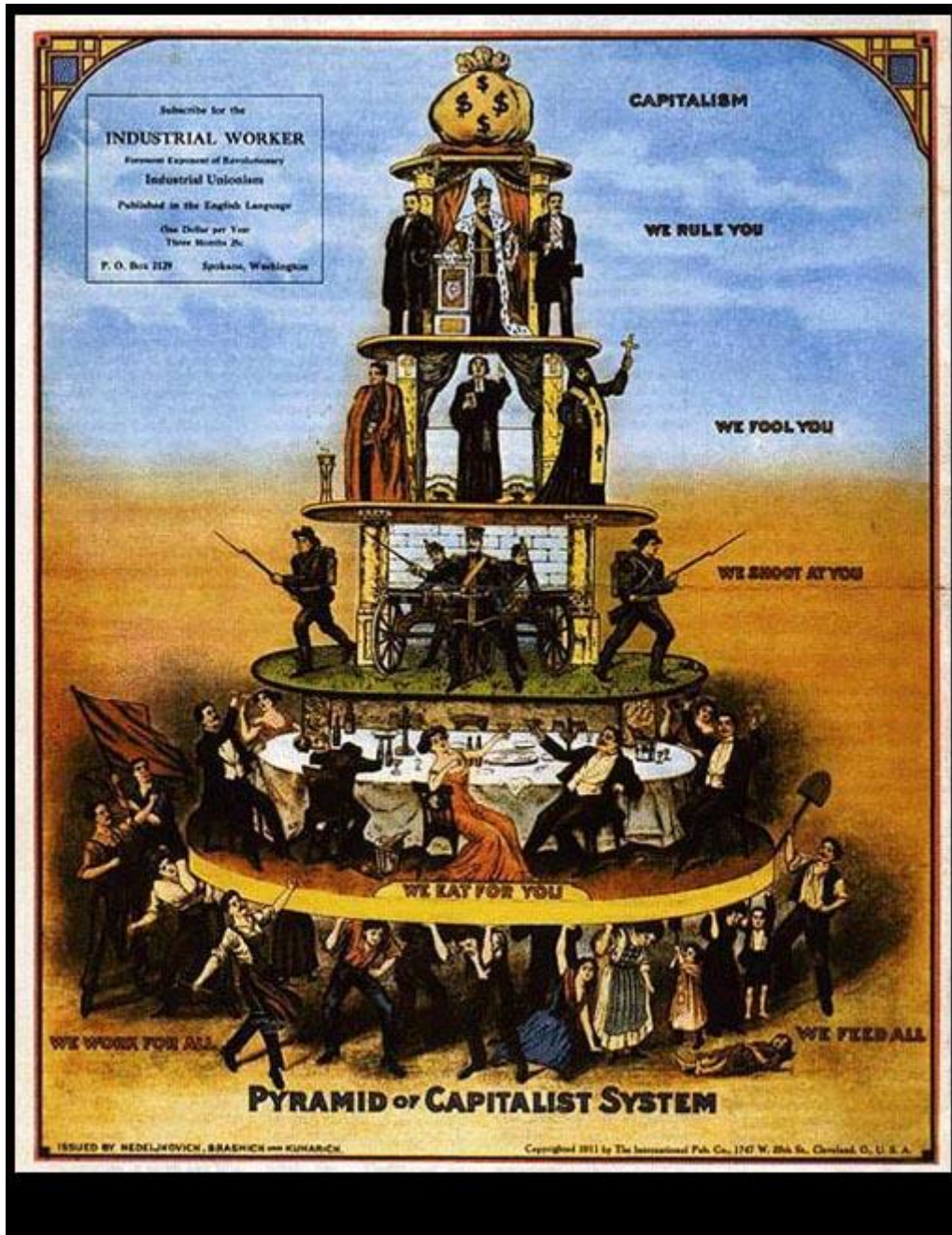


An Inspector Calls

J. B. Priestley

Revision Booklet



Name _____

Plot

Act One

- The Birlings are celebrating and are happy.
- The inspector interrupts to discuss Eva Smith's suicide
- Eva was sacked two years ago from Mr Birling's factory
- The discussion of the suicide causes conflict between Mr Birling, Eric and the Inspector
- Sheila feels sorry for Eva Smith
- Sheila confesses that she complained about Eva and got her sacked from Milwards
- The Inspector reveals that Eva Smith changed her name to Daisy Renton
- Gerald admits to Sheila that he had an affair with Daisy

Act Two

- Gerald still hopes to hide his involvement with Eva/Daisy
- The Inspector tells Gerald and Sheila that they are all responsible
- Mrs Birling behaves in a superior way to the Inspector, Gerald and Sheila
- Gerald reveals details of his affair with Daisy, and Sheila breaks off the engagement
- It is revealed that Eva was pregnant and asked Mrs Birling's charity for help
- Mrs Birling used her influence to have Eva's claim rejected because she didn't like her
- The Inspector manipulates Mrs Birling into stating that the father of Eva's child is to blame for her death
- The audience and characters gradually realise that Eric is the father

