

Context: what was happening when the text was written

Charles Dickens – Charles Dicken was born in 1812 and spent the first years of his life in Kent, England. At 9, he moved to London. At 12, his father was sent to debtors' prison for racking up huge debts, and Dickens was given a painful job labelling bottles near the prison. He found this period in his life hellish, and it doubtlessly led him to draw readers' attention to the plight of the poor when he later found success as an author. Many of his works are about social hardships and inequalities.

The Victorian Era– The Victorian era describes the period in which Queen Victoria sat on the English throne – between 1837 and 1901 (most of Dickens' life). Whilst this was a time of industrial revolution, it was also an extremely harsh time to live, and there was a huge disparity between the lives of the richest and the poorest. The Victorian era was a period of great change. In this time, the population of England doubled – from 16.8 million 1851 to over 30 million in 1901 but the country to struggled to accommodate this increase and the poor suffered the most.

Workhouses– A workhouse was a place where a person went if they could not afford to financially support themselves and their families: the most vulnerable in society. Men, women and children (mostly orphans) lived and worked in the workhouses, which were very crowded – making living conditions unhealthy and unpleasant. People slept in dormitories, where disease was easily spread. In A Christmas Carol, Scrooge voices his support for workhouses.

Class Divides – Despite industrial changes altering the social landscape, there were still relatively distinct social classes in operation: the nobility upper class, the middle class, and the working class. Life was terrible for the poorest: Lack of money resulted in a negligible food supply. For some working families, money was so tight that they required their children to work in order to survive.

Health and Medicine –The NHS was not established until much later so healthcare was not accessible for everyone, and medicine was nowhere near as advanced today. Many diseases were rife, and childbirth and poverty were very real dangers to people living in the era. As a result, a middle class person may expect to live to 45 at the time, whereas a working class person would have been fortunate to have lived half that time. In A Christmas Carol, the restrictions in healthcare are evident in Tiny Tim's continued suffering.

The Poor Law- In 1834 the Poor Law Amendment Act was passed by Parliament. This was designed to reduce the cost of looking after the poor as it stopped money going to poor people except in exceptional circumstances. Now if people wanted help they had to go into a workhouse to get it. The 19th Century consequently saw a growth in the numbers of charities such as The Salvation Army, Dr Barnardo's children's homes to help those living in poverty.

Literature Paper 1: A Christmas Carol

Language/ Structural Techniques	Definition	Example
Pathetic fallacy	A type of personification where emotions are given to a setting, an object or the weather.	'The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole, and was so dense without, that although the court was of the narrowest, the houses opposite were mere phantoms.'
Symbolism	When an object represents an idea that is much deeper and more significant.	Marley's chains are an example of symbolism: they represent the greed and selfishness of mankind.
Personification	Describing an inanimate object as having human feelings.	'The gruff old bell was always peeping silyly down at Scrooge out of a Gothic window in the wall.'
Metaphor	A descriptive technique that names a person, thing or action as something else.	'A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him.'
Simile	A descriptive technique that compares one thing with another, usually using 'as' or 'like'.	'As solitary as an oyster.'
Foreshadowing	When the writer hints what is going to happen later on in the text.	"Without their visits, you cannot hope to shun the path I tread."
Superlative	An adjective/ adverb that indicates the most of something.	'We're to be together all the Christmas long, and have the <u>merriest</u> time in all the world.'
Intensifier	A word, especially an adverb or adjective, that has little meaning itself but is used to add emphasis to another adjective, verb, or adverb.	'Uncle Scrooge had imperceptibly become <u>so</u> gay and light of heart.'
Minimiser	A word that is used to make another adjective, verb or adverb sound lesser.	' <u>Poor</u> Tiny Tim... <u>My little</u> child.'
Imperative	A sentence that is a command.	"Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer!"
Exclamatory	A sentence that expresses a heightened emotion. They end with an exclamation mark	" <u>They are Man's!</u>And they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both.'
Listing	When the writer includes several words/ phrases/ ideas, one after the other.	'(the chain) was long, and wound about him like a tail; and it was made (for Scrooge observed it closely) of <u>cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel.</u> '
Repetition	When a word/ phrase is noticeably repeated throughout a sentence/ paragraph/ whole text.	' <u>My little, little child.</u> ' cried Bob. ' <u>My little child.</u> '
Imagery	A technique in which the author appeals to the senses i.e. seeing, hearing, touching.	"Every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!"

