

‘An Inspector Calls’ by J.B. Priestley Workbook

English Literature

Name: _____



Plot Summary

Read through and highlight the important events:

An Inspector Calls is a play in three acts, set in Brumley, an English manufacturing town, in 1912. Arthur Birling is holding a dinner for the engagement of his daughter, Sheila, to her boyfriend, Gerald Croft. Arthur and his wife Sybil seem happy, although Sybil is reserved at the meal. Eric, Sheila's brother, drinks heavily and appears mildly upset. Gerald gives Sheila her ring, and Sheila and Sybil leave the room to try on wedding clothes. Eric goes upstairs. Arthur tells Gerald he knows the Croft family considers themselves social superiors of the Birlings, but that's easily fixed, he says, as he expects a knighthood for his business successes. Gerald promises to relay the news to his mother. Eric returns, and Arthur gives the two young men advice about professional life, saying that people ought to look out for themselves and their families, and not fall prey to socialist propaganda about the collective good. Edna, the maid, announces that an Inspector Goole is here to speak to Arthur.

The Inspector, whom Arthur does not know despite his positions in local government, announces that a girl named Eva Smith has died of an apparent suicide. The Inspector asks Arthur if he knows anyone by that name. Arthur initially denies it, but after seeing a picture, he admits to employing Eva at his factory, and firing her when she incites a failed strike for higher wages. Arthur says he is not sorry for doing so, even though he is sad to hear of the girl's death. Arthur believes that his foremost obligation is to his profits. When Sheila returns to the room, the Inspector begins interrogating her. It is revealed that Sheila got a girl fired from Milward's, a local shop, for giving Sheila mean looks as she was trying on clothing. Sheila regrets to hear that the person she incriminated was none other than Eva Smith, and that she and Arthur are responsible, in part, for Eva's poverty and suicide.

The Inspector turns to Gerald and asks if he knows someone named Daisy Renton. Sheila realizes, from Gerald's expression, that Gerald knows this name. When all but Sheila and Gerald leave the room, Sheila accuses Gerald of having had an affair with Daisy Renton the previous summer. Gerald admits to this. He asks Sheila to hide this information from the Inspector, but she says it won't be possible because the Inspector probably already knows. Act One ends.

Act Two begins with the same set. The Inspector questions Gerald about Daisy Renton, and Gerald admits to the affair in front of Sheila and her parents, Arthur and Sybil. Gerald is embarrassed by his indiscretion, but insists his concern for Daisy was authentic. Sheila wonders if she can forgive Gerald enough to continue their relationship. Gerald tells the Inspector he is going to leave for a walk.

The Inspector moves on to Sybil, who, on being questioned, says that she, as director of a charity, refused assistance to a pregnant woman. The Inspector tells them that the girl Sybil turned away was Eva Smith, or, as Gerald knew her, Daisy Renton. The Inspector also says that Gerald was not the one who got Eva pregnant. Sybil says she feels no regret, as Eva/Daisy had claimed she was pregnant but was not married to the child's father. To this, Sybil responded that Eva/Daisy should ask the child's father for money. Sybil blames the unnamed father for the situation, and for Eva/Daisy's suicide. Sheila and Arthur tell Sybil to stop talking. In this moment, Sybil realizes that her son, Eric, must be the father of the child, since Eva/Daisy presented herself to the charity as "Mrs. Birling." Eric returns to the room. Act Two ends.

