

AN INSPECTOR CALLS by J B PRIESTLEY

CONTENTS

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2-12 PLOT AND STRUCTURE
- 13 THE TIME SCALE
- 14 THE INSPECTOR
- 15 ARTHUR BIRLING
- 16 SYBIL BIRLING
- 17 GERALD CROFT
- 18 SHEILA BIRLING
- 19 ERIC BIRLING
- 20-21 THEMES
- 22 REVISION QUESTIONS



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# INTRODUCTION

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1

Before you begin your study of *An Inspector Calls* it is important that you have read the text carefully. It will also help if you can see a performance of the play at the theatre, or, failing that, watch a performance of it on video. To really appreciate the play as Priestley meant it to be seen, therefore, you really do need to see it in performance. This, of course, will help you to get a much clearer picture of what is happening too.

The sections that follow examine the key aspects of the play that you will need to be aware of in order to answer questions on the play in the GCSE exam. All the tasks are designed to help you look carefully at the play and come to an understanding of it both as a play and a work of literature. In addition to working through the tasks in the sections that follow it is also recommended that you keep your own notes on the various areas of study, noting down things that you find particularly interesting or effective and making a note of quotations or references to support your ideas.

At the end of this work book you will find a number of specimen questions of the kind that you might find on a GCSE English Literature exam paper. It would be very useful in terms of preparing yourself for the exam if you practised on some of these. As you get closer to the exam date it would be helpful to you to try doing one or two of them under timed conditions too. In most exams you would have about 40 minutes to answer one of these questions.

# PLOT AND STRUCTURE- ACT 1

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## 2

In studying a play you must always bear in mind that it is a dramatic text which was written to be seen in performance rather than read. However, when studying the text for a literature examination you will, necessarily, spend a good deal of time actually reading it and probably very little time, if any, actually watching it. It is very important, therefore, that you use all the information you can to help you visualise the action taking place in your mind. One important element of the text that will help you to do this are the stage directions. Make sure that you read these very carefully and use all the information they give you.

The play opens with some very detailed directions describing the setting and the characters. We have already been told that the action all takes place “in the dining-room of the Birling’s house in Brumley, an industrial city in the North Midlands.” We are also told that “It is an evening in Spring, 1912.” It is worth bearing this date in mind in view of some of the comments that are made later.

Look carefully at the stage directions at the beginning of Act One. Note down your initial impressions of the setting at the opening of the play.

Now look at the information that you are given about the characters and make a list of the key points about each character you are given here.

It is interesting to note that Priestley tells us that at the opening of the play they all feel “... pleased with themselves.”

Now look at the opening section of the play up to the arrival of the Inspector.

At the beginning of the play we see that the Birling family and Gerald have just finished a celebratory dinner and are about to drink a toast to Sheila and Gerald who have just become engaged. It seems that Gerald has been courting Sheila for some time and she has now accepted his proposal of marriage.

Although everything seems happy here, however, a hint is dropped that Gerald did neglect Sheila the previous summer. This does not seem particularly significant here but it does become relevant in the light of information that we are given later. It is worth noting also that a reference to Eric being “Squiffy” is made - again a point which gains greater significance later.

# PLOT AND STRUCTURE- ACT 1

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3

Look carefully at the short speech that Birling gives just before they drink the toast. How do you think that Birling views the union between his daughter and Gerald?

They drink the toast and at just the right moment Gerald produces the engagement ring - just the one that Sheila wanted. The importance of the occasion prompts Birling into giving a rather lengthy speech.

Look carefully at what he has to say in the section beginning "I'm delighted about this engagement...." to "And we don't guess - we've had experience - and we know." Make notes on what he has to say here. What kind of image does he create of himself?

What strikes you about comments such as:

"The Germans don't want war"

"The Titanic - she sails next week ...absolutely unsinkable."