Act Three

- Eric reveals that he met Eva and is the father of her baby
- Eric accuses his mother of killing Eva and the baby, and says his father is unapproachable
- The Inspector reminds the Birlings that they are all responsible for Eva Smith's death
- The Inspector states his belief that all members of society need to look after each other
- Gerald reveals the Inspector wasn't a real police officer
- They find out there is no dead girl at the infirmary
- Arthur, Sybil and Gerald relax, thinking everything can be covered up and forgotten
- Sheila and Eric still feel guilty and cannot understand the others' behaviour
- The play ends with a phone call from the police saying a girl has died and an Inspector is on his way

Questions

1. Who are the four members of the Birling family?
2. What is the family celebrating?
3. How is Eva Smith linked to each of the Birlings?
4. Why did Sheila get Eva sacked from Milwards?
5. Who reacts strangely to the news that Eva changed her name to Daisy Renton?
6. Why does Gerald want Sheila to leave the room?
7. How does Mrs Birling criticise Eva Smith?
8. How does Mrs Birling behave in front of the Inspector?
9. How would you describe Gerald's relationship with Eva/Daisy?
10. What immediately turned Mrs Birling against Eva?
11. How do Sheila and Mr Birling respond to the news that Mrs Birling denied help to a pregnant girl?
12. Why does Sheila try to stop Mrs Birling criticising the father of Eva's baby?
13. What negative aspects of Eric's character are revealed?
14. Why wouldn't Eva marry Eric?
15. What is the Inspector's final message before he leaves?
16. What do Arthur and Sybil focus on after the Inspector leaves?
17. What do Eric and Sheila feel after the Inspector leaves?
18. How do Arthur, Sybil and Gerald feel when they realise the Inspector is not a real police officer?
19. Why do Eric and Sheila react differently to their parents?
20. How does the play end?

Narrative Structure

The play takes place on one evening, in one setting, with one central plot.

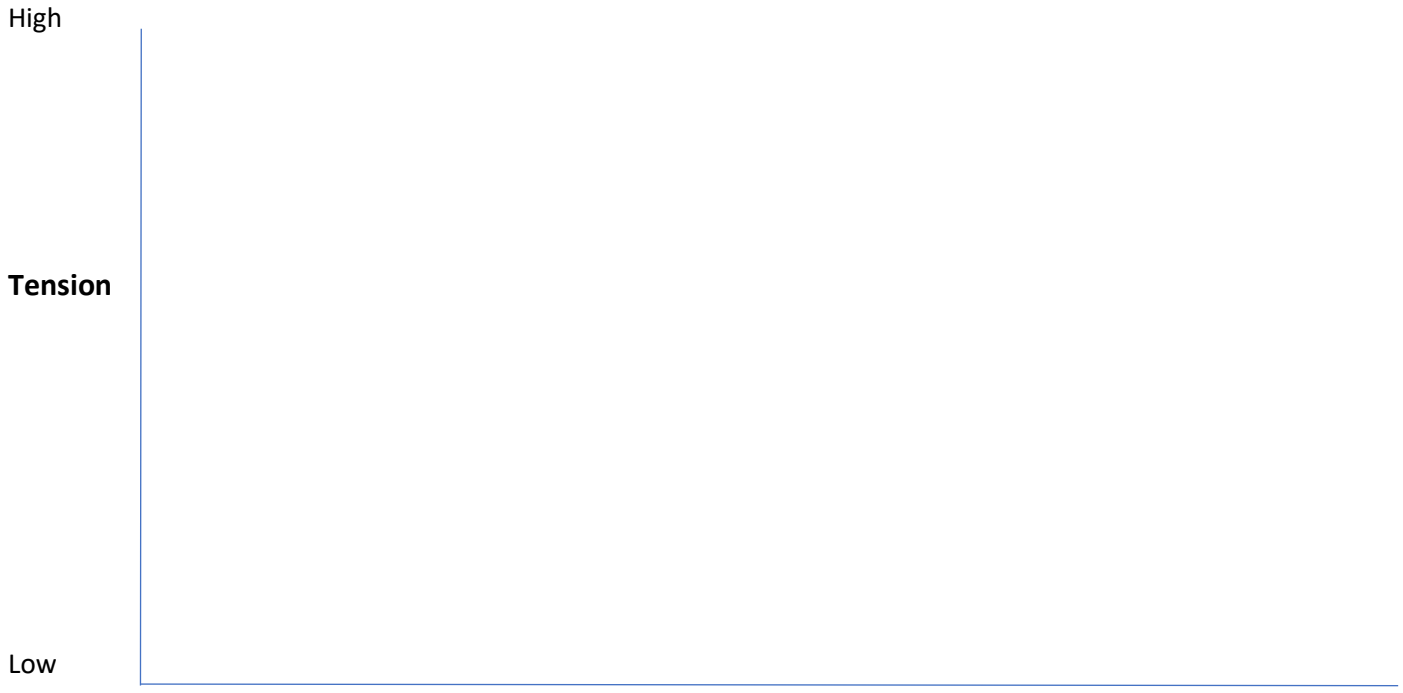
Each characters' involvement with Eva Smith is dealt with individually, with other characters leaving the stage when they are not necessary.