In Act Three, with the same set, Eric admits to an affair with Eva/Daisy, and to a drinking problem that makes many of the details hazy. The Inspector demonstrates that each member of the Birling family, and Gerald, has played a part in Eva/Daisy's suicide, and that all should consider themselves guilty. Before he leaves, the Inspector says that people must look out for one another, and that society is "one body." The Inspector departs. Sheila, wracked with guilt, wonders aloud whether the Inspector is a member of the police force. The family puzzles this out, and when Gerald returns, he says he spoke to a sergeant outside who does not know of any Inspector with the name of Goole, the man who just visited the Birling home. Arthur believes that the family has been hoaxed, and that this is a good thing, since their misdeeds will not now result in public scandal. Sheila resents Arthur's rationalization of the family's behavior, and she says they are still guilty for Eva/Daisy's death, even if the Inspector was not a genuine officer. Gerald, however, notes that no family member saw the picture of Eva/Daisy at the same time, and that the Inspector might have conflated the family's stories by offering pictures of different women, and changing the names from Eva Smith to Daisy Renton.

Sheila wonders whether this would excuse everyone's behavior, but it does not, as Gerald still committed his affair, Eric impregnated an unmarried girl, and Arthur and Sybil behaved uncharitably to young girls in need. Arthur calls the hospital and confirms that no self-inflicted deaths have been recorded for weeks. He says resolutely that Inspector Goole has tricked the family and that there is nothing to fear. Sheila worries aloud that Arthur will ignore the lessons the family was just beginning to learn. The phone rings, and Arthur answers. He alerts the family that a girl has been admitted to the hospital just now, and that her death is a suicide. As the play ends, Arthur relays to the family that a police inspector is headed to the house to begin an inquiry.

What will the exam look like?

- You will get an extract.
- You will just have a question to answer about the play.
- The question will be about either a theme or a character in the play.
- You do not have a choice of question.
- In the same booklet, there will be questions about plays that you haven't study. Do not answer those questions. Just answer one question on the play 'An Inspector Calls'.

What context do you need to know?

<u>J.B Priestley (the playwright)</u> From Bradford, Yorkshire, so set the play in a similar location. When the First World War broke out, Priestley joined the infantry and only just escaped death on a number of occasions. During the 1930s, Priestley became very concerned about the consequences of social inequality in Britain, and he was influential in the development of the welfare state in the United Kingdom. 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	<u>Life in 1912</u> <u>Workers</u> 19th century Britain saw a huge population increase accompanied by rapid urbanisation stimulated by the Industrial Revolution. The large numbers of skilled and unskilled people looking for work kept wages down to a barely liveable level. Available housing was scarce and expensive, resulting in overcrowding, and this continued into the 20th century. These problems were magnified in cities, where the population grew at record rates. Large houses were turned into flats and tenements, and as landlords failed to maintain these dwellings, slum housing developed. <u>Women</u> At the start of the 20th century, women had a very stereotypical role in British society. If married, they stayed at home to look after the children while their husband worked and brought in a weekly wage. If single, they did work which usually involved some form of service such as working as a waitress, cooking etc. Many young women were simply expected to get married and have children. Young, unmarried pregnant women were heavily criticised and outcast from society. <u>Advances in technology</u> <i>The Titanic</i> was an example of this. It had advanced safety features, such as watertight compartments and remotely activated watertight doors. There were not enough lifeboats to accommodate all of those aboard due to outdated maritime safety regulations. It was said that the builders and owners of Titanic claimed she
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this play, he encourages people to seize the opportunity the end of the war had given them to build a better, more caring society.	was 'unsinkable'. The claim actually made was that she was 'practically unsinkable': close enough, but nevertheless an unfortunate statement and one which would haunt both builder and owner for years. <u>Social equality</u> There were strong distinctions between the upper and lower classes. The rich were rich and the poor were poor. The rich set wages and set labour costs to a minimum. The classes would not mix.						
<u>Life in 1945</u> <u>Women</u> World War I proved to be the turning point for the campaign for women's rights. As men went to fight, women proved how indispensable they were in the fields and factories. By 1918, no government could resist and the Representation of the Peoples Act allowed women over 30 the right to vote. It would take a further 10 years to abolish the age qualification and put men and women on an equal footing. <u>Desire for social change</u> 1945 general election: Churchill's role in the Second World War had generated much support for him amongst the British population; he was defeated in the 1945 election. Many reasons for this have been given, key among them being that a desire for post-war reform was widespread amongst the population. The greatest factor in Labour's dramatic win appeared to be the policy of social reform. The Beveridge Report, published in 1942, proposed the creation of a Welfare State. It called for a dramatic turn in British social policy, with provision for nationalised health care (NHS), expanded state-funded education (free education for all), national insurance and a new housing policy. The report was extremely popular, and copies of its findings were widely	<u>Priestley's Message:</u> • Priestley deliberately set his play in 1912 because the date represented an era when all was very different from the time he was writing. • By 1945 most of those class and gender divisions had been breached. • Priestley was influential in developing the idea of the Welfare State (the NHS, benefits, free education for all), which began to be put into place at the end of the war. • 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. Now, write down what each character reveals to us about life in Edwardian England (1912): <table border="1" data-bbox="730 895 2083 1473"> <tr> <th>Character</th><th>Event/what they reveal</th></tr> <tr> <td>Mr. Birling</td><td>Middle class businessman who can exploit his workers; represents Priestley's views of Capitalism as a danger; tries to use his power and influence due to the rigid class structure of the time to intimidate the Inspector.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Sheila Birling</td><td></td></tr> </table>	Character	Event/what they reveal	Mr. Birling	Middle class businessman who can exploit his workers; represents Priestley's views of Capitalism as a danger; tries to use his power and influence due to the rigid class structure of the time to intimidate the Inspector.	Sheila Birling	
Character	Event/what they reveal						
Mr. Birling	Middle class businessman who can exploit his workers; represents Priestley's views of Capitalism as a danger; tries to use his power and influence due to the rigid class structure of the time to intimidate the Inspector.						
Sheila Birling							