"In Twenty or Thirty year's time -let's say, in 1940 - you may be giving a little party like this - ... and I tell you, by that time you'll be living in a world that'll have forgotten all these silly little war scares. There'll be peace and prosperity and rapid progress everywhere."

Eric and Sheila go out leaving Arthur to talk to Gerald alone.

What do you learn about the social status of the Birling family and the Croft family?

Why do you think the possibility of being given a knighthood is important to Arthur?

# PLOT AND STRUCTURE- ACT 1

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4

Notice the irony in his joking comments - “I gather there’s a very good chance of a Knighthood - so long as we behave ourselves, don’t get into the police court or start a scandal - eh? (Laughs complacently)” and “... you can promise her that we’ll try to keep out of trouble during the next few months.”

Little does he know what is about to happen!

Eric returns and helps himself to another glass of port. It doesn’t seem very important here but Eric’s drinking assumes much more significance later.

Their talk revolves around women and clothes and Eric begins to say something but then stops. This seems a little odd and prompts Gerald to say “Sounds a bit fishy to me.” Again a small point here but one which will become much more significant later. Notice how Priestley is beginning to drop in clues that will be taken up and revealed later.

Now look carefully at Birling’s speech which begins -“But this is the point.”

Make notes on what he has to say here and then think about why Priestley places this speech at this point in the play, and the effect of the speech being interrupted by the doorbell ringing.

Edna tells the three men that an Inspector has arrived and she leaves to show him through.

Briefly Birling and Gerald think about why an Inspector should want to see them and Gerald jokingly says “...Unless Eric’s been up to something (nodding confidentially to Birling.) And that would be awkward, wouldn’t it?”

How does Eric respond to this light-hearted remark. Why do you think he acts as he does?

Now look at the stage directions that describe the entry of the Inspector and note down the impression they give you of the character.

# PLOT AND STRUCTURE- ACT 1

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5

## THE 'QUESTIONING'

Read again the section that begins -

INSPECTOR: Mr. Birling?

BIRLING: Yes. Sit down, Inspector.

and ends -

INSPECTOR: (Rather slowly) No, she didn't exactly go on the streets.

Think carefully about the following aspects of this section and make notes on them.

The way that the Inspector begins his questioning.

Birling's attitude towards the Inspector to start with. How this changes as the section develops.

What is the difference between the way that the Inspector sees Birling's role in the girl's suicide and the way that Birling sees it himself. Can you find any quotations that sum up Birling's attitude?

Why did Birling sack Eva Smith in the first place? What do you think about this?

Birling clearly thinks that he was quite justified in refusing the girl's demands. What are his main priorities?

He comments "... If you don't come down sharply on some of these people, they'd soon be asking for the earth" and the Inspector replies "They might. But after all it's better to ask for the earth than to take it."

What is the meaning of this comment and how does Birling respond to it?

What is Birling trying to do when he makes reference to the Chief Constable and the golf club? Does it work?

What do you make of Eric's comments in this section?

# PLOT AND STRUCTURE- ACT 1

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6

Sheila enters at this point. Now look at the next section beginning with the entry of Sheila up to the point where the Inspector shows her the photograph.

Sheila's entry is very much out of line with the mood that has developed through the Inspector's questioning of Birling. Birling himself clearly thinks that the matter has been concluded but he very soon finds out that it is not. The Inspector tells Sheila what has happened and she is horrified at the thought of this young woman dying a terrible death poisoned by disinfectant. Gerald and Birling cannot see the purpose of the Inspector's inquiries at first but then Birling begins to realise that the Inspector believes that some of the others know something about Eva Smith too.

When Birling realises this how does he respond and what does he want to do?

What do you learn about what happened to Eva Smith after she left Birling's employment from what the Inspector has to say in this section?

What is Sheila's attitude to everything she hears about Eva Smith here?

How does Priestley build up the dramatic tension immediately before he shows her the photograph?