All the action taking place in the Birling's dining room creates the sense that they are cut off from the world – a metaphor for the attitudes that they have at the start of the play.

Priestley uses cliff-hanger throughout to create tension. On the next page, there is a tension graph. Plot the tension at each point in the play.

What is the effect of the cliff-hangers at the end of each act?

Tension Graph



“celebrating quietly”

“Please, sir, an inspector’s called.”

“What did you say your name was, Inspector?”

Sheila “give a half-stifled sob, and then runs out”

“She changed her name to Daisy Renton”

“Inspector, I think Miss Birling ought to be excused”

“I’ll just go out – walk about – for a while”

“As if a girl of that sort would ever refuse money!”

“Mother – I begged and begged you to stop – “

“You know, don’t you?”

“I was in that state when a chap easily turns nasty”

“my child – your own grandchild – you killed them both”

“Why, you hysterical young fool – get back – or I’ll – “

“Each of you helped to kill her. Remember that.”

“they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish”

“Was it a hoax?”

“The whole story’s just a lot of moonshine”

“the famous younger generation who know it all. And they
can’t even take a joke – “

“A girl has just died...And a police inspector is on his way...”

What is Capitalism?

Capitalism is a right-wing political belief in individual gain through hard work and a focus on profit. Capitalists accept that, for this to happen, there will always be people in society who are much better off than others.

Which character in the play do you think best represents Capitalism?

What is Socialism?

Socialism is a left-wing political belief in greater equality and fairness for all, especially the poorest and most needy in society. Socialists believe working class people should have more of a say in government and that wealth should be more evenly shared among the classes.

Which character in the play do you think represents Socialism?

Life in 1912

Look at the facts below. In the space underneath, explain what you think society was like in 1912, using the facts to support your opinions.

- A. The National Insurance Act 1911 was one of the first steps towards the creation of the welfare state. It set up a national system of insurance, protecting working people against illness and unemployment.
- B. The coal strike of 1912 was the first national strike by coal miners in Britain. Its main goal was securing a minimum wage. After 37 days, the government intervened and ended the strike by passing a minimum wage law.
- C. When the luxury passenger ship Titanic sank in 1912, it was carrying enough lifeboats for 52 per cent of its passengers. The higher the class of person, the more likely they were to be allocated a lifeboat: 62 per cent of first-class passengers found places in the lifeboats compared with 41 per cent of second-class passengers and 25 per cent of third-class passengers.
- D. In 1911, the UK census showed that the richest 1 per cent of the population owned 70 per cent of Britain's wealth

Early 20th Century Britain Timeline

Date	Reigning Monarch	Significant Events
1837-1901	Queen Victoria	
1901-1910	King Edward VII	<p>1903 – Women’s Social and Political Union formed to campaign for women’s suffrage. (Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst)</p> <p>1904 – Entente Cordiale (Anglo-French relations)</p> <p>1906 – First Dreadnought class battleship launched at Portsmouth (Anglo-German arms race)</p>
1910-1936	King George V	<p>1912 – “Unsinkable” Titanic sinks on maiden voyage</p> <p>1913 – Suffragette Emily Davison killed after she throws herself in front of the King’s Horse</p> <p>1914-1918 – World War One</p> <p>1918 – Women over 30 allowed to vote</p> <p>1918 – RAF formed</p> <p>1919 – Treaty of Versailles signed</p> <p>1920 – Women at Oxford University allowed to receive degrees</p> <p>1924 – First Labour Prime Minister (Ramsay MacDonald)</p> <p>1926 – General Strike – lasted only 9 days and deemed a failure</p> <p>1928 – Women over 21 allowed to vote</p> <p>1929 – General Election – Labour got more votes than any other party for the first time ever, but result was hung parliament</p> <p>1935 – Penguin paperbacks published for the first time. Literature now available to the masses at an affordable price.</p>
1936	King Edward VIII	1936 – Edward VIII abdicates (Wallis Simpson)
1936-1952	King George VI	<p>1938 – Munich Agreement (“Peace for our time”, Neville Chamberlain)</p> <p>1939 – Britain declares war on Germany, following Germany’s invasion of Poland</p> <p>1942 – Beveridge Report published, proposing a system of social security operated by the state</p> <p>1945 – End of World War Two</p> <p>1945 – General election – Labour won 393 seats (majority)</p> <p>1945 – Labour government introduce Welfare State</p> <p>1948 – Introduction of National Health Service</p>

What do the events in the table suggest about society in 1945? How was it different to society in 1912?

Women

For each of the facts below, write a sentence explaining what you think the impact would have been on women's lives.