purchased, turning it into a best-seller. The Labour Party adopted the report eagerly. People wanted to feel more equal. <u>Social equality</u> The war was over and social classes had blended. During the war, evacuation of people of all classes, food and clothing rations for all and a mix of classes fighting in the army and helping at home meant that social class was not as clearly defined. There was a stronger sense of equality and people wanted this to continue.	Gerald Croft	
	Mrs. Birling	
	Eric Birling	
	Eva Smith	

Mr Birling – What do you need to know?

Mr Birling is the **head of the Birling household**. He has made himself very wealthy by being a '**hard-headed**' **business man**. He is an active member of the community in Brumley and thinks that he might be in the running for a Knighthood. At the start of the play he comes across as being arrogant, making long speeches about his predictions for the future. He also makes assertions about how a man should look out for number one and not waste time helping others. It is at this exact moment that the Inspector arrives. Sybil, his wife, is his 'social superior' and it is hinted that he is self-conscious about being from a more working-class background. He is **materialistic and possessive** and also has **old fashioned views about women**.



Mr. Birling Key Points – Add ideas from the above and the rest of your knowledge of the play to this spider diagram.

Mr Birling Essay plan – These quotations and your ideas could be used for any question on Mr. Birling – This is what you need to learn and revise.

Part of the play	Technique	Evidence	Exploration	Discuss further & include Priestley's Message	Context
The beginning – celebration of Sheila and Gerald's engagement	DRAMATIC IRONY	'The Germans don't want war.'	- Arrogant, foolish, pompous - Thinks he knows everything about current affairs - Makes everything else he says seem to be untrue	Priestley wanted to demonise the view of Capitalists so makes Mr. B out to be a deeply foolish character	- Would have been laughable to the 1945 audience who knew the horror of war