At this point the Inspector shows Sheila a photograph and it is obvious that she recognizes the person it portrays and she sobs and runs from the room.

Now look at the next section from this point to the end of Act One.

At first Birling cannot grasp what is going on and why his daughter is so upset but Eric immediately realises that it is because she recognized the photograph.

Birling is angry that the Inspector has upset his daughter so much but the Inspector says that she is upsetting herself. Why she is so upset is something that the Inspector is clearly going to pursue later. Realising that something serious is happening here Birling goes to tell his wife the situation.

Gerald then wants to see the photograph but the Inspector simply tells him "All in good time" and when he objects he is put in his place by the Inspector.

Eric interrupts saying that he has had enough, he has had a few drinks, has a headache and is going to go to bed. The Inspector, however, does not think that this is a good idea.

Sheila returns and it is obvious that she has been crying. Her first comment reveals her involvement in something - "You knew it was me all the time, didn't you?"

# PLOT AND STRUCTURE- ACT 1

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7

Whatever Sheila has done has made her feel “rotten about it,” although now she’s told her father, he doesn’t make much of it. The Inspector goes on through his questioning of Sheila to get her to reveal what she had done and what her involvement with Eva Smith was.

How does the Inspector respond when Birling accuses him of making a nasty mess of their family celebration?  
What is the effect of his words?

What seems to be implied in the Inspector’s comment to Gerald, “If you’ve anything to tell me, you’ll have an opportunity of doing it soon” and his comment to Eric that if he turned in he might have to turn out again soon?

What do you think the Inspector means when he replies to Gerald’s comment that they are respectable citizens and not criminals that “Sometimes there isn’t as much difference as you think. Often, if it was left to me, I wouldn’t know where to draw the line.”

Make detailed notes on what Sheila did to Eva Smith. How does she feel about her actions now?

What is Gerald’s response when the Inspector tells them that Eva Smith changed her name to Daisy Renton? What does this tell you?

When Sheila and Gerald are left alone at the end of the Act what do they have to say to one another?

What is the effect of Sheila’s words “Why - you fool - he knows. Of course he knows. And I hate to think how much he knows that we don’t know yet.”?

What is the dramatic effect of the Act ending with the reappearance of the Inspector and his Single word - “Well?”

## PLOT AND STRUCTURE- ACT 2

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As the curtain rises at the beginning of Act Two the scene and situation is exactly as we left it at the end of Act One. Sheila has become slightly hysterical as she realises that she is right and that the Inspector knows of Gerald's involvement with the girl. Gerald wants Sheila to go and the Inspector says that he has no more questions to put to her but she is right to suspect that he hasn't finished asking questions yet. Gerald still urges her to leave but Sheila is insistent that she wants to stay. Gerald clearly doesn't like this and tells Sheila that the reason she wants to stay is because -

“You've been put through it - and now you want to see someone else put through it.”

This upsets Sheila but the Inspector intervenes. He is sensitive to the real reason that Sheila wants to stay and he tells them -

“Now Miss Birling has just been made to understand what she did to this girl. She feels responsible. And if she leaves us now, and doesn't hear any more, then she'll feel she's entirely to blame, she'll be alone with her responsibility...You see, we have to share something. If there's nothing else, we'll have to share our guilt.”

At this point Mrs. Birling enters full of confidence and her own self-importance - an attitude quite at odds with what has just occurred. Now look at the section from the entry of Mrs. Birling to the point where she says “Over-excited. And she refuses to go. (With sudden anger, to the Inspector.) Well, come along - what is it you want to know?”

When Birling returns he objects to the Inspector's tone and the way in which he is handling the inquiry. He tells the Inspector “I don't propose to give you much more rope.” Sheila responds by saying “No, he's giving us rope - so that we'll hang ourselves.”

What does she mean?

Look at the way that Mrs. Birling begins talking to the Inspector. What kind of attitude does she show here?

Why does Sheila feel that her mother is “beginning all wrong?”