1. The 1902 Education Act led to the opening of over 1000 secondary schools – 349 were for girls.

2. In 1908, the vacuum cleaner was invented, but it was considered a luxury item

3. The 1919 Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act ruled that women could have professional careers, including as accountants, vets and lawyers

4. The 1919 Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act ruled that women could sit on juries and become magistrates

5. In the 1928 version of the Book of Common Prayer, women agreed to “obey” their husbands in their wedding vows

6. Many jobs had a “marriage bar”, which meant that women had to stop working once they were married

J. B. Priestley

A brief biography

- Born in 1894, Priestley was the son of a schoolmaster and had a comfortable childhood
- Priestley's father was the first schoolmaster to provide free school meals and baths
- He worked as a clerk in a wool firm, and in his spare time, began writing for a Labour Party magazine
- He fought in World War One and was severely injured
- He attended Cambridge University
- He was interested in theories of time travel
- During World War Two, he hosted a radio programme, inspiring patriotism, but also sharing his socialist views
- He stood for election as an independent MP in 1945



middle-class

What do you think influenced Priestley's political views?

Where do we see evidence of Priestley's socialist views in the play?

Below are some extracts from Priestley's political writings. Next to each one, make note about what you think Priestley is saying

It was not the danger...but the conditions in which the lower ranks of the infantry were condemned to exist month after month...drained away health, energy, spirit... I went into that war free of any class feeling. No doubt I came out of it with a chip on my shoulder

One must stop thinking in terms of property and power and begin thinking in terms of community and creation. Take the change from property to community. Property is the old-fashioned way of thinking of a country as a thing, and a collection of things in that thing, all owned by certain people and constituting property; instead of thinking of a country as the home of a living society with the community itself as the first test

I have tried to make myself – and other people – aware of the harsh economic realities of our time. Again and again I have taken my typewriter to the factories, the mines, the steel mills. I denounced or jeered at those colleagues who would not look. I wrote some of the first detailed accounts of the depressed areas. Having been brought up on the edge of it, I knew what life was like 'back o' the mill'

The Impact of World War Two

How might the factors listed below have changed people's attitudes to class?

- Middle- and working-class men had fought together in the First and Second World Wars
- In the Second World War, many children had been evacuated to families from a different class to their own
- Middle- and working-class women had worked together during the Second World War
- Many men of both classes had returned home disabled
- During an after the war, the government implemented rationing for all citizens
- Everyone had experienced 5 years of war

	1912	1944
Political situation		
Class divide		
Rights of workers		
Rights of women		
Government provision for citizens		

Fill in the table on the previous page with the bullet points below, deciding where each point should be placed

- Many people were not paid enough to survive
- Many female workers were sacked for going on strike
- Thousands of people went on strike to ask for better pay
- Workers received a minimum wage
- Women did not have the right to vote
- It was very rare for the middle and working classes to mix
- There was less of a divide between the classes
- Council houses were available for the poor
- Many poor/unemployed could not afford health care
- Tensions were rising before the First World War
- National Insurance paid medical fees and unemployment benefit for some employees, though not women and children
- National Insurance paid medical fees and unemployment benefit for employees and women and children
- Socialism was rising in popularity
- Women were working in many traditionally male jobs during the war
- Women were able to vote and stand for parliament
- There was free secondary education for all children
- Poor women who were unable to find work were often forced into prostitution

In which areas do you think there had been progress between 1912 and 1944?

In which areas do you think there had been little progress?

Why do you think Priestley wanted to remind his audience of what life was like in 1912?

Setting

The play is set in Brumley, which is a fictional town in the West Midlands. In the 1900s, this area of England was full of factories; workers often lived in small terraces near the factories, and local shops and pubs would have catered to their needs.

“The dining-room of a fairly large suburban house belonging to a prosperous manufacturer”

Language choice	What it means	What you think of	What you feel	What you imagine
“suburban”	<i>It is on the outskirts of the city</i>	<i>An affluent area with spacious, expensive houses and large gardens</i>	<i>It must be a nice place to live. The family there are fortunate.</i>	<i>The family living there must be quite well off.</i>
“fairly large”				
“prosperous”				

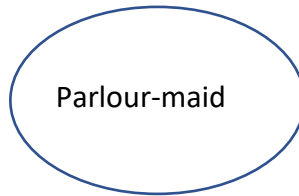
What clues do the following quotations give about the family who live in the house?

“EDNA, the parlourmaid, is just clearing the table”

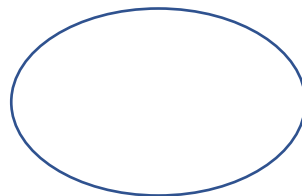
“replacing them with decanter of port, cigar box and cigarettes”

“substantial and heavily comfortable, but not cosy or home-like”

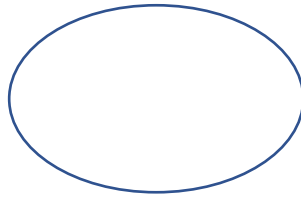
Annotate the word below, using a spider diagram to list the connotations.



Now select another word from one of the quotations from the opening stage directions and create another spider diagram.