How he speaks to the other characters	QUESTION	“Are you listening, Sheila?”	- Wants to command attention of everyone at once - Talks down to his children and treats them like they are still in childhood	Mr. B speaks to young women with disdain Capitalists have a need to be obeyed and listened to	- 1945 audience would know women like Sheila massively contributed to society
His relationship with Eva/Daisy	DIALOGUE	‘I can’t accept any responsibility’	- Attention is elsewhere and not on the welfare of his workers - Denies any wrongdoing, lacks remorse, can’t acknowledge that his greed sent her down a difficult path	Mr. B is painted as a selfish character by not wanting to help those less fortunate than him	- Priestley’s view that when Capitalists run society, the most vulnerable really suffer
How he responds to being questioned by Inspector Goole	DIALOGUE	‘When this comes out at the inquest, it isn’t going to do us much good’	- More concerned with how he is presented in society than what he has actually done - Static character – doesn’t learn his lesson about social responsibility	Priestley’s message – Capitalists will destroy the hardest working members of society and not care	- Big focus on reputation in 1945
The end – after Inspector Goole has left	EMOTIVE LANGUAGE	‘The famous young generation who know it all and they can’t even take a joke.’	- Laughs at the children in a boastful, smug manner, as his priority is still his reputation - Cannot accept the seriousness of this situation - Views Smith’s death as a joke	Priestley’s message is that upper classes did not care about the suffering of the working classes	- The truth is that the younger generation would have saved society & 1945 audience would know this

Sheila Birling – what do you need to know?

Sheila Birling is the daughter of Arthur and Sybil.

At the beginning of the play, she has become engaged to Gerald Croft and we see her happily simpering over her engagement ring. Later, the audience realises that she isn't sure of her fiancé, since he spent much of the previous summer ignoring her.

Throughout the play, we see Sheila change as she learns about her part in the death of Eva/Daisy. She could be said to be the least responsible of the participants since her involvement with the dead woman was one ill advised exchange in a shop.

She is, however, one of only two characters who takes responsibility for their actions. (Eric also begins to see his actions as wrong.)

Sheila and Eric show us how some of the characters are able to change throughout the play. They can be seen to be juxtaposed or presented against their parents (their more reasonable response to what has occurred makes the older Birlings seem more cold hearted).



Sheila Birling Key Points – Add ideas from the above and the rest of your knowledge of the play to this spider diagram.

Sheila Birling Essay Plan - These quotations and your ideas could be used for any question on Sheila Birling – This is what you need to learn and revise.

Part of the play	Technique	Evidence	Exploration	Discuss further & include Priestley's Message	Context
The beginning – celebration of Sheila and Gerald's engagement		'Mummy'			

How she speaks to the other characters		'Except for all last summer when you never came near me'			
Her relationship with Eva/Daisy		"I went to the manager and told him this girl had been very impertinent"			
How she responds to being questioned by Inspector Goole		"I'll never, never do it again"			
The end – after Inspector Goole has left		'Between us we drove that girl to commit suicide'			

Gerald Croft – what do you need to know?

Gerald Croft is the son of Birling's business rival. He comes from a good, upper-middle-class family and Arthur Birling is very pleased that Gerald has at last made the engagement to Sheila Birling official.

Gerald is described by Priestley as, 'an attractive chap about thirty, rather too manly to be a dandy but very much the easy well-bred young man-about-town.' He is much more self assured than Eric.

His engagement to Sheila is the end point of a long courtship but, even within this, Gerald has been unfaithful. He took Eva Smith/Daisy Renton as his mistress and, when bored with her, palmed her off with a small amount of money. Eva/Daisy seems to have been truly in love with Gerald.

Gerald seems to be the same at the end of the play as at the beginning. He seems temporarily hurt by Sheila’s calling off their engagement but on his walk about town chooses to ask questions about the Inspector rather than think about his relationships with women. He doesn’t seem to take responsibility for his part in Eva’s death and tries to find a way to absolve himself of all guilt.



Gerald Croft Key Points – Add ideas from the above and the rest of your knowledge of the play to this spider diagram.

Gerald Croft Essay Plan - These quotations and your ideas could be used for any question on Gerald Croft – This is what you need to learn and revise.