What do you think Sheila means when she says to her mother - “You mustn't try to build up a kind of wall between us and that girl. If you do, then the Inspector will just break it down. And it'll be all the worse when he does.”?

What is revealed to Mrs. Birling about her son, Eric, in this section and how does she respond?

What does this tell you about her relationship with her son?

## PLOT AND STRUCTURE- ACT 2

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9

The Inspector resumes his inquiry picking up from when Eva Smith had to leave Milwards because of Sheila's complaint against her. He tells them that she changed her name to Daisy Renton and he asks Gerald how he first came to know her. Birling and his wife are astonished that Gerald is somehow involved too. Gerald goes on to tell them how he first met her in the bar of the Palace music hall in Brumley the previous March. It seems that at this time Gerald had not been seeing much of Sheila and had told her that he was too busy at the works.

Now look at the section where Gerald begins his story from "I happened to look in, one night, after a rather long, dull day..." to where the Inspector says - "It's all I want to know from you."

What first caught Gerald's attention about 'Daisy Renton'?

What does the distress he shows when he breaks off tell you about Gerald?

How does Mrs. Birling respond to the description of Alderman Meggarty's part in all this? What does this further reveal about Mrs. Birling herself?

What do you think about Gerald's description of his involvement with Eva Smith? What impression does this give you of his character?

After some months Gerald's affair with Eva/Daisy came to an end. What do you feel about the way that Gerald describes this?

What do you think of Gerald at this point in the play?

Gerald has obviously been rather upset by all this and he feels he wants to be alone for a while. He says he will go for a walk but he wants to come back later. Before he leaves, however, Sheila hands him back the engagement ring that he had given her earlier in the evening. This is not entirely unexpected to Gerald. Sheila is not bitter though. In fact, having heard the full story of his involvement with Eva she says that "... in some odd way, I rather respect you more than I've ever done before." She recognizes, though, that all that has happened has made a difference - "You and I aren't the same people who sat down to dinner here. We'd have to start all over again, getting to know each other -". Mrs. Birling is at a loss and feels that they have just about come to an end of "this wretched business." Gerald, though, has gained a similar kind of insight to what is happening as Sheila intuitively gained earlier and he replies "I don't think so." and goes out.

Sheila notes that the Inspector never showed the photograph to Gerald and the Inspector tells her that it wasn't necessary. Mrs. Birling, asks the Inspector if he has a photograph of the girl and he

## PLOT AND STRUCTURE- ACT 2

10

tells her that he has and she had better look at it. She doesn't see any particular reason why she should but he insists and she looks at it. The Inspector asks her if she recognizes the girl and she says "No. Why should I?" It is clear, though, that the Inspector does not believe her and in plain terms he tells her so. Now look at the section which begins with the Inspector saying - "Mrs. Birling, you're a member - a prominent member - of the Brumley Women's Charity

How does Mrs. Birling respond initially to the Inspector's questioning?

The Inspector's question of Mrs. Birling is interrupted by the entry of Birling who tells them that Eric has been acting strangely and has gone out. What is the effect of the Inspector's words -

"We do need him here. And if he's not back soon, I shall have to go and find him."

What does this suggest to you?

Describe Mrs. Birling's involvement with Eva Smith.

Why was Mrs. Birling so prejudiced against her? How do you respond to her attitude here?

What effect does the information that Eva was going to have a baby have on the others? How does Birling respond at this point?

What reasons, according to Mrs. Birling, did Eva give for not wanting the help of the father?

The logic of the Inspector's questioning forces Mrs. Birling to attribute blame, ultimately, to the father of the child. Why does Sheila suddenly become alarmed at this point?

Too late, Mrs. Birling realises the implications of what she has said. What is the dramatic impact of the end of the Act?

Organisation, aren't you?" to the end of Act Two.

The Act ends as Eric enters looking "extremely pale and distressed."