Themes: an idea that is explored throughout the text	Ideas
Family	Dickens suggests that family is the ultimate key to happiness and fulfilment. Dickens links Scrooge's decision to be alone to darkness and the cold whilst he links family and companionship to light and warmth. Dickens implies that a successful life is one that is filled with significant relationships with others.
Redemption/change/transformation	Dickens implies that we all have the ability to change and that we should continually reflect on how our behaviour impacts upon others. Dickens suggests that many unfavourable qualities are born out of ignorance and that, by seeking to find out more about the lives of other, we can transform and become better people.
Supernatural	Dickens uses the supernatural to encourage self-reflection. Dickens also uses the supernatural to emphasise the idea that, through exploring our past behaviours and considering the impact on our future, we can become more compassionate and kinder people.
Greed/wealth	Dickens implies that concentrating solely on accumulating more money only results in emptiness and dissatisfaction. Dickens suggests that true 'wealth' is to have significant relationships with others.
Social inequality/poverty	Dickens suggests that the Victorian society ignored the poverty experienced by many. Dickens also highlights the divide between the rich and the poor and exposes the often inescapable cycle of poverty. Dickens portrays the poor as victims of a cruel society.
Forgiveness	Dickens suggests that change, both on an individual and societal level, is only possible through forgiveness. Dickens implies that that to be truly compassionate is to forgive.
Christmas/tradition	Dickens portrays Christmas as being an important time because it is a rare opportunity for kindness and compassion. Dickens also implies that it's a particularly important tradition because it is something that highlights the extravagance of the rich and the desperation of the poor.
Time	Dickens explores the idea that our past has direct implications on our behaviour in the future and that we need to recognise this pattern in order to be better people. Dickens also explores the notion that time is finite and that we should therefore live in the best way we can, all of the time to maximise the time we have.
Key Terms	Definition
Morality tale	A story which teaches the reader a lesson about right and wrong.
Gothic	A style of writing that is characterised by elements of fear, horror, death, and gloom, as well as Romantic elements, such as nature, individuality, and deep self-reflection.
Allegory	A story in which the characters and events represent other things and express a deeper, often moral message.
Social inequality	When resources and opportunities are distributed unfairly in society, resulting in a significant difference in the quality of life experienced by the rich and the poor.

Social/ Historical Context - Shakespeare wrote Macbeth during the Jacobean era (this refers to the period of time that King James I was on the throne)

Macbeth HT2

King James I	King James I (who ruled England and Scotland from 1603-1625) was Shakespeare's patron (he provided him with financial support in exchange for him writing plays) so the attitudes in the play are thought to have been heavily influenced by the King. King James I published "Demonology" in 1605, this book was about the dangers of the supernatural and witchcraft. The King was a supporter of the witch trials and even took part in the North Berwick witch trials in Scotland.
Supernatural/ witchcraft	In England and Scotland, up until the 1700s, there was a very strong belief witches and witchcraft. It was believed that 'witches' could be found within every community and that they could inflict diseases on people, spoil crops, bring about bad weather, and perform unspeakable and detestable acts of devil's work. The North Berwick witch trials took place in 1590 in Scotland, when a number of people from East Lothian were accused of witchcraft. They ran for two years and implicated seventy people. This was the first major witchcraft persecution in Scotland.
Divine Right of Kings	The Divine Right of Kings originated in the Middle Ages. Any attempt to remove the king was thought to be the worst of crimes: it was believed that to kill a king was to go against God and was therefore sacrilegious, and against the natural order.
The Gunpowder Plot	In 1605, a group of Catholic conspirators plotted to assassinate King James I planting explosives in the House of Lords during the opening of parliament. They hid kegs full of gunpowder in the cellars beneath the chamber where the king and the rest of the political elite would assemble. Enough powder was stored to completely destroy the building and kill everyone present. One of the conspirators, Guy Fawkes, was tasked with igniting this huge bomb. The plot was uncovered just 12 hours before parliament was due to open. However, the plot meant that King James I was keen to ward off any further attempts to take his throne.
Affitudes toward women	In the Jacobean era, women belonged to their fathers (or their brothers if their father died), and then to their husbands. Women could not own property of their own. Women had very few rights and were viewed as subservient to men: they were only provided with a very basic education and often this was centred on mastering tasks within the home. Women were not given the opportunity to work and they were not allowed on the stage. All the female parts in plays at the time were played by boys whose voices hadn't broken yet – the apprentices, therefore the portrayal of women is widely regarded as being very limited.