Part of the play	Technique	Evidence	Exploration	Discuss further & include Priestley’s Message	Context
The beginning – celebration of Sheila and		‘I know we’d have done the same thing’			

Gerald's engagement					
How he speaks to the other characters		'For God's sake – don't say anything to the Inspector'			
His relationship with Eva/Daisy		'We went to the County Hotel, which I knew would be quiet at that time of night'			
How he responds to being questioned by Inspector Goole		'I didn't feel about her as she felt about me'			
The end – after Inspector Goole has left		'Everything's alright now, Sheila. What about this ring?'			

Mrs. Birling – what do you need to know?

Sybil Birling is the mother of Sheila and Eric Birling.

She is the representation of motherhood in the play but is an astoundingly unsympathetic character and does not appear to be maternal in any way. Her priority is how her family appears, rather than whether they are actually happy.

Sybil is described by Priestley as being, 'a rather cold woman and her husband's social superior'.

Sybil is the chairwoman of a charitable organisation that gives money to the more unfortunate. As such, Sybil sees herself as doing her civic duty and caring for the poor but, in truth, she judges them harshly.

She accuses Eva/Daisy of being dishonest, greedy and immoral and resents the Inspector for asking questions.

By the end of the play, Sybil still hasn't taken any responsibility for her role in the death of the young woman, Eva/Daisy. She refuses to see that her actions were anything but correct and justifiable.



**Sybil Birling Key
Points – Add ideas
from the above and
the rest of your
knowledge of the play
to this spider diagram.**

Mrs. Birling Essay Plan - These quotations and your ideas could be used for any question on Mrs. Birling – This is what you need to learn and revise.

Part of the play	Technique	Evidence	Exploration	Discuss further & include Priestley's Message	Context
The beginning – celebration of Sheila and Gerald's engagement	Dialogue	'When you're married, you'll realise that men with important work to do...'	- Supports the idea that men should be the head of the household - More supportive of Gerald being a success than her own daughter - Speaks in a condescending manner to her daughter	Mrs. Birling treats her children, especially Sheila, like an infant who cannot make her own way in the world	Middle class women, like Sheila, were not expected to work – their husbands were seen as the breadwinner
How she speaks to the other characters	Dialogue	'You know of course that my husband was Lord Mayor'	- Attempt to intimidate the Inspector into believing that Mr. B has power and influence - Trying to exert her power over someone she sees as inferior to her	The upper classes were used to getting away with things due to their status	People with power in 1912 were able to intimidate the working classes; untouchable
Her relationship with Eva/Daisy	Euphemism	'As if a girl of that sort would refuse money'	- In response to Inspector saying she didn't want to take £ - "that sort" = her view that Smith was immoral and promiscuous - Suggests ALL working class women are the same	People who were supposed to help, like Mrs. B, were the worst in terms of judgment	Working class people who needed help never stood a chance
How she responds to being questioned by Inspector Goole	Imperative	'Find this young man and make sure that he's compelled to confess in public'	- Inadvertently (without realising) pointing the finger at her own son, Eric - Not accepting any responsibility – deflecting onto someone else - Priestley wants to show unaware she is	The upper classes would not accept responsibility for their own dangerous behaviour	Upper classes' treatment of the working classes led to devastating results
The end – after Inspector Goole has left	Dialogue	'Gerald, you've argued this very cleverly and	- Elated that Gerald has 'got them out of trouble'. - Thrilled her reputation has been saved - She does not realise or accept that all of their selfish behaviour has still occurred	- Upper classes need to change – if they don't, the cycle of damage will continue	Sides with the person who cheated on her daughter – priority for upper classes = reputation, not family

		I'm most grateful'			
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Eric Birling – What do you need to know?

Eric Birling is the son of Arthur and Sybil. Eric is described by Priestley as, 'in his early twenties, not quite at ease, half shy, half assertive.' He seems unsure of his place in the world and, at the beginning of the play, is intimidated by his father.