Now select another word from one of the quotations from the opening stage directions and create another spider diagram.



Lighting

At the start of the play, the lighting is “pink and intimate”, but when the Inspector enters, it becomes “brighter and harder.” Why has Priestley been so explicit about the lighting?

Characters

Arthur Birling

“a heavy-looking, rather portentous man in his middle fifties”

Why does Priestley give Birling the greatest number of lines and have him interrupt and give orders?

What phrase does he repeat to show his self-confidence?

As well as his love for his daughter, why else is he pleased about her engagement to Gerald?

Why is Birling’s confident belief that there will be no war important?

Mr Birling is used by Priestley to represent Capitalism. Throughout the play, Priestley has Mr Birling trying to demonstrate his power over others. Fill in the table below to identify the tactics that Birling uses to show his power, and explain what this reveals about his character.

Quotation	What tactic(s) Mr Birling is using	What it suggests about Mr Birling
“Have a glass of port – or a little whisky?”	Being friendly and generous, as if it is a visiting friend	He believes he is above the law and that his money will impress and persuade people to be on his side.
“I was an alderman for years – and Lord Mayor two years ago – and I’m still on the Bench.”		
“Just keep quiet, Eric, and don’t get excited.”		
“Yes, well, we needn’t go into all that.”		
“I don’t like that tone.”		
“Look – just you keep out of this.”		

Contrasting Birling's views

Fill in the table with quotations that show socialist counter-arguments in the play. Note who says them.

Birling's capitalist views	Contrasting socialist views
"It's my duty to keep labour costs down."	"Why shouldn't they try for higher wages? We try for the highest possible prices" (Eric)
"We were paying the usual rates and if they didn't like those rates, they could go and work somewhere else."	
"So she had to go."	
"If you don't come down sharply on some of these people, they'd soon be asking for the earth."	

Reduce

In no more than 50 words, summarise how Mr. Birling is presented in the play as a whole:

Transform

Using the play, draw three images which represent Mr Birling's journey across the evening. Label with appropriate evidence

Sybil Birling

“a rather cold woman and her husband’s social superior”

In what ways does Sybil conform to the gender expectations of the times?

Why does she feel superior to others?

What does her charity role show about her?

What is her relationship with Eric like?

Annotate each of the quotations below, explaining what they tell us about Mrs Birling

“His wife is about fifty, a rather cold woman and her husband’s social superior.”

“(Reproachfully) Arthur, you’re not supposed to say such thing – “

“When you’re married, you’ll realise that men with important work to do
sometimes have to spend nearly all their energy on their business.”

“Now stop it, you two”

Quality	Quotation	Further explanation
Cold		
Prejudiced		
Unashamed		
Puritanical		

Reduce

In no more than 50 words, summarise how Mrs. Birling is presented in the play as a whole:

Transform

Using the play, draw three images which represent Mrs Birling's actions across the evening. Label with appropriate evidence.

Sheila Birling

“a pretty girl in her early twenties, very pleased with life and rather excited”

Why does Sheila have social status?

What feelings cause her to have Eva sacked?

How does Sheila begin to change?

What does she realise about Eric, long before the rest of her family?

Complete the following statements about Sheila:

a) Sheila is in a happy mood at the beginning of the play because _____

b) When she first meets the Inspector, she realises that _____

c) Sheila is greatly affected by the Inspector’s news. One example is when _____

d) Of all the characters, Sheila changes the most and she is the one who _____

e) By the end of the play, Sheila’s relationship with Gerald _____

Sheila changes, arguably the most, during the course of the play. Fill in the table below with quotations that show Sheila's development as a character.

Before – Quotation	Explanation	After – Quotation	Explanation

Reduce

In no more than 50 words, summarise how Sheila is presented in the play as a whole

Transform

Using the play, draw three images which represent Sheila and her actions across the evening. Label with appropriate evidence.

Eric Birling*“in his early twenties, not quite at ease, half shy, half assertive”*

Why does Eric seem different to the other characters at the start of the play?

How does he disagree with his father about the factory workers?

How does he feel about his behaviour?

What does he feel about his relationship with his parents?

Fill in the table below, explaining what each quotation tells us about the character of Eric

Quotation	Explanation
“Why shouldn’t they try for higher wages?”	
“I was in that state when a chap easily turns nasty”	
“I hate those fat old tarts round the town – the ones I see some of your respectable friends with”	
“Because you’re not the kind of father a chap could go to when he’s in trouble – “	
“my child – your own grandchild – you killed them both – damn you, damn you – “	
“And I say the girl’s dead and we all helped to kill her – and that’s what matters –“	
“He could laugh his head off – if I knew it really was all a hoax.”	

Questions about Eric

Why do you think Priestley chose to give an educated character more socialist views?

Why are Eric's actions towards Eva in the following quotation so horrible and such an abuse of power?

“Yes, I insisted – it seems. I’m not very clear about it, but afterwards she told me she didn’t want to go in but that – well, I was in that state when a chap turns easily nasty – and I threatened to make a row.”