Language/ Structural Techniques	Definition	Example	Key Terms	Definition
Pathetic fallacy	A type of personification where emotions are given to a setting, an object or the weather.	"The night has been unruly. Where we lay, Our chimneys were blown down and, as they say, Lamentings heard i' th' air" Lennox describing the night of Duncan's death, A3 S2.	Tragic hero	A seemingly noble character whose actions lead to their downfall.
Symbolism	When an object represents an idea that is much deeper and more significant.	'Is this a dagger which I see before me/ handle towards my hand? A dagger of the mind, a false creation, Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?' Macbeth, A2 S1.	Peripeteia	The tragic hero's reversal of fortune/downfall.
Personification	Describing an inanimate object as having human feelings.	'Stars, hide your fires; let not light see my black and deep desires' Macbeth, A1 S4.	Soliloquy	A speech given by a character whilst alone to express their thoughts to the audience (not the other characters).
Metaphor	A descriptive technique that names a person, thing or action as something else.	'Here's daggers in men's smiles. The near in blood, The nearer bloody' Donalbain, A2 S3.	Hubris	Excessive pride which leads to a downfall.
Simile	A descriptive technique that compares one thing with another, usually using 'as' or 'like'.	'Look like th' innocent flower, But be the serpent under it' Lady Macbeth, A1 S5.	Tragedy	A genre of play that focuses on the downfall of the main character.
Foreshadowing	When the writer hints what is going to happen later on in the text.	'The instruments of darkness tell us truths, Win us with honest trifles, to betray 's In deepest consequence' Banquo to Macbeth, A1 S3.	Anagnorisis	A tragic hero's realisation that they have fallen.
Superlative	An adjective/ adverb that indicates the most of something.	'He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor: In which addition, hail, <u>most</u> worthy thane!' Ross to Macbeth and Banquo, A1 S3.	Hamartia	A fatal flaw that leads to tragic hero's downfall.
Intensifier	A word, especially an adverb or adjective, that is used to add emphasis to another adjective, verb, or adverb i.e so, very, really.	'Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd <u>Too</u> terrible for the ear' Macbeth to LM, A3 S4.	Motif	A recurring idea/ image throughout a text.
Minimiser	A word or phrase that is used to make another adjective, verb or adverb sound lesser i.e. a bit, some.	"A <u>little</u> water clears us of this deed: How easy is it, then! Your constancy Hath left you <u>unattended</u> " LM, A2 S2.	Themes	
Imperative	A sentence that is a command.	'Come, you spirits... <u>unsex</u> me here' LM A1 S5.	Ambition: Macbeth's ruthless seeking of power is presented as his ultimate flaw (hamartia). Shakespeare presents ambition as the gateway to deceit and evil. Shakespeare suggests that ambition can manifest itself in different ways: it can make a person ruthless and violent but it can also result in them becoming practical and detached.	Violence: Shakespeare's portrayal of violence is often contradictory; it sustains and ends Duncan's throne; seizes, holds and ends Macbeth's.
Exclamatory	A sentence that expresses a heightened emotion. They end with an exclamation mark	"Prithee, see there! behold! look! lo! How say you? Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too" Macbeth to LM, A3 S4.		
Listing	When the writer includes several words/ phrases/ ideas, one after the other.	'The castle of Macduff I will surprise...give to th' edge o' th' sword His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls' Macbeth, A4 S1.	Deception (reality vs appearance): Shakespeare presents deception (lying) as one of the products of ambition and uses it as a signal for further moral decline. Shakespeare also suggests that everyone is capable of deception but that those in <u>power are particularly vulnerable</u> .	Loyalty: Shakespeare suggests that loyalty is often diluted and ultimately lost as a result of ambition. Shakespeare highlights the importance of being loyal to the king and country, as well as being loyal to peers.
Repetition	When a word/ phrase is noticeably repeated throughout a sentence/ paragraph/ whole text.	' <u>Unnatural</u> deeds, Do breed <u>unnatural</u> troubles. Infected minds To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets. More needs she the divine than the physician' LM's Doctor, A5 S1.		
Imagery	A technique in which the author appeals to the senses i.e. seeing, hearing, touching.	'Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather The multitudinous seas in incarnadine, Making the green one red' Macbeth, A2 S2.	Guilt: Shakespeare suggests that ambition ultimately leads to guilt and that this eventually results in inner-torment and madness.	Masculinity/ gender: Shakespeare suggests that the social construct of 'masculinity' can encourage violent and reckless behaviour and that ideas surrounding gender can be used as tools for manipulation.
Foil	A character that exaggerates the opposing qualities of another character.	Banquo's truthful and discerning character is used as a foil to Macbeth's deceitful and naive character.		