As the play continues, we see Eric, as well as Sheila, begin to grow. He changes his ideas, begins to take responsibility for his actions and accepts that his drinking and behaviour have become real problems. Eric and his sister are set up as comparison characters to their parents, who are rigid and set in their ways.

At the beginning of the play, Eric appears to be a casual young man without cares. As the story progresses, however, we see that Eric does not feel that he can explain his problems to his own family. He feels like an outsider and so bottles all his problems up inside, sometimes taking refuge in drinking. His problems eventually manifest in a sexual assault on Eva Smith, leaving her pregnant with his child. However, he clearly feels remorse for his behaviour and takes responsibility for his actions.



Eric Birling Key Points
– Add ideas from the
above and the rest of
your knowledge of the
play to this spider
diagram.

Eric Birling – Essay Plan These quotations and your ideas could be used for any question on Eric Birling – This is what you need to learn and revise.

Part of the play	Technique	Evidence	Exploration	Discuss further & include Priestley's Message	Context
The beginning – celebration of Sheila and Gerald's engagement		'Half shy, half assertive'			
How he speaks to the other characters		'He could have kept her on instead of throwing her out'			
His relationship with Eva/Daisy		'I was in a state where a chap easily gets nasty'			
How he responds to being questioned by Inspector Goole		'She didn't want to marry me – in a way, she treated me as if I were a kid'			
The end – after Inspector Goole has left		'It's what happened to the girl and what we all did to her that matters'			

Inspector Goole – What do you need to know?

Inspector Goole can be seen as the central character of the play. This character is sometimes termed the protagonist. It is clear from the opening of the play that his presence will be the cause of all the coming action of the play.

The Inspector is a strange character, a bit of a mystery. He speaks 'carefully, weightily, and has a disconcerting habit of looking hard at the person he addresses before actually speaking.'

Gerald investigates his credentials and finds out that there is no Inspector Goole on the police force. We are left at the end of the play wondering if the Inspector is real or not. Was he a real policeman?

Does he represent another, more omniscient being – a God? The entire play could be described as a morality play in which the Inspector forces the other characters to come to terms with their actions.

The Inspector's presence is integral to the action of the plot and he can be seen as a major element in the theme of judgment being played out in it. His very name, 'Goole', implies a ghost-like or mysterious creature.



**Inspector Goole Key
Points – Add ideas
from the above and
the rest of your
knowledge of the play
to this spider diagram.**

Inspector Goole – Essay Plan These quotations and your ideas could be used for any question on Inspector Goole – This is what you need to learn and

Part of the play	Technique	Evidence	Exploration	Discuss further & include Priestley's Message	Context
The beginning – celebration of Sheila and Gerald's engagement		"pink and intimate" to "brighter and harder" (lighting stage directions)			
How he speaks to the family		"burnt her inside out"			
Discussing Smith's death and the involvement of each family member		"we have to share our guilt"			
Responses to being challenged by the family		"I don't play golf"			
The end – his final message		"taught it in fire and blood and anguish"			

revise.

You could also be asked a theme question. Read the below to remind yourself of the main themes in 'An Inspector Calls':

An Inspector Calls - Themes Overview

- social responsibility
- age
- gender
- class

The consequences of the Birlings' actions highlight Priestley's ideas on social responsibility - do we look after one another in society?

The difference between the younger and older characters' reactions to Eva Smith's death shows how Priestley viewed different generations. He viewed the younger generation as hope for the future and this is why both Sheila and Eric learn a lesson from the Inspector.

How the male characters behave towards the females in the play highlights important points on gender and inequality.

Class issues are also dealt with by having a middle-class family involved in the death of a working-class girl.

J B Priestley explored these themes in a lot of his work. They are political in nature and are still relevant today.

Four Key Themes

Social responsibility



An Inspector Calls was first performed in the UK just after the end of World War Two, in 1946. It was a time of great change in Britain and many writers were concerned with the welfare of the poor. At that time there was no assistance for people who could not afford to look after themselves. Priestley wanted to address this issue. He also felt that if people were more considerate of one another, it would improve quality of life for all. This is why social responsibility is a key theme of the play. Priestley wanted his audience to be responsible for their own behaviour and responsible for the welfare of others.