## PLOT AND STRUCTURE- ACT 3

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11

Act Three opens exactly as Act Two finished, with Eric standing just outside the room with the others staring at him.

His opening words - "You know, don't you?" reveal that he is completely aware of the situation that faces him. Mrs. Birling is distressed now and cannot believe that Eric was the young man that Eva Smith had described to her as being responsible for her condition.

The Inspector once again takes charge and wants to hear what Eric has to say, but first Eric needs a drink. For the first time Birling and his wife see that their son is a man very used to "quick heavy drinking."

Now look at the section that begins with the Inspector's question - "When did you first meet this

Note down the Key points of Eric's description of his first meeting with Eva Smith. What is your impression of a) Eric and b) Eva from this description?

How did they come to meet for a second time? and what happened?

What is the significance of Eric's response to his fathers - "... and I hate these fat old tarts round the town - the ones I see some of your respectable friends with -"?

Not long after, Eva told Eric that she was pregnant. How did Eric react and what did Eva feel about the idea of marriage?

Eric gave Eva money. How could he afford to go out on the town drinking and give Eva money?

What is Birling's response when he finds out that Eric has done?

What did Eva do when she found out where Eric's money had come from?

How does Eric respond when he finds out that Eva had appealed to his mother's committee and his mother had turned down her case?

What are the central points that the Inspector makes to them all before he leaves?

## PLOT AND STRUCTURE- ACT 3

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12

girl?” to the point at which the Inspector leaves.

Sum up the attitudes of Sheila and Eric. How do these contrast with the attitudes shown by Birling and his wife?

Make a list of quotations from this section of the play to illustrate those differences in attitude.

How does Birling begin to explain away the ‘Inspector’ and what he was trying to do?

How do Gerald and Birling try to explain away all that has happened?

What attitude does Gerald take in this final section?

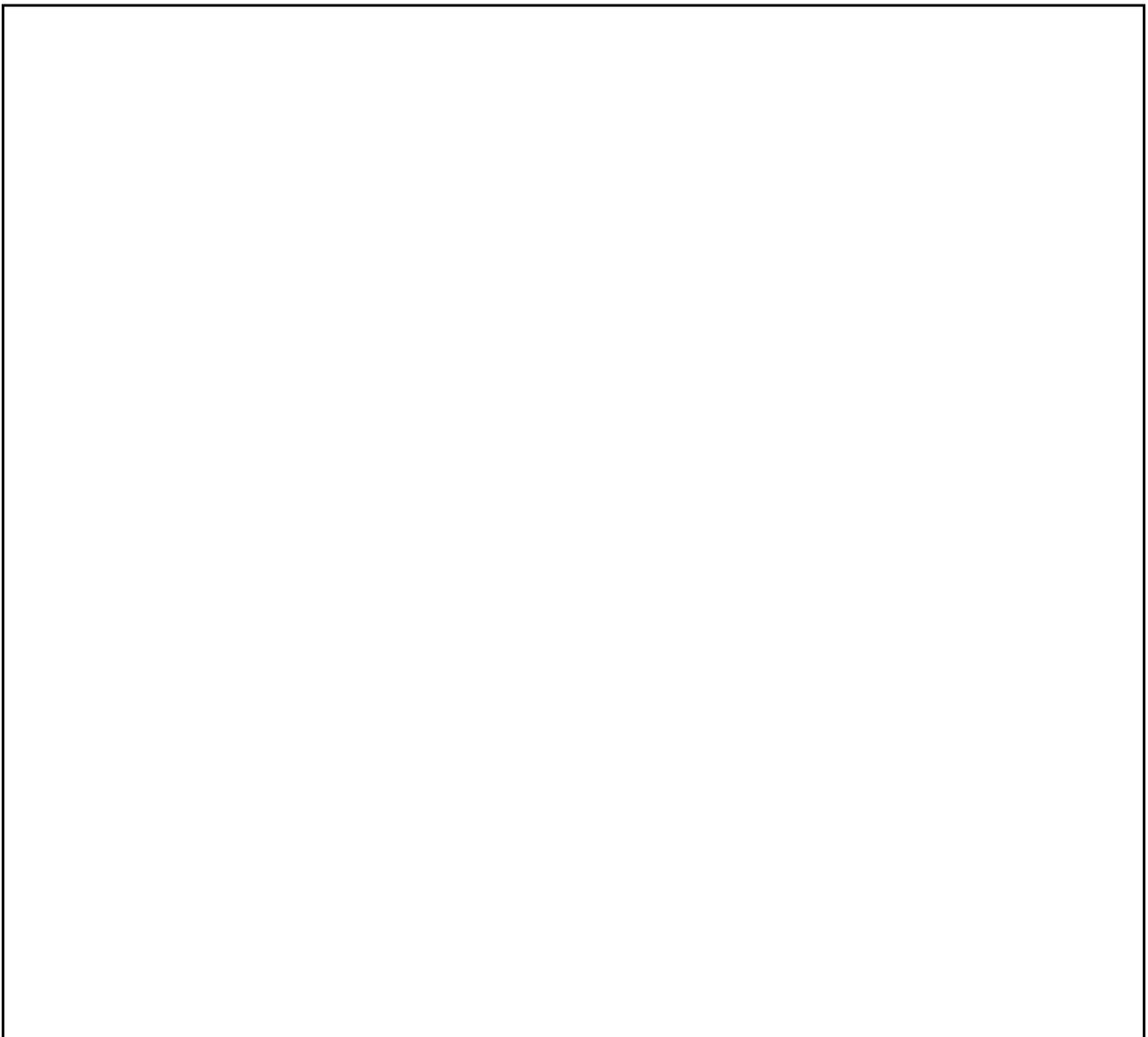
What effect does Gerald’s call to the hospital have on the others? Do different characters respond in different ways?

