how they were before. Right at the end, the telephone rings and they are told that a girl has just committed suicide and an inspector is on his way over to ask some questions.

<b>AGE</b> The older generation (Mr and Mrs Birling) are a symbol of Capitalism, so they do not change their ways and they are reluctant to accept blame for their role in Eva's demise. The younger generation, on the other hand (Sheila and Eric) become a symbol of Socialism as the play progresses. They accept blame and want to change; they change throughout the play, for the better.
<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b> The Inspector, as Priestley's mouthpiece, is a symbol of Socialism – he wants everyone to look after each other and to view community as very important. He is sent to uncover the family's wrongdoings and to make them see that they should take responsibility for others. Sheila and Eric realise this, but Mr and Mrs B do not.
<b>GENDER INEQUALITY</b> Priestley wanted to show his audience that there was a lot of inequality back in 1912 when it came to how women were treated. By making certain characters out to be sexist, he highlighted this problem and tried to shame audiences into changing their own views about gender equality too. This is perhaps why the victim of their actions is a woman, and why she is working class (working class women were at the bottom of the pile in those times).

Theatrical Stagecraft: Dramatic Devices	
1. Dramatic irony	the audience knows what the characters don't
2. Stage directions	Instructions for the actors; often revealing
3. Setting	Constant throughout but subtle changes e.g. lighting
4. Tension	Builds up throughout the play
5. Cliff-hanger	The ending allows the audience to make up their minds

Assessment Objectives		The Exam	
AO1 (40%)	Make an informed personal response using a critical style. Use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Choose <b>one</b> of the 2 questions – they could be on a theme or a character <input type="checkbox"/> Firstly, <b>highlight</b> the key words in the question <input type="checkbox"/> Now, decide on <b>4-5 suitable quotations</b> which will support your answer well <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Write response:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Intro: summarise character or theme (5 mins)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Write <b>4 – 5 detailed IQDs</b> (30 mins)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Sum up</b> how the writer presents...whatever the question asks. (5 mins)</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Check</b> spellings, punctuation and vocab (5 mins)	
AO2 (40%)	Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.		
AO3 (20%)	Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.		
AO4 (4 marks)	<i>Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.</i>		

Key quotations	
Birling's confidence	'We're in for a time of steadily increasing prosperity'
Birling on society	'the way some of these cranks talk and write now, you'd think everybody has to look after everybody else'
Sheila's recognition	'but these girls aren't cheap labour – they're <i>people</i> '
Sheila's regret	'it's the only time I've ever done anything like that, and I'll never, never do it again to anybody'
Sheila on the Inspector	'we all started like that – so confident, so pleased with ourselves until he began asking us questions'
Sheila on Eric	'he's been steadily drinking too much for the last two years'
Inspector on guilt	'I think you did something terribly wrong – and that you're going to spend the rest of your life regretting it'
Mrs Birling defends herself	'she was claiming elaborate fine feelings and scruples that were simply absurd in a girl in her position'
Eric explains	'I'm not very clear about it, but afterwards she told me she didn't want me to go in but that – well, I was in that state when a chap easily turns nasty – and I threatened to make a row'
The Inspector says	'but each of you helped to kill her. Remember that'
Inspector's message	'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, with what we think and say and do. We don't live alone.'
Birling's confidence	'the famous younger generation who know it all'