How is the theme of social responsibility shown in the play?

In *An Inspector Calls*, Priestley explores social responsibility through:

- the treatment of Eva Smith
- how each character does or doesn't take responsibility for their behaviour
- the Inspector's lessons

Age



Age is an important theme in *An Inspector Calls*. Priestley uses it to show how he believed that there was hope in the younger generation's ability to learn and change.

The older characters' opinions and behaviours are stubbornly fixed. Mr Birling refuses to learn and Mrs Birling cannot see the obvious about herself and her children. Eric and Sheila however are younger - they accept their mistakes and offer the chance for a brighter future.

How is the theme of age shown in the play?

In *An Inspector Calls*, Priestley explores the theme of age through:

- Sheila and Eric's response to Eva's death
- Mr and Mrs Birling's response to Eva's death
- how the older characters perceive the younger ones

Gender



An Inspector Calls was written after World War Two. As many British men went away to fight during the war, their positions in work had to be filled by women. This helped change existing perceptions. Men had to acknowledge the fact that women were just as capable as them. As a result of this, many women enjoyed a newfound freedom that working and earning money allowed them.

Not all men saw this change in attitude as a good thing and stayed stuck in the past. Priestley explores the impact of these new gender roles through the independence of Eva Smith and the sexist attitudes of Mr Birling.

How is the theme of gender shown in the play?

In *An Inspector Calls* Priestley explores the theme of gender through:

- how Mr Birling and Gerald Croft view women
- how Mrs Birling treats Eva Smith
- how Eva Smith is portrayed as independent and outspoken before her death

Class



Before World War Two, **Britain was divided by class**. Two such classes were the wealthy land and factory owners and the poor workers. **The war helped bring these two classes closer together** and rationing meant that people of all classes were eating and even dressing the same. The war effort also meant that people from all classes were mixing together. This was certainly not the case before.

Priestley wanted to highlight that inequality between the classes still existed and that the **upper-classes looked down upon the working-class** in post-war Britain.

How is this shown in the play?

In *An Inspector Calls*, Priestley explores the theme of class through the treatment of working-class Eva Smith by the wealthy Birlings and Gerald Croft when she is in the following situations:

- when she is a factory worker
- when she works in a shop
- when she is effectively homeless
- when she is potentially a single mother

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Part of the play	Technique	Evidence	Exploration	Discuss further & include Priestley's Message	Context
The beginning – celebration of Sheila and Gerald's engagement		"I know we'd have done the same thing"			
The family's response to Smith's death		"These girls aren't cheap labour; they're people"			
The family's response to Smith's death II		"Girls of that class			
Responses to Goole's questioning		"You know of course that my husband was Lord Mayor"			
The end – Goole's final message		"taught it in fire and blood and anguish"			

Theme Question Planning – We'll use the same quotations as before – How does Priestley present the theme of class in 'An Inspector Calls'?

Example Essay – How does Priestley use Inspector Goole to teach the family a lesson?

In 'An Inspector Calls', Inspector Goole is used as a dramatic device, arguably acting as a mouthpiece for J. B. Priestley in order to convey the message of the play - for the audience to be more accepting of socialist ideologies to ensure society never reverts to being dominated by capitalism like it was before the two world wars. This would have a profound impact on the post war audience of 1945 as through their suffering, they would have realised the importance of unity.