Language Techniques	Definition	Example
Pathetic fallacy	Attributing human emotions and traits to nature or inanimate objects	'Merciless iced east winds that knife us'
Symbolism	When an object represents an idea that is much deeper and more significant.	'Later a single dove flew from the pear tree'
Personification	Describing an inanimate object as having human feelings.	'My city takes me dancing through the city of walls'
Metaphor	A descriptive technique that names a person, thing or action as something else.	'The mind-forged manacles I hear'
Simile	A descriptive technique that compares one thing with another, usually using 'as' or 'like'.	'my boat Went heaving through the water like a swan'
Foreshadowing	When the writer hints what is going to happen later on in the text.	'That's my last Duchess painted on the wall, Looking as if she were alive'
Superlative	An adjective/ adverb that indicates the most of something.	'But most thro' midnight streets I hear'
Intensifier	A word, especially an adverb or adjective, that has little meaning itself but is used to add emphasis to another adjective, verb, or adverb.	'In every cry of every Man'
Minimiser	A word that is used to make another adjective, verb or adverb sound lesser.	'he's there on the ground, sort of inside out'
Imperative	A sentence that is a command.	'Honour the charge they made!'
Exclamatory	A sentence that expresses a heightened emotion. They end with an exclamation mark	'She thanked men—good!'
Listing	When the writer includes several words/ phrases/ ideas, one after the other.	'All my words flattened, rolled, turned into felt'
Repetition	When a word/ phrase is noticeably repeated throughout a sentence/ paragraph/ whole text.	'His bloody life in my bloody hands'
Imagery	A technique in which the author appeals to the senses i.e. seeing, hearing, touching.	'Stumbling across a field of clods towards a green hedge That dazzled with rifle fire'

Themes	Ideas
Identity	Identity is something that is heavily shaped by painful experiences. Identity can be determined by others. Identity is influenced by your place of birth and cultural underpinnings.
Memory	Memory is something that is deeply unreliable. Memories can cause tremendous suffering. The memory of an event can become more painful than the event itself. Memories encourage regret.
Nature	Nature is all powerful and should be respected. The power of nature transcends the power of humans. Nature is destructive and vengeful.
Impact of war	War favours the collective over the individual. War encourages erratic behaviour. As wars develop, patriotism is replaced with fear and a need to survive.
Power	Power can be used by individuals to manipulate and control others. Power can be used to limit the opportunities of groups within society. The power of humans is always fleeting.

Structural Features	Definition
Opening	The first mood/ image of the poem.
Cyclical	When end of the poem repeats an idea/ character/ setting from the opening.
Stanza	A 'paragraph' in a poem.
Enjambment	A sentence or phrase that runs onto the next line.
Anaphora	When the first word of a stanza is the same across different stanzas.
Volta	A turning point in a poem.
Juxtaposition	Two ideas/ images placed together for contrasting effect.
Foreshadowing	A warning/ hint about what is going to happen next.
Speaker	The narrator, or person in the poem.
Change of mood/ tone	When the writer alters the overall feeling of the poem.
Refrain	A phrase, line or group of lines which is repeated throughout a poem.
Ending	The final mood/image of the poem.