How do you respond to the ending of the play? What do you think it all means?

Now think about the overall structure of the play. Draw up a chart showing the key events that occur in each act.

Using the information that you are given in the play construct a chart showing the time scale of the things that happened to Eva Smith and when the other characters were involved with her.

A f t e r  
t h e I n -  
s p e c t o r  
h a s l e f t  
t h e



# THE INSPECTOR

14

Birling's are subdued and quiet and for a few moments no-one speaks. Birling is the first to break the silence and he turns on Eric telling him that he is the one that he blames for the situation. Birley's main concern seems to be that this story is bound to get out and the ensuing public scandal will ruin his chances of getting a knighthood. Mrs. Birling joins the attack on Eric and tells him that she is ashamed of him. Eric accepts his part of the blame but he tells them both that he is ashamed of them too. Birling and his wife find excuses for their behaviour and feel that things just turned out "unfortunately, that's all -" Sheila is very disturbed by their attitude, by them trying to pretend that nothing much has happened. Birling is still focused on the idea of a 'public scandal' but Sheila is worried because her parents don't seem to have learnt anything. At this stage there is a visible

What impression do you gain of the Inspector from this description?

split between the younger members of the family and the

older ones. Look at the section from here up to the point where Gerald returns.

When Gerald returns he adds to the speculation about who the Inspector really was and what he was trying to do when he tells the others that he has found out that he was not a police officer. Birling becomes excited at this news and wants to make absolutely sure of this, so he rings the Chief Constable, Colonel Roberts. Roberts confirms that there is no Inspector Goole on the force.

Think about how the following characters respond to the Inspector and write down two or three quotations from each character that you feel reflects their attitudes towards him:

Birling,  
Sheila,  
Gerald,  
Mrs. Birling,  
Eric.

Birling is greatly relieved because he now begins to see the whole business as a hoax and that of course, means that there will be no public scandal.