Why has Priestley chosen to present Eric in this way? Consider:

- What point what Priestley trying to make?
- What was he saying about young middle-class men? How did they treat working-class women?
- Is it important that Eric wants to be different from his father?

Gerald Croft

*“an attractive chap about thirty, rather too manly to be a dandy,
but very much the easy well-bred young man-about-town.”*

In what ways does Gerald pretend to be something he’s not?

Why does Arthur like Gerald?

What were the honourable aspects of his part in Eva Smith’s life?

What were the dishonourable aspects of his part in Eva Smith’s life?

Do you think Gerald has changed or not by the end of the play? Fill in the table below.

Point	Evidence/Quotation	Effect

“You were the wonderful Fairy Prince. You must have adored it, Gerald.”- Sheila

Fill in table below, indicating whether Gerald’s actions paint him in a positive or negative light.

Action	Positive	Negative
Goes to a bar where prostitutes wait to meet men		
Sees a pretty girl and looks at her		
Realises the girl needs help getting away from Alderman Meggarty		
Tells girl she needs to leave if she doesn’t want to be treated like a prostitute		
Takes her for a drink at the County Hotel		
Buys her a meal when he finds out she is hungry		
Arranges to meet her again		
Offers her a place to go when he finds out she is homeless and penniless		
Visits her regularly		
She becomes his mistress		
Breaks off the relationship and gives her money		

Reduce

In no more than 50 words, summarise how Gerald is presented in the play as a whole:

Transform

Using the play, draw three images which represent Gerald’s journey across the evening. Label with appropriate evidence

Inspector Goole

“he creates at once an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness.”

What socialist view does the Inspector represent?

How does he seem to go against social conventions?

What is unusual about his surname?

In what way does he expose the other characters?

There are many different opinions about what the Inspector represents. Fill in the table below, finding evidence for each of the interpretations.

A supernatural character (Goole/ghoul)	
The voice of God	
The voice of conscience	
Mouthpiece for Priestley’s beliefs	
Representation of consequences	

Why doesn’t Priestley end the play after the Inspector leaves?

Questions

Why does Priestley interrupt Mr Birling's speech with a "sharp ring of a front door bell"?

Why does Priestley have the Inspector speak in such a blunt manner?

Explore the connotations of the three nouns Priestley uses in his description of the Inspector

Massiveness	
Solidity	
Purposefulness	

Eva Smith/Daisy Renton

“A pretty, lively sort of girl”

Which two sections of society does Eva Smith represent?

In what ways is she treated badly by the characters in the play?

In what ways does she appear to have better values than the Birlings?

What's in a name?

Annotate the two names below, exploring why Priestley might have used them

Eva Smith

Daisy Renton

“She wanted to be Daisy Renton – and not Eva Smith.”

Why might she not have wanted to be Eva Smith?

Why is it significant that she appears as more than one person?

Fill in the tables below, considering the issues that Eva represents and what the play suggests about Priestley's opinion on the topic

Issues faced by the working class	Quotation	Priestley's opinion and how we know
They were kept in their class by not being able to interact equally with – and in this case marry – people above their class	“She knew it couldn't last – hadn't expected it to last”	He thinks the working class are as good as the middle and upper classes, as he shows Eva's behaviour as good (e.g. saving money), while the behaviour of the middle and upper classes is not good
	“Old Joe Meggarty, half-drunk and goggle-eyed, had wedged her into a corner with that obscene fat carcass of his”	
	“...she was desperately hard up and at that moment was actually hungry.”	
	“And you used the power you had, as a daughter of a good customer, and also as a man well known in the town, to punish this girl.”	
	“I told the girl to clear out and she went.”	

For the table on the next page, you need to consider the following:

- Sexual freedom
- Wages
- Financial independence
- Working rights
- Politics

Issues faced by women	Quotation	Priestley's opinion and how we know

Eva Smith's Timeline

September 1910	After helping to organise a strike over wages at Birling and Company, Eva Smith is sacked
December 1910	She gets a job at Milwards
January 1911	Sheila complains about Eva and she is sacked
March 1911	Eva, who has now changed her name to Daisy Renton, meets Gerald. He finds her a place to live and she becomes his lover.
September 1911	Gerald breaks off his relationship with Daisy. She goes to live by the seaside for two months.
November 1911	Eva meets Eric. They become lovers and she gets pregnant. After she realises that Eric is supporting her with stolen money, she leaves him.
Spring 1912	Eva, using the name Mrs Birling, asks for help from the Brumley Women's Charity Organisation but is refused.
Spring 1912	Two weeks later, Eva Smith commits suicide.

Edna

"the parlour-maid"

What does Edna show about the Birlings' attitudes to the working class?

Why do we never learn Edna's last name?

How do the Birlings speak to Edna?

How does Edna speak to the Birlings?

Themes

Theme: Young and Old, The Generation Gap

What does Arthur show about the older generation at the start of the play?

What does Sheila show about the younger generation at the start of the play?

Why does Priestley have Eric and Sheila come into conflict with their parents?