Key Events/ Ideas	Explanation
French Revolution	The French Revolution was a period of time in France when the people overthrew the monarchy and took control of the government. The French Revolution lasted 10 years from 1789 to 1799. It began on July 14, 1789 when revolutionaries stormed a prison called the Bastille.
WW1	World War I was a major conflict fought between 1914 and 1918. A lot of the war was fought using trench warfare along the western front. The armies hardly moved at all. They bombed and shot at each other from across the trenches
Romanticism	A movement in literature and art during the late 18th and early 19th centuries that celebrated nature rather than civilisation.
Socialism	Socialism is an economic system where the ways of making a living (factories, offices, etc.) are owned by a society as a whole, meaning the value made belongs to everyone in that society, instead of a group of private owners.

Poem	Context
Ozymandias 1819	The poem was inspired by the unearthing of part of a large statue of the Egyptian Pharaoh, Ramesses II. The Egyptian Pharaohs like Ramesses believed themselves to be gods in mortal form and that their legacy would last forever. Shelley was critical of the monarchy and government in England and sympathised with the ideas behind the French Revolution (rebellious against those who were born into positions of authority). 'Ozymandias' can be read as a criticism of undemocratic or tyrannical governments, reflecting Shelley's socialist views.
London 1792	The poem is set during the Georgian era in England where there was a huge disparity between the rich and poor and child labour was common. Women had few rights, death rates from disease and malnutrition were high and the industrial revolution has resulted in many oppressive factories in which poorer members of society were desperate to work (in order to escape poverty) but the conditions were terrible and they were not paid adequately. During the late eighteenth century the French Revolution (a rebellion against those who were born into positions of authority) was taking place, and a sense of uprising against authority was spreading. Blake openly supported this.
The Prelude 1799	Wordsworth was part of the Romantic movement which means that he believed that nature ought to be respected above all else and that man's curiosity should be discouraged as it risked ruining the purity and beauty of nature. Wordsworth believed that, upon being born, human beings move from a perfect, idealised state into the imperfect, un-ideal earth. He believed that humans should connect to their natural surroundings in order to discover their true, uncorrupted selves.
My Last Duchess 1842	This poem is based on historical events. Duke Alfonso II of Modena and Ferrara (1559–1597) married Lucrezia de' Medici in June 1558. She was the first of his three wives and is believed to be 'the last duchess' of the poem. She died four years after her wedding. During the Victorian era, the idea was that upper and middle class women had to stay dependent on a man: first as a daughter and later as a wife. Once married, it was extremely difficult for a woman to obtain a divorce. Men the right to divorce their wives on the grounds of adultery. However, married women were not able to obtain a divorce if they discovered that their husbands had been unfaithful. Although institutions were set up during the Victorian era to help victims of domestic violence, physical force between husbands and wives was worryingly common during this period.
Charge of the Light Brigade 1854	The poem tells the story of the failed charge of the British cavalry in the Battle of Balaklava in October 1854. Britain was fighting against Russian forces in the Crimean War. A cavalry group (soldiers on horses), the Light Brigade, was ordered to charge down a narrow valley straight into the fire of Russian cannons. It was a huge catastrophe and 150 soldiers died. The men were respected for following orders, even though they knew they may be wrong but the disaster caused public outrage as the British public began to question the politicians and generals who led them.
Exposure 1917	Wilfred Owen was a soldier and officer in World War I. He died just a week before the end of the war but during his time he saw the full horror of conditions on the front line and he felt angry at the way that young men had been deceived into fighting in such terrible conditions. World War One began in 1914 and at first it was predicted that it would end swiftly. However, the war went on for much longer and during the winter of 1917 both sides had sustained massive losses and extreme cold weather made the misery even worse. It was said to be the coldest winter in living memory. As a result of living in the trenches, soldiers suffered from hypothermia and frostbite and many developed trench foot (a crippling disease caused by feet being wet and cold and confined in boots for days on end).