Inspector Goole is presented as an omnipotent, powerful figure throughout the play; his presence immediately has the power to change the light and cheerful atmosphere of the Birlings' dinner party. The lighting changes from "pink and intimate" to "brighter and harder" once the inspector arrives. Here, Priestley's use of the adjectives "pink and intimate" have connotations of warmth and happiness whereas the comparative adjective "harder" opposes this. Priestley uses the inspector as a dramatic device. Not only could it be argued that the inspector is an immensely powerful figure but also that Priestley uses the specific stage directions that accompany Inspector Goole's arrival to act as a symbol for how he wants society to improve. The lighting before the inspector arrives suggests that the Birling family – who encapsulate a stereotypical portrayal of a middle class family – were happy whilst they were ignorant to the plight of the working class. The lighting change mirrors how Priestley wants society to change; he wants society to stop being ignorant to the plight of the working class. Additionally, the lighting change foreshadows the rest of the play; through Inspector Goole, Priestley will throw into relief the issues within Edwardian society symbolised by the bright light in which nothing can hide.

Furthermore, J. B. Priestley uses the inspector to convey that he wants society to change and become more empathetic towards the plight of the working class instead of perceiving them as being disposable. When the inspector arrives, he tells the Birling family about Eva Smith's suicide in which she drank a lot of strong disinfectant that "burnt her inside out". Here, Priestley's use of graphic language and violent verb "burnt" evokes an emotional response with the post war audience of 1945 and the twenty first century audience alike. Priestley's language persuades the audience to feel immense sympathy not only for Eva Smith but also for all of the working class; it could be argued that Eva Smith's suffering and suicide is used as a metaphor to highlight the continuous struggles faced by the working class, throwing into relief the issues within society and how these problems are ignored by the wealthier classes. Priestley's gory imagery alternately makes the audience feel profoundly guilty for they may realise how ignorant they have been to ignore the struggles of the working class and persuade them to change by being more empathetic.

Priestley suggests that a pressing issue with the twentieth century society is that people are reluctant to take responsibility for their actions. This view is encapsulated through the use of the elder members of the Birling family, Arthur and Sybil – who do not take responsibility for their actions towards Eva Smith. However, Priestley uses the inspector to thwart this. The Inspector states that if we share nothing else, "we have to share our guilt". Here Priestley uses the personal pronoun "we" to give society a sense of unity, implying everyone must do the same and follow the inspector's teachings. 'An Inspector Calls' was set in 1912, a time in which society was divided by not only gender but by social class. Here, Priestley's use of the inclusive pronoun is paradoxical, subverting the audience's expectation about a divided society. Augmented by Priestley's use

of the imperative verb “have to”, he persuades the audience to take responsibility for their actions towards other members of society in order for society to progress. Alternately, Priestley’s use of the verb “share” could further reflect Priestley’s socialist ideologies that wealth should be more even distributed within society, instead of the richer upper and middle classes being greedy. Priestley wants the middle and upper classes to transform from abusing their power to dominate and exploit the working class to instead being more responsible for their actions and treating people more sympathetically.

Priestley uses the inspector to convey the consequences of what will happen if members of society do not change. He states that we will be “taught” in “fire and blood and anguish”. Priestley’s use of a triplet of nouns act as metaphors for the two world wars. The entire play is used as a motif for the wars; if society proceed to not improve the way in which members of society treat each other, the world wars will repeat in an endless cycle until we learn. Here, the inspector is conveyed as an omnipotent being. ‘An Inspector Calls’ was written and first performed at the end of the Second World War therefore the contemporary audience will have experienced the perpetual suffering that come with them. Priestley uses the inspector to make the audience be fearful as they are persuaded to think that the inspector is a God-like character imposing judgement on society. This will persuade all audiences to change their actions and embrace socialist ideologies of caring for other members of society which is what Priestley intended them to do.

Priestley uses Inspector Goole as an imposing omnipotent being who is used to highlight the issues of society. Priestley wants the middle and upper classes to stop being selfish and exploiting the poor for their own financial gain, but instead be more generous and empathetic towards other members of the working class. The inspector is almost an impartial figure in the play for he does not fit into the distinct levels of society. This gives the audience the impression that the inspector is an unbiased figure; they will be persuaded to listen to him and change their views.