Fill in the table below, using evidence from the text

	Older Generation	Younger Generation
Actions		
Views		
Feelings		

Responsibility

What does the Inspector believe we should do for the less fortunate people in society?

What is Arthur's opinion of social responsibility?

In what way does Sybil only pretend to have social responsibility?

Which characters take responsibility for their actions?

What word does Sheila use to describe the process of admitting what they did?

What do Arthur and Sybil do instead of taking responsibility?

What is the difference between personal and social responsibility?

Personal Responsibility	Social Responsibility

Fill in the table on the next page. Next to each quotation, fill in the name of the character who says it, and what it tells about their attitude to personal and/or social responsibility

Quotation	Who says it?	What does it tell us?
"I can't accept any responsibility"		
"If we were all responsible for everything that happened to everybody we'd had anything to do with, it would be very awkward, wouldn't it?"		
"So I'm really responsible?"		
"I consider I did my duty."		
"There's every excuse for what both your mother and I did"		
"The point is, you don't seem to have learnt anything"		

<p>“It’s my duty to keep labour costs down”</p>		
<p>“A man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own”</p>		
<p>“It’s about time you learnt to face a few responsibilities”</p>		
<p>“But the way some of these cranks talk and write now, you’d think everybody has to look after everybody else, as if we were all mixed up together like bees in a hive.”</p>		
<p>“We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other”</p>		

Morality

In the Middle Ages, morality plays were used to teach people how to behave and served as a warning against sin. They focused particularly on the Seven Deadly Sins:

- Greed
- Gluttony
- Lust
- Anger/Wrath
- Envy
- Sloth
- Pride

Where in the play do we see examples of each sin?

Greed	
Gluttony	
Lust	
Anger/Wrath	
Envy	
Sloth	
Pride	

Mrs Birling's Charity

Is charity really charity if it's guided by moralistic judgements? What do you think Priestley is saying about charity and morality?

Repentance

Using the quotations below, explain how repentant each character is about their treatment of Eva Smith.

Mr Birling: "I can't accept any responsibility"

Sheila: "It's the only time I've ever done anything like that, and I'll never, ever do it again to anybody."

Gerald: "She didn't blame me at all. I wish to God she had now. Perhaps I'd feel better about it."

Mrs Birling: "(*very distressed now*) No – Eric – please – I didn't know – I didn't understand"

Eric: "(*unhappily*) My God – I'm not likely to forget."

Quotation	Who is the Inspector speaking to?	What does this reveal about the Inspector's attitude towards the character?
“(Dryly) I don’t play golf”		
“The girl’s dead though”		
“(Steadily) That’s more or less what I was thinking earlier tonight, when I was looking at what was left of Eva Smith. A nice little promising life there, I thought, and a nasty mess somebody’s made of it.”		
“Yes, I’m afraid it did”		
“you’re partly to blame”		
“(harshly) Yes, but you can’t. It’s too late. She’s dead.”		
“(very sternly) Her position now is that she lies with a burnt-out inside on a slab.”		
“Don’t stammer and yammer at me again.”		

<p>“(very deliberately) I think you did something terribly wrong – and that you’re going to spend the rest of your life regretting it.”</p>		
<p>“You made her pay a heavy price for that. And now she’ll make you pay a heavier price still.”</p>		

Inequality (Rich/Poor, Men/Women)

Why is Eva at the bottom of the social hierarchy?

What things suggest the Birlings have greater power and opportunities?

How do the Birlings benefit from social inequality?

Rank the characters from most to least powerful. Justify your choices.

How does the following stage direction show what social class Mr Birling belongs to?

“The dining room of a large suburban house, belonging to a prosperous manufacturer”

Mrs Birling is Mr Birlings *“social superior”* and Gerald’s family are upper class. What do these two facts suggest about Mr Birling’s attitude towards social mobility between the middle and upper classes?

“Not if it was just after the holidays. They’d all be broke – if I know them”

“As if a girl of that sort would ever refuse money!”

What do the two quotations suggest about what Gerald and the older Birlings think about social mobility between the lower and middle classes?

Priestley presents Eva Smith as a positive character. Fill in the table to show how her character is presented and what the effect is on the audience.

Eva's positive attributes	Quotation	Effect on the audience
She's a good worker		
She stands up for herself and others		
She thinks stealing is wrong		
She doesn't blame others for her misfortunes		
She tries to protect the people in her life		

Why does Priestley present the working-class character in the most sympathetic way?

The Role of Women

Make notes under each of the headings below, exploring Sheila and Mrs Birling's attitudes and behaviour

Questioning their husband/fiancé

Relationship with their husband/fiancé

Using improper language

Expressing their opinion

Being exposed to unpleasant things

Time

Theory	How it relates to the play
Ouspnesky's Theory: He suggests that when we die, we re-enter our life once more from the beginning. We are born again to same parents and continue to repeat all the events of our life as before. This cycle of identical lives would go on being repeated if we changed nothing of significance. If, however, we improved in some spiritual way, we could convert the circle into a spiral of events, that would eventually allow us to escape from the repetitions and live a new life in which we did not repeat our mistakes.	
Dunne's Theory: He suggests that it is possible, in dreams, to see forward into our own timeline, because our wakeful mind is too focused on the present. These pre-cognitive episodes mix with fragments and memories of our own past. Déjà vu is considered to be further evidence of this. This would make it possible for a person to look both forward and back in their personal timeline, and see the consequences of their actions, allowing them to change those actions if necessary.	