Storm on the Island	Seamus Heaney was a poet in Ireland, he grew up in a farming community and he uses a large number of agricultural and natural images in his work as metaphors for human nature. The poem is set around a story of a small isolated cottage near the sea in a storm and the exposure to the elements. The violence of the storm in the poem could also be a metaphor for the Troubles which was a series of conflicts between Ireland and Britain.
Bayonet Charge 1957	This poem was heavily influenced by the fact that Hughes' father was a veteran of the First World War. The poem outlines the horrific conditions that soldiers experienced on the battle field in WW1. Particularly at the start of the war when a consistent training programme had yet to be put in place, some soldiers were sent to battle with very limited training. Hughes also explores the idea that many soldiers were conscripted (they were legally obliged to go) to fight in WW1 and therefore did not always understand or support what they were fighting for.
Remains 2008	Armitage made a film and a collection of poems called 'The Not Dead'. In preparation for this work, he interviewed veteran soldiers of different wars, including the Gulf War. The reference to 'desert sand' in this poem suggests that it reflects the experiences of soldiers in the Gulf War. Armitage made the series to highlight the plight of soldiers suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Today, veterans of any nation still have the highest rate of suicide among the general populace and Armitage wanted to highlight that soldiers suffer long after their service ends.
Poppies 2009	Weir's poem 'Poppies' was commissioned as part of a collection of modern war poems which were published in the Guardian in 2009, as part of a response to the escalating conflict in Afghanistan and the Iraq inquiry. Weir commented, 'I wrote the piece from a woman's perspective, which is quite rare, as most poets who write about war have been men. As the mother of two teenage boys, I tried to put across how I might feel if they were fighting in a war zone.'
War Photographer 1985	Duffy was inspired to write this poem by her friendship with a war photographer. She was especially intrigued by the strange challenge faced by these people whose job requires them to record terrible events without being able to directly help their subjects. Throughout the poem, Duffy encourages the reader to consider our own response when confronted with the photographs that we regularly see in our newspaper supplements, and why so many of us have become desensitised to these images. The 'children running in a nightmare heat' is based on an iconic image of a girl running away from a napalm attack on her village.
Tissue 2006	The poem explores the conflicts and troubles of the modern world; destruction, religion, war and politics, money and wealth. The poem remarks on how nothing is meant to last, that it would be better not to hold too tightly to ideas/ buildings/ societal structures that have not been questioned for a long time, and instead we should be willing to let go and pass things on in their time to be remade.
The Emigree	Emigrants are people who have left the country of their birth to settle elsewhere in the world. Neither the city nor the country left behind is ever named in the poem and this lack of specific detail seems intentional- Rumens wants her poem to be relevant to as many people who have left their homelands as possible. Rumens suggests the city and country may now be war-torn, or under the control of a dictatorial government that has banned the language the speaker once knew.
Checking Out Me History	Agard suggests that that because black history and experience is often ignored and forgotten in British history, what is taught in schools is very limited. Agard highlights the importance of recognising the social and historical achievements of black people in order to develop a personal identity that reflects his cultural and racial roots. Agard explores colonialist attitudes towards the way in which history is taught.
Kamikaze	The poem is set around the events of a kamikaze pilot flying to war and then turning back before it was too late. Kamikaze pilots were expected to use up all their weapons and then suicide by flying into their targets as a final act of destruction. It was considered a great honour in Japan to die for your country.

AN INSPECTOR CALLS Context: Key Ideas
1912 – when the play was set. Just before WW1 (1914-18) and the sinking of the Titanic. JBP wanted to make sure audiences in 1945 recognised the problems of society in 1912 before the wars (class system, capitalism, sexism) and weren't tempted to go back to living like that. He wrote the play to highlight the dangers of the capitalist lifestyle.
1945 – when the play was written and performed. After WW2, society changed for the better. The benefits system started to be introduced and there was more equality for women and less of a class divide because of different classes and different genders integrating in order to assist with the war. JBP supported and encouraged these changes and wanted to make sure he promoted them in his play by making capitalists like the older Birlings appear ignorant and selfish.
Socialism – JBP was a keen Socialist. This meant that he wanted everyone to look after each other rather than just caring about themselves. He was trying to promote this with the play, by making the Socialist characters like the Inspector much more insightful than the capitalist ones.
Capitalism – JBP wished to challenge Capitalists – those who believe in individual profit over equality. He created Mr and Mrs Birling as an emblem for capitalism, in order to present capitalism as egocentric and regressive.
Outdated ideas – In 1912, the social classes were segregated, women got paid less than men for the same work, there was no benefit system or help with unemployment or housing. Society was patriarchal (men ruled).
Priestley – was a broadcaster and playwright, he also served in the army in WW1. Priestley saw, firsthand, during WW1, men from different paths in life/ classes coming together and working for the common, greater good. He believed that this mantra should be taken forward in a broader context to make society more responsible for one another. When working for the BBC as a broadcaster during WW2, Priestley broadcast a series of short propaganda radio shows which were credited for strengthening civilian morale. His left wing beliefs brought him into conflict with the government and influenced the birth of the welfare state. The programme was eventually cancelled by the BBC for being too critical of the government.

Characters	
Mr Birling	The father. He is egocentric and capitalist businessman who works against social equality due to his own greed. He sacks Eva from his factory when she asks for equal pay for women and threatens a strike.
Mrs Birling	The mother. She is superior and conceited capitalist who believes everyone is responsible for themselves. She doesn't help Eva when she comes to the charity for help because of her own prejudicial views against the proletariat.
Inspector	The interrogator. He is Priestley's mouthpiece (represents JBP's personal views) and a keen Socialist who fights for collective responsibility and encourages the Birlings to re-evaluate their outlook and their actions.
Sheila	The daughter. She wrongly causes Eva to lose her job because she purposely misinterprets her actions. Sheila is initially ignorant of her privilege but transform her views as the play progresses and she eventually feels sympathy for Eva Smith's plight and starts to adopt increasingly Socialist views. By the end of the play, there is a huge disparity between Sheila's views and those of her parents.
Eric	The son. Priestley hints that Eric is an alcoholic and it is heavily implied that his sexual encounter with Eva is not consensual and that she was raped. As a result of this, Eva falls pregnant and Eric resorts to stealing from his dad to give Eva money.
Gerald	Sheila's fiancé. Gerald is a businessman who has capitalist ideals and has similar political beliefs to Mr Birling. He shows some regret for his affair with Eva, but does not seem sincere in making any long-term changes to his beliefs.

Context : Morality Play
<p>Morality plays were first performed in the late middle ages. They are a type of allegory (a story which can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one).</p> <p>In these types of plays, the main characters are met by supporting characters who are personifications of good and evil. They are used to prompt the main character to choose a good life over one of evil. The point of a morality play then, was to educate the audience and get them to lead a better life so that they would determine a better fate for themselves in the "after-life. Morality plays were popular during the 15th and 16th-centuries. Historically they sought to teach the audience lessons that focused on the seven deadly sins: lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy and pride. Whilst characters who committed these sins were punished, morality plays showed that if a character repented then they could redeem themselves.</p> <p><i>An Inspector Calls</i> is a morality play because all of the Birlings and Gerald Croft commit crimes which are similar to the seven deadly sins. Mr Birling is greedy because he wants more money, Sheila is guilty of wrath and envy when she spitefully complains about Eva Smith and so on. Not all of the characters manage to redeem themselves. Priestley uses the morality play structure to teach a 20th-century audience a series of lessons that relate to his beliefs about social responsibility, age, gender and class. The audience is invited to enjoy judging these characters - they are also forced to question their own behaviour. Priestley would have hoped that people watching the play would have left the theatre as better people.</p>