Mrs. Birling gives in to the Inspector. Sheila and Eric continue to distance themselves from the others though. They see that whether or not the whole thing was a hoax all of them had done the things that they had admitted to the Inspector. Now look at the ending section of the play.

# ARTHUR BIRLING

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15

In the play Priestley is quite specific about when the events described in the play occurred. For example, we are told that the action of the play takes place on an evening in Spring 1912. We are also told that Eva had worked for Birling nearly two years before. The workers had asked for a pay rise after their holiday in August.

Pompous - he is full of his own views on life and pontificates on these to the others.

Self-centred - his main concern is how the situation will effect his chances of a Knighthood.

When the Inspector enters, the stage direction tells us that -

He doesn't really understand his son - notice how he doesn't really listen to Eric or take any notice of his views.

Priestley shows us that his views are wrong-headed ones - he talks about the Titanic as being unsinkable - it sank in 1912; he dismisses the possibility of war - the First World War broke out two years later; he talks of the future - 1940 as a time of peace and prosperity when in fact in 1940 Britain was embroiled in the Second World War.

“The Inspector need not be a big man but he creates at once an impression of massiveness, solidity and purpose-

Even his attitude to his daughter's engagement is dubious - he sees the marriage of Gerald and his daughter as a means of bringing him a business advantage in Birling's and Croft's closer together.

He learns nothing from the experience and once the danger of a public scandal seems to have disappeared he reverts to his usual self-centred and self-satisfied attitude. It is worth noting here how he mocks Sheila and Eric who have learnt something from the experience.

ness, so-

Think about these points and about your own impressions of the character. Compile a list of quotations to support your ideas (these can be either things that Birling himself says or what others say to him or about him).

Now write your own character study of Arthur Birling supporting your ideas with references to the text.

fulness.  
He is a man in his fifties, dressed in a plain darkish suit of

the period. He speaks carefully, weightily, and has a disconcerting habit of looking hard at the

person he addresses before actually speaking.”

In one sense, because of the question marks over his existence as a ‘normal character’ in the play it might be better to think of him from the following two perspectives: how the other characters re-

At the beginning of the play we are told that she is “... about fifty, a rather cold woman and her husband’s social superior.”

She exhibits the same kind of strong self-satisfaction as her husband.

She is completely surprised by the discovery that her son is a heavy drinker and has been for two years. She is also surprised by the exposure of Alderman Meggarty as a “... notorious womaniser as well as being one of the worst sots and rogues in Brumley.”

It seems that she has never really understood or listened to her children - as Eric says “You don’t understand anything. You never did. You never even tried...”

Despite her ignorance of what is going on around her she is “a prominent member of the Brumley Women’s Charity Organisation” and in a position to make decisions that affects the lives and futures of others.

Her treatment of Eva Smith shows that she really is the ‘cold’ woman that Priestley describes at the beginning of the play.

Her comments with regard to the young man who was the father of Eva’s child show her concern with the idea of ‘class’ and elsewhere in the play she refers to her husband’s position.

At the end of the play, like her husband, she has learned nothing by her experience - in fact her main preoccupation seems to be with the ‘impertinent’ manner of the Inspector and her own ideas of her social superiority.

Make a list of quotations that you think describe various aspects of Mrs. Birling’s character.

Now write a character study of her supporting your ideas with references to the text.

spond to him,  
his function in the play.

Priestley's opening description of him as "... very much the easy well-bred young man-about-town" proves to be accurate. He has been "about town" and has found Eva/Daisy who he sets up as his mistress.

He introduces reality into the artificial dinner-table language through his descriptions of the Palace bar, of Alderman Meggarty's character and behaviour.

He agrees with Birley's businessman's attitude of striving for "lower costs and higher prices" and also approves of Birling's way of handling the strikers. In this sense he and Birling represent the interests of 'Capital'.

He is the one who seemed to genuinely care for Eva and Sheila does not completely condemn him. Even the Inspector says that the "... young man at least had some affection for her and made her happy for a time."