How does Priestley use the audience's knowledge of the past to show something about Arthur?

What is the effect of setting the play over one evening?

Why does Priestley use flashbacks in the play?

How do Sheila and Eric respond to the past differently to Arthur and Sybil?

Love and Marriage

When is marriage presented positively in the play?

How does Sybil present negative aspects of marriage?

What is different about men and women's attitudes towards love in the play?

How is Eric's relationship with Eva presented as being about sex?

Why is it significant that Sheila does not agree to take Gerald back at the end of the play?

The Play's the Thing

An Inspector Calls is a play, which means it is designed to be performed on stage, and watched by an audience.

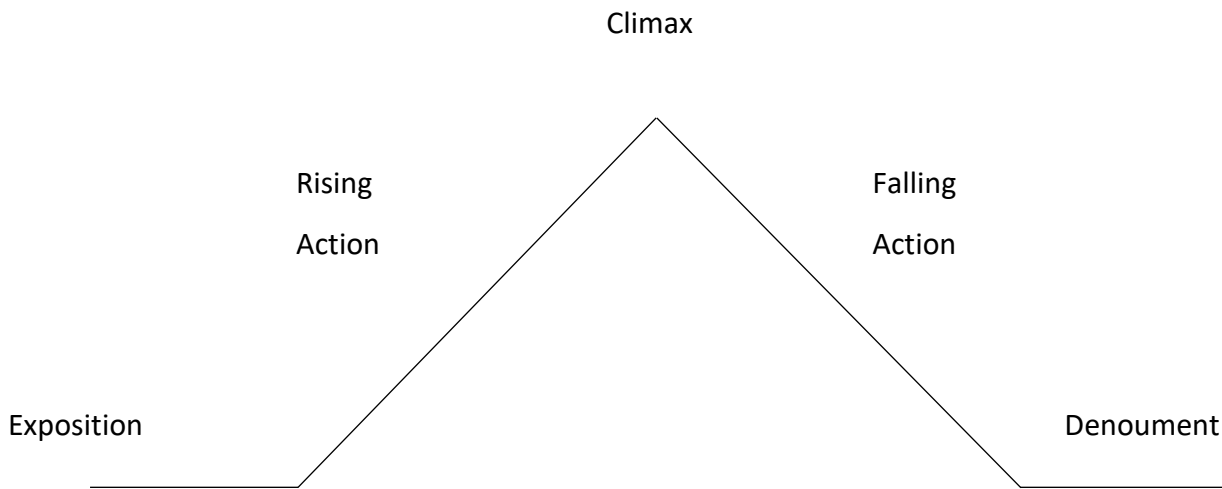
Using the opening stage directions, draw a diagram of what you think the set looks like

What is the effect of having the play take place in one room?

Why does Eva Smith never appear on stage?

Stylistic features of An Inspector Calls

The Well-Made Play



Features of the Well-Made Play

1. Characters, background, themes and ideas are introduced during the opening.
2. Entrances and exits are perfectly timed
3. Secrets are revealed during 'obligatory scenes'
4. The climactic curtain – the ending of an act or scene on a highly dramatic and tense moment
5. Mistaken identity
6. One major plot. Although there is no subplot, there can be complications.
7. The denouement. The ending must be both logical and plausible.

To what extent does An Inspector Calls fulfil the criteria of a well-made play?

Exam-style questions

There are 16 marks available for AO1, 16 marks for AO3 and 8 marks for AO4, for a total of 40 marks.

1. **Sheila:** *I know I'm to blame – and I'm desperately sorry... It's simply my fault.*
Explore the importance of guilty consciences in the play.
You must refer to the context of the play in your answer.
2. **Gerald:** *I'm sorry, Sheila. But it was all over and done with, last summer. I hadn't set eyes on the girl for at least six months.*
Explore the significance of Gerald in *An Inspector Calls*.
You must refer to the context of the play in your answer.
3. **Sybil Birling:** *I must say, we are learning something tonight.*
Explore how learning from experience is important in the play.
You must refer to the context of the play in your answer.
4. **Sheila Birling:** *But these girls aren't cheap labour – they're people.*
In what ways is Eva Smith exploited in the play?
You must refer to the context of the play in your answer.
5. **Inspector:** *We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other.*
Explore the significance of responsibility in *An Inspector Calls*.
You must refer to the context of the play in your answer.
6. **Eric:** *He was our Police Inspector all right.*
Sheila: *That's what I mean, Eric.*
How does Eric change throughout the play?
You must refer to the context of the play in your answer.