Plot	
ACT 1	The family are celebrating Sheila and Gerald's engagement. Mr B states there will be no war, and the Titanic is unsinkable. An Inspector arrives and tells them Eva Smith has committed suicide. He urges Mr B to admit sacking her from his factory because she threatened to strike over unfair wages. He refuses to accept any blame. The Inspector encourages Sheila to admit that she caused Eva to lose her job at Milwards. She is contrite and ashamed of herself.
ACT 2	The Inspector prompts Gerald to admit having an affair with Eva Smith (now called Daisy Renton after a name change). Sheila consequently questions her relationship with Gerald. The Inspector coaxes Mrs B into admitting not helping Eva when she came to Mrs B's charity for help when she became pregnant because of her own prejudicial views. Mrs B attempts to evade blame by stating that it should be the father's responsibility. At the end of the Act, it is revealed that the father of Eva's baby was Eric.
ACT 3	Eric suggests that he raped Eva Smith which resulted in her pregnancy. The Inspector gives his final speech about fire, blood and anguish. He warns the family that if they don't start to take responsibility for others, they will live to regret it. The Inspector then leaves. Gerald seemingly discovers that the Inspector wasn't a real inspector. Mr B rings to check and there is no Inspector Goole. Mr and Mrs B (and Gerald) celebrate. Sheila and Eric still feel guilty and can't go back to how they were before. Right at the end, the telephone rings and they are told that a girl has just committed suicide and an inspector is on his way over to ask some questions.

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

Language/ Structural Techniques	Definition	Example
Symbolism	When an object represents an idea that is much deeper and more significant.	The bleach that Eva Smith uses to kill herself is a symbol of desperation and social neglect.
Metaphor	A descriptive technique that names a person, thing or action as something else.	'We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other'
Simile	A descriptive technique that compares one thing with another, usually using 'as' or 'like'.	'As if we're all mixed up together like bees in a hive'
Foreshadowing	When the writer hints what is going to happen later on in the text.	'So long as we behave ourselves, don't get into the police court or start a scandal – eh?'
Superlative	An adjective/ adverb that indicates the most of something.	'I became at once the most important person in her life – you understand?'
Intensifier	A word, especially an adverb or adjective, that has little meaning itself but is used to add emphasis to another adjective, verb, or adverb.	'Eric enters, looking extremely pale and distressed'
Minimiser	A word that is used to make another adjective, verb or adverb sound lesser.	'You refused her even the pitiable little bit of organised charity you had in your power to grant her'
Imperative	A sentence that is a command.	'But each of you helped to kill her. Remember that. Never forget it'
Exclamatory	A sentence that expresses a heightened emotion. They end with an exclamation mark	'You! You don't seem to care about anything'
Listing	When the writer includes several words/ phrases/ ideas, one after the other.	'I'm sorry – but you see – we were having a little party – and I've had a few drinks, including rather a lot of champagne – and I've got a headache – and as I'm only in the way here – I think I'd better turn in'
Repetition	When a word/ phrase is noticeably repeated throughout a sentence/ paragraph/ whole text.	'And a nasty mess you've made of it now, haven't you?' 'A nice little promising life there, I thought, and a nasty mess somebody's made of it'
Imagery	A technique in which the author appeals to the senses i.e. seeing, hearing, touching.	'Her position now is that she lies with a burnt-out inside on a slab'
Religious allusion	When a line references or reflects something to do with religion or the Bible	'If men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire and bloody and anguish'
Foil	A technique in which one character is used to exaggerate the opposing qualities of another character.	The Inspector and Mr Birling are used as foils to one another.
Euphemism	A mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered to be too harsh or blunt when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing	'And now I say we must discuss this business quietly and sensibly'

Dramatic Techniques

Dramatic Irony	When the audience knows something that the characters don't. Used usually to create tension or humour.
Tension	A dramatic device used to create a sense of suspense or to make the audience feel on edge; tension is often created through the use of cliff-hangers
Monologue	A speech of some length which is usually directed to a second person, without them interrupting.
Interruptions	When characters cut into the speech of other characters and stop them from speaking.
Contrast	When two things are strikingly different to one another, serving to heighten their differences further.
Repetition	When a word or phrase is noticeably repeated throughout a sentence/ paragraph/ whole text
Cyclical structure	When the opening of the story is mirrored, or is repeated at the end of the story – usually in order to convey a message about change (or lack thereof)