Gerald can be seen in some ways to hold the middle ground between Birling and his wife on the one hand and Eric and Sheila on the other. It is worth noting that at the end he seems to have learnt little from the experience and his behaviour very much sides with that of Birling and his wife.

Make a list of quotations that reveal aspects of Gerald's character.

Now write a character study of him supporting your ideas with references to the text.

Here are some possible ways of looking at the character of Arthur Birling:

At the beginning of the play Sheila appears as a rather spoiled girl who enjoys being the centre of attention at the dinner party.

This impression of her as a spoiled girl used to getting her own way is confirmed through her own account of what happened at Milwards, where she is seen to be directly responsible for Eva Smith's dismissal.

She does show signs that she is genuinely sorry for this and she clearly had no idea what the implications of such an action would be for a girl of Eva's 'class'.

She is also sensitive to the Inspector's intentions from an early stage in the play. She realises that he knows about Gerald's involvement and a little later she says to him "I don't understand about you" and the stage direction tells us that "she stares at him wonderingly and dubiously." There are a number of other places where she shows understanding of what the Inspector is saying to them and that she is sympathetic to his views.

She shows honesty and integrity and the Inspector adopts a gentler approach to her than he does towards her parents. Note how he comes to her defence when Gerald accuses her of wanting to see "someone else put through it" when the Inspector is about to question him.

In many  
ways Sybil

Make a list of quotations that you think are important in telling us things about Sheila.

Now write a character study of her supporting your ideas with references to the text.

Birling is an even less attractive character than her husband. Here are some points about her for you

to consider:

He has enjoyed the privileges of his class and position and has developed a taste for heavy drinking and enjoying himself about town.

Although he gets Eva pregnant in his drunken state he tries to do the right thing but he knows that she will not marry him so he tries to provide her with money instead.

Like Sheila he is more receptive to the Inspector's message - note that it is Eric who notices that the Inspector arrived just as Birling had been telling them that "... a man has to make his own way, look after himself, and mind his own business."

Even when the others believe that the whole thing is a hoax at the end of the play Eric's concern is for the dead Eva rather than his own welfare.

Make a list of quotations that you think are important in telling us things about Eric.

Now write a character study of him supporting your ideas with references to the text.

In age Gerald is closer to Sheila and Eric but he is not regarded by Birling as a member of "the famous younger generation who know it all." Here are some points about him that you could

# THEMES

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20

consider:

Study these two quotations very carefully because the central message of the play is encapsulated in them. Make notes on what a) Birling and b) the Inspector is saying here. What do they tell you about the message that Priestley wanted his audience to gather from the play.

Sheila and Eric are the two characters who change and mature during the course of the play. At the start Sheila is described as "... a pretty girl in her early twenties, very pleased with life and rather excited." She has much to be pleased and excited about as she is about to become engaged

t o

Now look through the play and make a list of quotations that:

- a) argue that we should look after ourselves and our own family and friends and not worry about other people,
- b) argue that we all live in a community and have a responsibility towards each other.

In each case note who is speaking and in what context.

In a broader sense the play can also be seen to be about relationships. Write about the idea of relationships in the play considering the following:

the different kinds of relationships portrayed,

how relationships change,

what you think Priestley wants us to think about these relationships.

Gerald Croft at the start of the play and he is clearly regarded as 'quite a catch.' However, as the drama unfolds we see that she is a character with much more to her than first sight might suggest. Here are some ideas to consider:

## REVISION QUESTIONS

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22

Her part in Eva Smith's fate,  
Her attitude towards the Inspector,  
Her attitude towards Eva Smith,  
Her relationship with other members of her family.

Like Sheila, Eric belongs to the 'younger generation' that is more receptive to the Inspector's message and capable of change. Although his behaviour cannot be condoned he, like Sheila, has some positive qualities. Here are some points to consider: