

# Y10 Mock Exam - English Literature Revision Guide

## Question 1: An Inspector Calls

Worth 30 marks (plus 4 for accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar)

You will be given a choice of two questions (character or theme) and will be expected to answer ONE. You will be expected to respond in the style of an essay.

## Question 2: Poetry Anthology

Worth 30 marks (no accuracy marks available)

You will be given a poem from the Power and Conflict cluster and will be asked to compare it to another poem of your choice from the anthology. The second poem will not be provided. You will be expected to respond in the style of a comparison essay.

### Assessment Objectives

#### **AO1:**

-Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to:

- maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response.
- use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.

#### **AO2:**

-Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

#### **AO3:**

-Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.

#### **AO4:**

-Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

In this revision guide you will find important information relating to all aspects of the English Literature paper.

There is information, **top tips**, **tasks**, **key quotations**, past papers, model answers and suggestions for revision activities that you can complete in your own time.

Please use this revision guide in the months prior to your examinations – revisiting the same material over a longer period of time will be more useful to you than trying to cram everything into a few evenings.

## Section A: An Inspector Calls

### Social and Historical Context (AO3):

The play was written in 1945 at the end of World War 2. It is set in 1912, Edwardian England, just two years before the First World War.

#### Top Tip:

Refer to the time period in which the play is *SET* (1912) as Edwardian Britain, and the time period that the play was *WRITTEN* (1945) as post-war Britain.

### Life in 1912:

This was a very difficult time for England. It was a period when there were many workers' strikes, food shortages and great political tension. There was also a divide between the people of England at that time; the rich and the poor. 87% of all the money in England belonged to only 5% of the population! The class system was rigid, with a very clear hierarchy – the more money you had, the more powerful you were.

England had no official welfare system, in other words, there was no benefit system if you didn't have a job. Even if you were lucky enough to find work, there were no real unions or laws that helped people at work - there was no minimum wage and the average number of hours people worked each week was up to 65, we only work an average of 39! Employers could treat their workers as they wanted.

Wealthy women in society often set up charitable organisations (like the one set up by Mrs Birling) in order to help provide for the needy as there was no welfare system to fall back on. However, these were often used to appease the consciences of the rich, rather than to genuinely help those in need.

If you were ill, you were unlikely to be able to see a doctor if you were poor. Women had fewer rights than men at the time and had not yet won the right to vote. They were not expected to work

unless they belonged to the lower class, then they would have to work to survive. The eldest male of any home would be the main breadwinner (the person who earns the most money for the family). They were also in charge at home, and their word was law; a wife would never argue or answer back to her husband or eldest son. For the middle to upper class women, marriage was a necessity for their future security – women would have been taken care of by their father, and then by their husband.

1. What were the main societal problems encountered in 1912?

2. Which group in society would have struggled the most? Explain why.

3. Which group in society would have struggled the least? Explain why.

*Check the answers that your friends/classmates have written – have they chosen a different group? Consider why to look at an alternative point of view.*

4. Why do you think Priestley chose to set 'An Inspector Calls' in 1912?

### Life in 1945:

By 1945, Europe was in ruins and two cities in Japan had been destroyed by atomic bombs. During the war, the Blitz and the evacuation of city children into the country meant that many people were thrown or forced together. As a result, they learned about each other and felt responsible for each other as individuals and as a country. A sense of community was created between groups who would previously never have mixed.

As well as this, the rationing of fabric meant that all groups in society started to dress similarly, and lower, middle and upper class men would have been fighting together as part of the war effort. The once strong class system was starting to change and become less rigid. A post-war audience watching 'An Inspector Calls' would be able to see how far society had changed since 1912, which Priestley hoped would encourage audience members to continue progressing towards a fairer and more accepting society.

In 1942, Liberal politician William Beveridge identified five areas of society that needed to change: poverty, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness. He proposed setting up a welfare system that provided social security (a benefit system for both the unemployed and for the workforce), free healthcare, free education, council housing and full employment. Society was starting to improve for everyone, not just the privileged few.

The political landscape was also starting to change – the Labour government were voted in in the 1945 General Election. The public not only wanted, but needed society to change.

1. What were the positive changes that happened in society during and after World War 2?

2. How would a post-war audience have viewed the Birling family and their behaviour towards others?

3. Which societal changes would have had the most impact on the Birling family? Explain why.

'An Inspector Calls' delivers a moral message (similar to a fable, with a lesson to be learned at the end); that we should think of others and work together to ensure a fairer, more equal society, this idea is known as Socialism. Even now, the Labour party, to some extent, follow this idea. When the play was first published, Labour had just taken over the country for the first time. Before Labour, the country was run by capitalists; these people believed that each person had to look after themselves. This belief, however, resulted in unequal treatment of people.

Top Tip:

By explaining Priestley's purpose in your exam response, you will be hitting Level 6 of the mark scheme: "Critical, exploratory, conceptualised response to task and whole text."

Try to keep in mind the following questions to help you: what did Priestley want to teach his audience? What did he want them to learn after watching 'An Inspector Calls'?

Inspector Goole is used as Priestley's mouthpiece; he is being used to deliver and explore Priestley's message that society needs to be more socially responsible. He wanted society to create a sense of community that goes beyond class boundaries. He also suggests that if you are in a position to be able to help those in need, you should help them, and not turn your back for your own benefit. Additionally, the Inspector believes that employers had a duty of care to their workers, as he reminds Mr Birling that "public men...have responsibilities as well as privileges."

Useful Quotations:

"Perhaps we may look forward to the time when Crofts and Birlings are no longer competing but are working together – for lower costs and higher prices." Pg. 4 (Mr Birling)

"We employers are at last coming together to see that our interests – and the interests of Capital – are properly protected." Pg. 6 (Mr Birling)

"But you youngsters just remember what I said. We can't let these Bernard Shaws and H.G Wellses do all the talking." Pg. 7 (Mr Birling)

"But what so many of you don't seem to understand now, when things are so much easier, is that a man has to make his own way – has to look after himself – and his family too, of course, when he has one – and so long as he does that he won't come to much harm. 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 – community and all that nonsense...a man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own – and –" Pg. 10 (Mr Birling)

"Still, I can't accept responsibility. If we were all responsible to everything that happened to everybody we'd had anything to do with, it would be very awkward, wouldn't it?" Pg. 14 (Mr Birling)

"And as you were saying, Dad, a man has to look after himself--" Pg. 14 (Eric)

"Well, it's my duty to keep labour costs down." Pg. 15 (Mr Birling)

"I know I'm to blame – and I'm desperately sorry – but I can't believe – I won't believe – it's simply my fault." Pg. 29 (Sheila)

"Though naturally I don't know anything about this girl." Pg. 32 (Mrs Birling)

"Mrs Birling, you're a member – a prominent member – of the Brumley Women's Charity Organisation, aren't you?...It's an organisation to which women in distress can appeal for help in various forms, isn't that so?" Pg. 42 (Inspector Goole) "Yes. We've done a great deal of useful work in helping deserving cases." Pg. 42 (Mrs Birling)

"You admit being prejudiced against her case?" Pg. 43 (Inspector Goole) "Yes." Pg. 43 (Mrs Birling)

"I used my influence to have it [Eva's case] refused...I consider I did my duty." Pg. 44 (Mrs Birling)

"I think you did something terribly wrong – and that you're going to spend the rest of your life regretting it." Pg. 45 (Inspector Goole)

"How could she have wanted to kill herself?" Pg. 45 (Sheila) "Because she'd been turned out and turned down too many times. This was the end." Pg. 45 (Inspector Goole)

"Fifty pounds – on top of drinking and going round the town! Where did you get fifty pounds from?" Pg. 53 (Mr Birling) "Look, Inspector – I'd give thousands – yes, thousands –" Pg. 56 (Mr Birling)

"One Eva Smith has gone – but there are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths still left with us...all intertwined with our lives." Pg. 56 (Inspector Goole)

"We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other." Pg. 56 (Inspector Goole)

"I tell you that the time will soon come when, if men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish." Pg. 56 (Inspector Goole)

### Top Tip:

Some of these quotations are quite long, and difficult to learn in their entirety. Try to pick out the most important key words and phrases to learn to make this task easier.

1. Identify which of these quotations show ideas relating to Socialism, and which show ideas relating to capitalism.

2. Analyse how each quotation is being used by Priestley to present the beliefs of the characters.

*Make sure you focus on methods used (key words, writing techniques, sentence types – the more specific you are, the better!) If possible, identify the precise terminology being used.*

3. Make notes on how the characters will be viewed by the audience and why Priestley wanted to present the characters in this way.

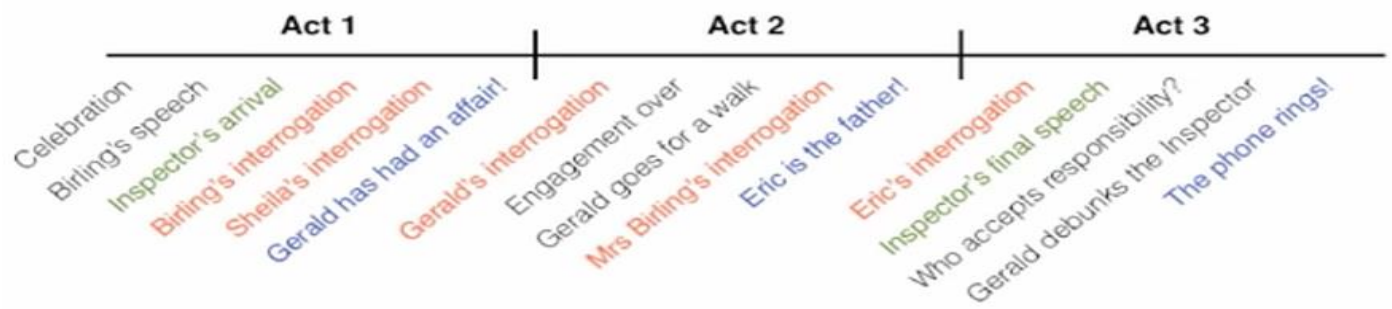
4. Link any relevant context to your analysis.

### **The Plot (AO1):**

The play is set in the fictional town Brumley – a northern town like Bradford (where Priestley is from). Bradford had many factories owned by rich people who paid very little for back breaking work.

1. The Birling Family and Gerald Croft are having a dinner celebrating Sheila Birling's engagement to Gerald Croft.
2. Just as Mr Birling is at his most confident, an inspector arrives to investigate the suicide of a young girl named Eva Smith.
3. Mr Birling reveals he sacked Eva Smith.
4. Sheila explains that she had Eva sacked from her next job at Milwards.
5. Gerald recognises the name Daisy Renton (Eva's alternative name)
6. Gerald admits that he kept Daisy as his mistress.
7. Mrs Birling tells the Inspector that she refused to help a pregnant girl who went to her charity organisation in her time of need.
8. Eric enters, just as we realise he is the father of the child.
9. Eric explains his relationship with the girl, and how he stole money to help her.
10. The Inspector leaves.
11. The family gradually realises the Inspector could have been a fraud.
12. The celebratory mood is almost restored – then a phone call announces that an Inspector is on his way to investigate a girl's suicide.

### **The Structure (AO2):**



### Top Tip:

The structure of the play is incredibly important and can be analysed as much as language and techniques. The examiners will be impressed if you can analyse the play's structure and link this to Priestley's purpose.

The play is organised into 3 Acts, with each one exploring the interrogation of the different members of the Birling family and Gerald. Act One focuses on Mr Birling and Sheila, Act Two focuses on Gerald and Mrs Birling, and Act Three focuses on Eric.

The play follows a cyclical structure, meaning that what happens at the start of the play comes full circle and is repeated. The Inspector arrives and interrogates the family to try to get them to learn from their mistakes. An inspector is about to arrive again at the end of the play, suggesting that family members have not all learnt from their mistakes and need to have the lesson repeated again.

1. What mistakes does the Inspector, and therefore Priestley, believe the family have made?

*Think about Priestley's purpose.*

2. Which family members have and have not learnt from their mistakes? Why might this be?
3. What does Priestley want to teach the audience by having some family members learn from their mistakes, and others not?

### *Useful Quotations:*

"You seem to have made a great impression on this child, Inspector." Pg. 30 (Mrs Birling)

"(coolly) We often do on the young ones. They're more impressionable." Pg. 30 (Inspector Goole)

"(angrily to Eric) You're the one I blame for this." Pg. 56 (Mr Birling)

"(angrily)...There's every excuse for what both your mother and I did - it turned out unfortunately, that's all -" Pg. 57 (Mr Birling)

"I behaved badly too. I know I did. I'm ashamed of it. But now you're beginning all over again to pretend that nothing much has happened -" Pg. 57 (Sheila) "Nothing much has happened!"



"The worse part is [over now]. But you're forgetting one thing I still can't forget. Everything we said had happened really had happened." Pg. 70 (Sheila)

"(imitating Inspector in his final speech) You all helped to kill her (pointing at Sheila and Eric and laughing.)" Pg. 70/71 (Mr Birling)

"You began to learn something. And now you've stopped. You're ready to go on in the same old way." Pg. 71 (Sheila) "I agree with Sheila. It frightens me too." Pg. 71 (Eric)

"Now look at the pair of them – the famous younger generation who know it all. And they can't even take a joke –" Pg. 72 (Mr Birling)

### Form (AO2):

Feature	Definition
Exposition	The opening of a play that provides basic information about characters, background, context and themes/ideas within the play. The play will begin with an event that causes a crisis in an already unstable environment. This will excite, interest and spark the curiosity of the audience.
Entrances and exits	Entrances and exits are perfectly timed to heighten suspense and tension.
'Obligatory scene'	A scene where a secret is revealed.
'Climactic curtain'	When an act/scene will end on a climactic/tense moment.
Mistaken identity	A 'well-made play' will use the idea of identities being mistaken to heighten tension and suspense.
Denouement	The ending of the play will be both logical and plausible.

The form is the *type* of text that has been written – for example, a sonnet or a haiku would be classed as form as it is a type of poem. 'An Inspector Calls' is a well-made play, and a medieval morality play.

#### Top Tip:

Discussing the form of the play is important, but it is even more vital that you explain *why* Priestley chose to use that form.

Think about the following question: What meaning has Priestley been able to create by using the well-made play form/Medieval morality play form?



## Well-Made Play:

A well-made play consists of six key features:

As well as this, a well-made play will be naturalistic. This means that the setting will be somewhere considered 'normal' and relatable to most (like the drawing room of the Birling's house), time passes in the same way as in real life, and all action takes place in one evening. As well as this, the action all takes place in one room, which can feel claustrophobic and intense – both for the characters and the audience. It can be seen that the setting is very closed to the outside world, and protected from external influences. The Inspector is able to break through this metaphorical wall created.

1. What do we learn about the Birlings from the opening few pages of the play that suggest that they are in an unstable environment?
2. Which entrances/exits cause the most tension of the audience?
3. Which elements of mistaken identity are explored in 'An Inspector Calls'?
4. Do you think the ending of the play is logical and plausible? Why/why not?
5. Why do you think the Inspector has been able to break through the metaphorical wall of the Birling family home?
6. Why do you think Priestley has chosen to have such a naturalistic setting?

*There is a list of relevant answers to help with this question on Page 38 and 39.*

## Entrances and Exits:

The timing of entrances and exits throughout the play is crucial for creating the maximum amount of tension and excitement for the audience. Some of the most important examples are:

-The Inspector arrives immediately after Birling has told Gerald about his impending knighthood and about how "a man has to look after himself and his own." He is interrupted by the Inspector, suggesting that Mr Birling's ideas need to be stopped by external forces.

-Sheila runs off stage when she realises she is the reason Eva was sacked. This creates an intense atmosphere, and hints that Sheila has been deeply affected by her involvement in the death of Eva Smith.

-Sheila and Gerald are left alone to discuss Daisy Renton (all of the other Birlings and the Inspector leave the room). This draws information out for audience and allows the plot to develop.

-Mrs Birling informs the Inspector that the "chief culprit" should be "dealt with very severely," before Eric enters and the curtain falls on Act Two.

### Climactic Curtain:

A great deal of tension has been created for the audience by the end of Act One and they have the desire to know how all the characters were involved. By having a break at this point between Acts One and Two, it creates a dramatic pause to create tension for the rest of the play. Act One ends with the Inspector asking, "Well?". This word is repeated at the start of Act Two, creating tension for the audience, and leaving us wanting to know the answer to the question.

Tension is further created by the way information is gradually revealed, one person at a time. The audience and characters are kept on their toes by the Inspector's logical approach to his interrogation of the Birlings and Gerald.

Between Act Two and Three, there is further tension created. At the end of Act Two, "we hear the front door," but the audience have to wait until Act Three until his involvement is revealed fully.

#### Top Tip:

This would be a perfect opportunity to reference Priestley's use of sound to create dramatic effect.

### Denouement:

The ending leaves the audience on a cliff-hanger as it is revealed that an Inspector is on his way to interrogate the Birlings for a second time. This cyclical structure indicates that some of the Birlings have not learnt the lesson intended by Inspector Goole, and need to be taught it again.

At the end of Act Three some of the Birlings believed themselves to be off the hook when it is discovered that Inspector Goole wasn't real and that no girl had died in the infirmary. Mr Birling states that "the whole story's just a lot of moonshine. Nothing but an elaborate sell!" and the stage directions also indicate that he speaks "triumphantly" and "produces a huge sigh of relief." This releases some of the tension - but the final telephone call, announcing that a real inspector is on his way to ask questions about the suicide of a young girl, suddenly restores the tension very dramatically. It is an unexpected final twist.

Why would Priestley want to have left the audience just as shocked as the characters at the end of the play?

The features of a well-made play state that the ending should be logical and plausible. On the surface, the ending seems neither logical or plausible. However, when you consider Priestley's message, it is both logical and plausible. Priestley wanted to teach the Birlings that their way of thinking needed to change dramatically, or else they (and society as a whole) would be taught a very bad lesson "in fire and blood and anguish." As not all of the Birlings were taught the Inspector's lesson, and only two members of the family were changed by the end of the play, it can be argued that by having a new inspector on his way to interrogate the family, it is the only logical and plausible ending for Priestley to impart his ideas onto as many people as possible.

### Medieval Morality Play:

‘An Inspector Calls’ is also a genre of medieval theatre. The play leaves the audience with a moral message – that society are one body, and that everyone should look after one another with a true sense of community. No one is better than anyone else, and the class system is flawed.

The play seeks to remind the audience of their moral compass and guide them from the temptations

The Seven Deadly Sins
Avarice (greed for material things like money)
Envy (jealousy)
Gluttony (eating or drinking too much)
Lust (strong sexual desires)
Pride (deep satisfaction at your own achievements)
Sloth (laziness – wasting your talents)
Wrath (anger – not showing tolerance)

of the seven deadly sins, which are considered excessive versions of a person’s natural instincts or desires.

Each of the Birlings possess one or more of the Seven Deadly sins, and the Inspector is there to guide the family (and the audience) away from the tempting lures of the deadly sins before any dreadful consequences occur. It is the Inspector’s role to ensure they confess and repent, thus setting them back onto the path of righteousness and allowing them to be used as a stark warning to others. Both Eric and Sheila are able to repent their sins, however Sybil, Arthur and Gerald are still tempted by the sins at the end of the play.

### Mr Birling

Mr Birling can be seen to represent both Avarice and Gluttony. At the start of the play, the dining table is described as being covered with “*dessert plates and champagne glasses*” suggesting that he has provided the family with lavish amounts of expensive food and drink, which would have been out of the reaches of the vast majority of the country at the time.

He is a self-made man and wants to ensure that he continues to get richer by denying the workers a decent wage. He states that “*they wanted the rates raised so that they could average about twenty-five shillings a week. I refused, of course.*” Mr Birling would be well aware that workers didn’t have any legal rights (minimum wages, working hour limits etc.) and by arrogantly stating “*of course*” it suggests he doesn’t care about those who are working class and living on pitiful wages. This can be reinforced when he tells Gerald that he’s looking forward to the Crofts and Birlings working together for “*lower costs and higher prices.*” The fact that Mr Birling viewed the prospective marriage between Sheila and Gerald as a business deal suggests that he doesn’t care about the happiness of his family, but about wealth and the success of his own company.

Towards the end of the play, Mr Birling he is indignant that Eric had stolen “*fifty pounds – on top of drinking and going round the town!*” The use of the exclamative sentence indicates how annoyed Mr Birling is that his own son has taken a small amount of money to support someone who is unable to support themselves. As soon as Mr Birling realises that his reputation and place in society is in

jeopardy, he offers money to solve the problem – “I’d give thousands – yes, thousands.” He repeats the phrase to emphasise his desperation to resolve the issue, but the Inspector reminds him that “you’re offering the money at the wrong time.” Mr Birling is unable to see that money cannot solve every problem.

### Mrs Birling

Mrs Birling can be seen to represent Wrath and Pride. She is incredibly proud of the charity organisation that she chairs – “we’ve done a great deal of useful work in helping deserving cases.” – but as was common during the Edwardian period, many wealthy women chose to set up charity organisations as a way of appeasing their own consciences. She had no real desire in helping those in need as she clearly states that she was “prejudiced” against Eva’s case, and was able to use her power as a middle to upper middle class member of society. She didn’t care that Eva would have had nowhere else to go for help, as her charity organisation was able to help who she deemed to be “deserving.”

Mrs Birling is not tolerant of anyone in a lower class than herself. Like Mr Birling, her arrogance is shown when she states “though naturally I don’t know anything about this girl.” The term “naturally” implies that it is out of the question that she would know anything about a working class girl, which she reinforces when she believes that she wouldn’t know anything about “girls of that class.” Her utter disgust at the working class is demonstrated through the term “that” – she cannot even bring herself to refer to Eva as working class. Mrs Birling does not see her as a human being, but as a class in society to disregard as she pleases. When it is revealed that Eric is the father of Eva’s unborn child, Mrs Birling states that “I didn’t know it was you.” The use of the italicised pronoun suggests that Mrs Birling assumed Eva had become pregnant by a working class man, rather than her well-to-do son. Mrs Birling sees the Birlings as highly important and that Eva “had no claim to the name” due to her societal position. Mrs Birling repeatedly refers to Eva as a “girl” showing how patronising she is, and how much she feels that she can control those beneath her.

What does it suggest about Mrs Birling that she refers to the charity organisation using the term “we’ve”?

### Sheila

Sheila can be seen to represent the sin of Envy. Sheila demonstrates her jealousy of Eva Smith when trying on dresses at Milwards. She doesn’t like the fact that Eva suited a dress more than herself – “and it just suited her. She was the right type for it, just as I was the wrong type.” – and that she was very pretty – “She was a very pretty girl too – with big dark eyes – and that didn’t make it any better.” Sheila makes the situation worse by stating that “if she’d been some miserable plain little creature, I don’t suppose I’d have done it,” suggesting that looks are more important than personal qualities. She reinforces the gender stereotypes of the time – that women were defined by their looks, and that they could make or break your future.

Sheila is behaving in a very childish way, as she is described in the opening stage directions, as being “a pretty girl in her early twenties,” showing that she is jealous of something that she already has. Furthermore, she is jealous of a working class girl, who despite having a job at a reputable company at the time, still had very few prospects for her future. Sheila shows that she is completely unaware of the differences between the classes, and doesn’t realise or care that getting Eva sacked would have had such a detrimental effect on her. She used her power in the situation to ruin the life of a young girl, who were only differentiated by circumstance – “I went to the manager at

Milwards and I told him that if they didn't get rid of that girl, I'd never go near the place again and I'd persuade mother to close our account with them."

Furthermore, Sheila proves that the Inspector is right to be interrogating the Birlings and trying to teach them a very important lesson. Sheila states that when she got Eva dismissed from her position that it "**didn't seem to be anything very terrible at the time.**" Sheila proves that all actions, no matter how small and insignificant, all have a knock on effect and can develop into much bigger problems for both the individual and society as a whole.

Analyse why Sheila describes Eva as a "creature". What does it suggest about her attitudes towards the lower classes *at this part of the play*?

### Eric

Eric can be seen to represent the sin of Lust and Gluttony. It is first revealed that Eric visited the Palace bar, somewhere that is understood to be frequented by "**women of the town,**" showing straight away that he views women as being objects for purchase. After meeting Eva, he treats her appallingly due to drinking too much. He takes Eva back to her house and despite telling him that she didn't want him there, Eric admits he was in a "**state when a chap easily turns nasty - and I threatened to make a row**" and that he "**didn't even remember**" what he'd done. Eric believed that

he was entitled to Eva's body, which can be attributed to either his gender or his class. Appropriate behaviour has been ignored in favour of fulfilling sexual desires. After meeting her for a second time, he describes her as a "**good sport,**" suggesting that he viewed Eva as a game to win, rather than as a person to build a relationship with.

Eric is presented as a drunk since the start of the play. In opening stage directions, it states that Eric is "**half shy, half assertive,**" showing how quickly he can change between two opposing character traits. He also "**suddenly guffaws**" and explains it on the fact that he "**just had to laugh.**" His drunken behaviour comes as a shock to his parents who don't believe he is the type to get drunk - "**you're not the type - you don't get drunk -**"

What does it suggest about Eric when he states that he "turn[ed] nasty" and "threatened to make a row"? How did he treat Eva in his drunken state?

### Gerald

Gerald can be seen to represent the sin of Lust. Whilst being in a relationship with Sheila that resulted in their engagement, he had an affair with Daisy Renton. He first noticed Daisy because she was "**pretty**" (much like Sheila), suggesting that he was drawn to her appearance rather than her intellect or personal qualities. Gerald's lust is also fueled by his desire to have control over someone much less powerful. He "**insisted**" that she move into the rooms left vacant by his friend, and he "**made her**" take money from him. He also admits that he "**became at once the most important person in her life,**" showing that he reveled in the power that he had over Daisy. The relationship was uneven as Gerald "**didn't feel about her as she felt about [him],**" reinforcing that his lust was not just about the sexual elements of their relationship, but the power and control.

What was Priestley trying to demonstrate about the class system with regards to Gerald's affair with Daisy Renton?



### Greek Drama, Crime Drama and Parable:

'An Inspector Calls' also follows the rules of Greek Drama- the three unities of place, action and time are kept to in a realistic manner. i.e. The drama all unfolds in one place (the Birling's dining room). Action all takes place in one evening, time passes in the same way as in real life. This makes the play realistic. These are also features of a well-made play.

The Inspector acts like a Greek chorus (narrator). He sums up what has happened, and explains to both actors and the audience the lessons we must learn.

Equally, the play might be seen as a simple crime/mystery drama. It poses the question of 'whodunit?' which and audience are able to come to their own conclusion over who is to blame for the death of Eva Smith/Daisy Renton.

Furthermore, the play has myth-like quality in that it carries a moral message that we should take better care of our fellow human beings, so in some ways it is like a parable.

### Opening Stage Directions (AO2):

At the beginning of Act One, Priestley uses stage directions to set the scene – details for the set, furniture, props, costume, lighting and characterisation are all specified to give us as much information as we need about the Birling family, before we even meet them through the dialogue.

The Birlings are a middle to upper middle class family, who are comfortably wealthy. They are presented as being happy, relaxed and confident. They are sitting around the dining table, enjoying the celebration, but by the end of the play they are all standing, shouting and the relationships are completely fractured.

*The dining room of a fairly large suburban house (1), belonging to a prosperous manufacturer (2). It has good solid furniture (3) of the period. The general effect is substantial and heavily comfortable (4), but not cosy and homelike (5). (If a realistic set is used, then it should be swung back, as it was in the production at the New Theatre...The lighting should be pink and intimate (6) until the Inspector arrives, and then it should be brighter and harder (7).*

*At rise of curtain, the four Birlings and Gerald are seated at the table, with Arthur Birling at one end, and his wife at the other (8), Eric downstage, and Sheila and Gerald seated upstage (9). Edna, the parlourmaid (10), is just clearing the table, which has no cloth (11), of dessert plates and champagne glasses (12) etc., and then replacing them with decanter of port, cigar box and cigarettes. Port glasses are already on the table. All five are in evening dress (13) of the period, the men in tails and white ties, not dinner jackets. Arthur Birling is a heavy-looking (14), rather portentous (15) man in his middle fifties with fairly easy manners but rather provincial in his speech (16). His wife is about fifty, a rather cold woman (17) and her husband's social superior (18). Sheila is a pretty girl (19) in her early twenties, very pleased with life and rather excited. Gerald Croft is an attractive chap (20) about thirty, rather too manly to be a dandy but very much the easy well-bred young man-about-town (21). Eric is in his early twenties, not quite at ease (22), half shy, half assertive. At the moment they have all had a good dinner, are celebrating a special occasion, and are pleased with themselves (23).*

1. Analyse the stage directions above in relation to what they tell us about the Birling family.

*There are detailed explanations to help with this task/check answers on Page 38 and 39.*

### Inspector Goole's Arrival and Purpose:

The play opens with the family celebrating Sheila's engagement to Gerald. It is a happy time, and as such, the mood is light and jovial. The stage directions used at the start of the play indicate this: "*gaily*", "*smiling*" (repeated 3 times), "*politely*" and "*half playful*". The timing of Inspector Goole's arrival interrupts the family to show that he is now in control of the situation and the other characters.

#### Top Tip:

Examiners will be impressed if you can analyse the *stage craft*. Comment on the lighting, sound effects, timing and props. You will find a lot of this information in the stage directions at the start of the play, and in Act One.

There is a "*sharp ring of a front door bell,*" which would startle the audience and suggest that the Inspector is a sharp character (intelligent and quick).

The lighting is described as "*pink and intimate*" when the family are celebrating Sheila and Gerald's engagement, suggesting closeness and intimacy between the family, which is how the family would want to be seen from the outside. However, it could also suggest oppressiveness and a stifling atmosphere, where something needs to be changed in order for order to be restored. Pink lighting suggests a low level of brightness, that implies that it would be difficult to see everything. Metaphorically, it could suggest that the tiny cracks in the family unit are hidden from view at the start of the play. Furthermore, the colour pink suggests that the family are wearing rose-tinted glasses - they see their family life as perfect and tightly knit, but in reality it is much more fragile.

When Inspector Goole arrives, the lighting changes to "*brighter and harder*". This suggests that the Inspector is a 'hard' character who will expose the flaws in the family, without caring who he upsets. The Inspector does not care about the social status of the family, and confronting people who are higher in society. The brightness of the lighting also suggests that the Birlings are being viewed under a spot light and are being interrogated by the Inspector. It will also show the cracks that are evident in the family from the opening of the play.

### Inspector Goole's Investigation (AO1/AO2):

His name, 'Inspector Goole', suggests something mysterious about the Inspector - Goole/Ghoul = ghost. This can be reinforced by the idea that he is omniscient (all-knowing). He seems to know what will happen before it does. It could be suggested that not only is Inspector Goole Priestley's mouthpiece, but he plays the role of God by morally judging the characters. Even Sheila is aware of how much he knows when she "*hysterically*" tells Gerald that "*he knows. Of course he knows. And I hate to think how much he knows that we don't know yet.*"

When the Inspector arrives, the stage directions specify that he "*creates at once an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness.*" He also speaks "*carefully, weightily*" and "*has a disconcerting habit of looking hard at the person he addresses before actually speaking.*" These descriptions are unnerving - the Inspector arrives with a sense of purpose and is completely in control of the situation. This would immediately pique the interest of the audience - we want to know why he is



there and how the Birlings are going to react to him. Sheila quickly realises that the Inspector is unable to be fooled, as she tries to teach her family that any walls that are put up between the Birlings and the Inspector are *“sure to be knocked flat.”*

Inspector Goole works methodically and logically. He pursues *“one line of inquiry at a time”* and the audience feel like members of the Birling family – we learn how each member of the family is involved at the same time as the Birlings do. The Inspector interrogates each person in turn, and shows a photo of Eva Smith to each character that only they see. Again, the audience is intrigued and wants to know more about the photograph and the characters’ involvement. The Inspector controls the pace of the investigation, which creates tension for the audience as they wait to hear more details of the Birling’s involvement.

During the investigation, each family member reacts differently:

-Mr Birling feels uncomfortable and tries to threaten Inspector Goole with his friendship with Colonel Roberts - *“How do you get on with our Chief Constable, Colonel Roberts?”* He is shown to be someone who thinks he is above the law, and untouchable because of the important people that he knows. He also tries to undermine the Inspector by asking him what his name is again - *“What did you say your name was, Inspector?”* Mr Birling asks multiple questions to try to take control back from the Inspector, but is unable to do this due to his foolish attitude towards the investigation. Mr Birling refuses to accept any responsibility for his role in Eva’s suicide. He also behaves coldly towards the young girl by explaining that his *“duty”* is to *“keep labour costs down”* rather than to look after the welfare of his workforce. The audience think Birling is selfish and arrogant. The fact that this interrogation takes place first sets the tone for the rest of the investigation; those who do not accept responsibility are likely to look incredibly foolish.

-Sheila reacts instinctively and emotionally to the report of Eva Smith’s death. After seeing the photograph of Eva, she *“recognises it with a little cry, gives a half-stifled sob, and then runs out.”* The audience start to feel sympathy for Sheila, and tension - Mr Birling and Sheila react so differently, that arguments are inevitable. She admits what she has done wrong, and is horrified by the results of her actions - *“I felt rotten about it at the time and now I feel a lot worse.”* However, she also makes it clear that whilst she takes responsibility for her part in Eva’s death, she cannot be held wholly responsible - *“I know I’m to blame – and I’m desperately sorry – but I can’t believe – I won’t believe – it’s simply my fault.”* The repeated pauses in Sheila’s dialogue suggest that she is thinking carefully about how to articulate herself, and that she cares deeply about how she is presenting herself to the Inspector – she wants to redeem her previously poor behaviour. The audience would respect her attitude towards the investigation and prove that she is starting to change for the better.

-Gerald initially reacts evasively. He tells Sheila that he didn’t know Eva Smith (who had changed her name to Daisy Renton by this point), despite being *“startled”* when her name was mentioned. He doesn’t want to explain how he knows Daisy, and wants to *“leave it at that.”* Gerald is unable to see that the Inspector already knows about his involvement, and even Sheila is aware, which highlights the disparity between the couple, and the fractures that are starting to widen. Gerald speaks in declarative sentences - *“I don’t come into this suicide business.”* – to show that he feels that what he is saying is factually correct. The audience would feel angry towards Gerald at this point, as they would be on the side of the Inspector. Additionally, they know that Sheila accepted responsibility for her part in Eva/Daisy’s death, which serves to highlight how different the characters are, and how unsuited they are. Gerald doesn’t believe that the family have committed a crime and that they are respectable citizens, although the Inspector is quick to remind him that *“sometimes, there isn’t as much difference as you think ... I wouldn’t know where to draw the line.”* The Inspector suggests that even though no legal crime has been committed, they are guilty of a moral crime.

1. Why is Gerald's involvement in the death of Daisy explored with Sheila behind closed doors?
2. Why does Priestley choose to *not* include the Inspector during this interrogation?

-Mrs Birling immediately behaves defensively, and assumes that she has nothing to do with the suicide of Eva Smith. She questions the Inspector after seeing the photograph, suggesting that she has no reason to know who Eva is – “**Why should I?**” It is also implied that she is being difficult and evasive, as the Inspector tells her that she doesn't “**choose to**” understand his lines of inquiry. Mrs Birling is not only conversing with the Inspector during her interrogation, but Sheila. Priestley has chosen to pair the two to demonstrate the different attitudes of the younger and older generation; the older generation are reluctant to accept responsibility, whereas the younger generation want to help others to learn from their mistakes. Mrs Birling gives very short answers (often single word answers) to Inspector Goole's questions, which would make the audience feel that Mrs Birling is making no effort to help herself or the investigation. Sheila even tells her mother that she's beginning “**all wrong,**” and that she was “**afraid [she would] say or do something that [she would] be sorry for afterwards.**” Mrs Birling behaves incredibly foolishly when she states that the father of Eva's unborn child should be made “**entirely responsible**” and “**dealt with very severely,**” – she doesn't realise until too late that the father is, in fact, her son Eric.

-Eric immediately reacts with acceptance – “**You know, don't you?**” Everyone knows that Eric is involved, and he is now resigned to explain in more detail. He gets angry at Sheila, as seen through the exclamation “**Why, you little sneak!**” Eric is much more open to the investigation than his mother, and allows the Inspector to direct the conversation through his questioning. Eric is clearly troubled by his involvement, as the stage directions repeatedly state that he spoke “*miserably*”, “*unhappily*” and that he was “*nearly at breaking point.*” The audience would be surprised by his mature reaction (especially compared to his immature behaviour at the start of the play), and would respect him for not only accepting his role in the suicide of Eva Smith, but for standing up to his parents. He tells his mother that “**– you killed her. She came to you to protect me – and you turned her away – yes, and you killed her – and the child she'd have had too – my child – your own grandchild – you killed them both – damn you, damn you –**” The repeated pauses, coupled with the repetition of “**and**” show how Eric is struggling to coherently express himself. The final repetition of “**damn you**” links with the Inspector's message – that if people will not change their attitude to society and start taking responsibility for their actions, then grave, hellish consequences will happen. By condemning his mother, Eric shows that *he* has changed, and that the younger generation are not doomed. Eric also tells his father that “**you're not the kind of father a chap could go to when he's in trouble,**” and “**you don't understand anything. You never did. You never even tried.**” Again, the audience would respect him for standing up to his father, as his future at the company will now be in jeopardy. The cracks in the family have at this point become large canyons – Eric's interrogation and subsequent reaction have split the family into the older generation pitted against the younger generation, with Gerald caught somewhere in between.

### Structure of Inspector Goole's Investigation (AO2):

The structure of the investigation is vitally important in demonstrating the divisions in the family between age groups.

Priestley chose to pair a member of the older generation and younger generation together for the interrogation of the characters. Mr Birling is paired with Sheila, Mrs Birling is paired with Eric, and

Gerald is interrogated on his own, in between pairs, to show how he is caught in between the two groups.

Additionally, by the time Gerald is interrogated, Sheila has started to take on the role of the Inspector as Inspector Goole has left the room. The audience will see that three out of five characters are involved, and that the final two are also likely to have played a role in Eva's suicide.

Top Tip:

Try to comment on the structure of the investigations to show the examiner a higher level skill – don't forget to link this to Priestley's purpose!

Priestley has chosen to pair members of the older and younger generations together to demonstrate the contrast in how the different generations accept responsibility. Priestley's use of duality shows the correct and incorrect way to react – the older generation not only cannot see the mistakes they've made, but they refuse to accept responsibility and see Eva's suicide as an inconvenience. They need to be taught a valuable lesson about community and social responsibility, but are unable to learn. This is why Priestley has chosen to follow a cyclical narrative – so the lesson can be attempted for a second time. The younger generation, on the other hand, are able to see what they've done wrong, accept responsibility for it, and try to help the older generation see their mistakes.

*Useful Quotations:*

"You're new, aren't you?...I thought you must be. I was an alderman for years – and Lord Mayor two years ago – and I'm still on the Bench – so I know the Brumley police officers pretty well – and I thought I'd never seen you before." Pg. 11 (Mr Birling)

"I seem to remember hearing that name – Eva Smith – somewhere. But it doesn't convey anything to me. And I don't see where I come into this." Pg. 12 (Mr Birling)

"Well, we've several hundred young women there, y'know, and they keep changing." Pg. 12 (Mr Birling)

"(somewhat impatiently) Look – there's nothing mysterious – or scandalous – about this business – at least not so far as I'm concerned. It's a perfectly straightforward case, and as it happened more than eighteen months ago – nearly two years ago – obviously it has nothing whatever to do with the wretched girl's suicide." Pg. 13 (Mr Birling)

"Still, 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?" Pg. 14 (Mr Birling)

"Well, Inspector, I don't see that it's any concern of yours how I choose to run my business. Is it now?" Pg. 15 (Mr Birling)

"It's my duty to keep labour costs down, and if I'd agreed to this demand for a new rate we'd have added about twelve percent to our labour costs...so I refused." Pg. 15 (Mr Birling)

"If you don't come down sharply on some of these people, they'd soon be asking for the earth." Pg. 15 (Mr Birling)

"I didn't [know Eva Smith]...why should I have known her?" Pg. 25 (Gerald)

"I don't come into this suicide business." Pg. 26 (Gerald)

"Don't say anything to the Inspector...we can keep it from him." Pg. 26 (Gerald)

"All right, if you must have it. I met her first, some time in March last year." Pg. 34 (Gerald)

"(distressed) Sorry - I - well, I've suddenly realised - taken it in properly - that she's dead -"  
Pg. 35 (Gerald)

"Well, I never saw her again, and that's all I can tell you." Pg. 39 (Gerald)

"I'm rather more - upset - by this business than I probably appear to be - and - well, I'd like to be alone for a while - I'd be glad if you'd let me go." Pg. 39 (Gerald)

"Why should I [recognise her]?" Pg. 41 (Mrs Birling)

About Mrs Birling: "You're not telling me the truth." Pg. 41 (Inspector Goole)

About Mrs Birling: "We've no excuse now for putting on airs and that if we've any sense we won't try...you're pretending you don't recognise her from that photograph. I admit I don't know why you should, but I know jolly well you did in fact recognise her...can't you see...you're making it worse?" Pg. 41 (Sheila)

"We've done a great deal of useful work in helping deserving cases." Pg. 42 (Mrs Birling)

"I think it was simply a piece of gross impertinence - quite deliberate - and naturally that was one of the things that prejudiced me against her case." Pg. 43 (Mrs Birling)

"I'm very sorry. But I think she had only herself to blame." Pg. 43 (Mrs Birling)

"I don't think we need to discuss it." Pg. 44 (Mrs Birling)

"Unlike the other three, I did nothing I'm ashamed of or that won't bear investigation...you have no power to make me change my mind." Pg. 44 (Mrs Birling)

"I've done nothing wrong - and you know it." Pg. 44 (Mrs Birling)

"I'll tell you what I told her. Go and look for the father of the child. It's his responsibility." Pg. 45 (Mrs Birling)

"Please remember before you start accusing me of anything again that it wasn't I who turned her out of her employment - which probably began it all." Pg. 46 (Mrs Birling)

"You're quite wrong to suppose I shall regret what I did." Pg. 47 (Mrs Birling)

"I'm sorry that she should have come to such a horrible end. But I accept no blame for it at all." Pg. 47 (Mrs Birling)

On who is to blame for Eva's suicide: "First, the girl herself...secondly, I blame the young man who was the father of the child she was going to have." Pg. 47 (Mrs Birling)

"You know, don't you?" Pg. 50 (Eric)

"(bitterly) You haven't made it easier for me, have you, Mother?" Pg. 50 (Eric)

"(nearly at breaking point) Then - you killed her. She came to you to protect me - and you turned her away - yes, and you killed her - and the child she'd have had too - my child - your own grandchild - you killed them both - damn you, damn you -" Pg. 55 (Eric)

"I'm not likely to forget." Pg. 55 (Eric)

"(angrily to Eric) You're the one I blame for this." Pg. 57 (Mr Birling)

"There's every excuse for what both your mother and I did - it turned out unfortunately, that's all -" Pg. 57 (Mr Birling)

"I behaved badly too. I know I did. I'm ashamed of it. But now you're beginning all over again to pretend that nothing much has happened." Pg. 57 (Sheila)

1. What does it suggest about Mr Birling when he repeatedly uses tag questions when being interrogated? (Pg. 14 and 15)
2. Why does Gerald pause when explaining that he is upset? What does he hope to achieve? What effect will this have on the audience? (Pg. 39)
3. How is Mrs Birling presented when she starts blaming her own family for Eva's death? (Pg. 46)

### Dramatic Irony (AO2/AO3):

**Definition:** a literary technique, originally used in Greek tragedy, by which the full significance of a character's words or actions is clear to the audience although unknown to the character.

Priestley uses dramatic irony throughout the play to demonstrate how ridiculous Mr Birling's opinions are, and highlight how foolish he is. By setting the play in Edwardian Britain, a post-war audience will know which major historical events have actually happened, what society has been like from 1912 onwards and how the economy has been. He also uses it when Mrs Birling is explaining her involvement in Eva Smith's suicide – the audience, and even Sheila, realise how damaging what she is saying actually is, before she does.

#### Top Tip:

When referencing Priestley's use of dramatic irony, it is a perfect opportunity to include AO3 references to help reinforce your point.

Mr Birling is presented as a very arrogant character, who believes he is incredibly knowledgeable on a wide range of topics. During his speech in Act One, he tries to impart his 'knowledge' on his children, who would be reliant on his opinion to shape their views on the world. Priestley's use of dramatic irony shows that Mr Birling has no real understanding of the political climate of Great Britain and the problems within society, particularly in relation to the class system.

Priestley has chosen to structure the play so that most examples of dramatic irony are present in Act One. This has been done so that Mr Birling is presented as foolish from the very beginning of the play, which highlights how little he changes as the play progresses. Additionally, the audience will be able to see how those who have power in society are not always the most intelligent, and can in fact be downright foolish.

What was Priestley trying to teach his audience, and encourage them to do by presenting Mr Birling in such a way?

Examples of dramatic irony:

-Mr Birling states categorically that war won't happen – “I say there isn't a chance of war.” – despite the fact that they were only two years away from World War One, and World War Two happened 27 years later.

-Mr Birling also doesn't believe that the Titanic will sink. He refers to it as being “sinkable, absolutely unsinkable,” despite it actually sinking later that year.

-Mr Birling doesn't think that there won't be any tension between employers and employees. He thinks that his family will be “living in a world that'll have forgotten all of these Capital versus Labour agitations,” but there had actually been labour strikes since 1907, Eva and her co-workers had gone on strike in his own factory – “they went on strike.” – and there was a General Strike in 1926.

### Key Themes (AO1/AO2):

#### Responsibility:



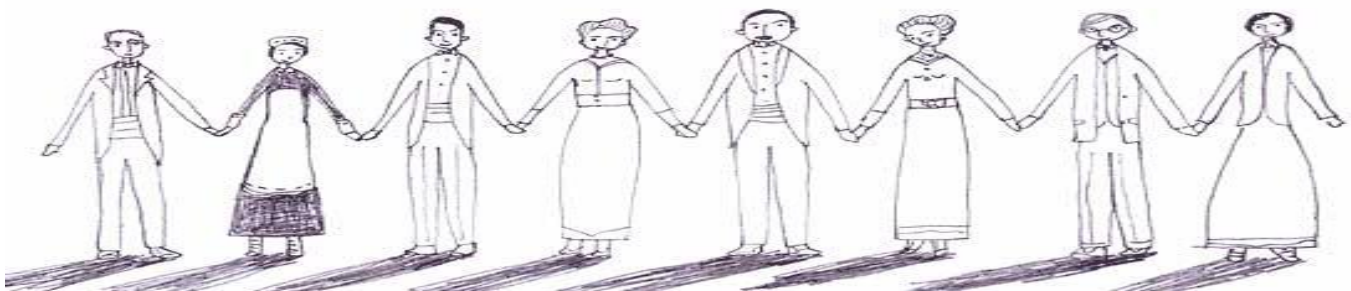
Priestley's key message throughout the play is that everyone should take responsibility for their own actions, regardless of age, gender or social class. He encourages the idea that communities should work together in order to support one another, rather than building walls to separate one social group from the next. This message is delivered through the character of Inspector Goole, Priestley's mouthpiece.

Each member of the Birling family has a different attitude towards responsibility. Mr and Mrs Birling acknowledge they were involved in Eva's difficult circumstances, but refuse to accept responsibility for the part they played in her death. Mr Birling tells the Inspector that he "can't accept any responsibility" and further emphasises this when he states that "if we were all responsible for everything that happened to everybody we'd had anything to do with, it would be very awkward." Similarly, Mrs Birling states that she was "sorry she should have come to such a horrible end," but that she still "accepts no blame for it at all."

Sheila and Eric, on the other hand, admit that they were involved, and also accept that they played a role in her death. Sheila tells the Inspector that she will "never, never do it again to anybody," and accepts responsibility for her role in Eva's suicide - "I know I'm to blame - and I'm desperately sorry." Sheila has taken on board the Inspector's message about collective responsibility as she goes on to state that she "can't believe...wont' believe - it's simply [her] fault." Eric makes it very clear that he is "not likely to forget" what he has done, and that even though there are suspicions about Inspector Goole, he "did what [I] did." Furthermore, he states that "what happened to the girl and what we all did to her...matters."

Gerald is caught somewhere in the middle - he was willing to accept responsibility whilst being interrogated by the Inspector, but is pleased when it is revealed that the Inspector wasn't quite what he seemed as he believes that everything can go back to the way it was before Inspector Goole arrived. Gerald, whilst not as openly accepting of the blame as Sheila, is still upset by what has happened "I'm rather more - upset - by this business than I probably appear to be - and - well, I'd like to be alone for a while." However, as soon as he has worked out that Inspector Goole was not a real inspector, he believes that "everything's all right now."

The Inspector wanted each member of the family to *share* responsibility by telling them "each of you helped to kill her," but his final speech is also aimed at the audience. Priestley wants the audience to learn just as much as the characters. He warns them that "one Eva Smith has gone - but there are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths still left with us, with their lives, their hopes and fears, their suffering and chance of happiness, all intertwined with our lives, and what we think and say and do." Inspector Goole makes it very clear that if the Birlings fail to learn from their mistakes now, then "they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish."





Priestley has created three distinct character groups that have been used to represent larger groups in society. This is known as a microcosm.

*Definition:* a small society, place, or activity which has all the typical features of a much larger one and so seems like a smaller version of it.

Each of the follow groups have been used to represent the wider groups in society. For example, Eric and Sheila represent the younger generation in society as a whole.

### Age:

Priestley presents the older generation and younger generation as polar opposites in relation to their behaviour, their attitudes towards the lower classes, and whether they accept responsibility for their involvement in Eva's death.

1. Why do you think Priestley has chosen to show such a contrast between the different generations?
2. What was he trying to teach his audience by presenting the two groups in this way?

The older generation and the younger generation take the Inspector's message in different ways – the younger generation are very accepting of what they have done, whereas the older generation refuse to accept responsibility. Inspector Goole even replies to Mrs Birling, when she observes that he has had a “great impression” on Sheila, “(coolly) we often do on the young ones. They're more impressionable.”

Gerald is caught in the middle of the generations – he is older than Sheila and Eric, but younger than Mr and Mrs Birling. Due to his aristocratic upbringing, he tends to side with the older generation as he doesn't want any disruption to his easy life, and wants to protect his own interests.

Ultimately, Priestley has presented the younger generation in a positive light. The audience will be optimistic that the younger generation have taken on board the Inspector's message and that they will change their behaviour, and in turn, change society. Eric tries to remind his parents and Gerald that “money's not the important thing,” as they know that the older generation are much too concerned with wealth.

Identify a relevant quotation that can be used to support each of the ideas below.

The Older Generation (Mr and Mrs Birling)	The Younger Generation (Sheila and Eric)
Mr and Mrs Birling are set in their ways, they are utterly convinced that they are right, and they see the younger members of the family as foolish.	Sheila and Eric are open to new ideas. This is first seen early in Act One when they both express sympathy for the strikes. This is an idea which horrified Mr Birling, who can only think of production costs and ignores the human side of the situation.
Mr and Mrs Birling will do anything to protect themselves. Mrs Birling lies to the Inspector when he first shows her the photograph; Mr Birling wants to cover up a potential scandal that will threaten the future of his business and the knighthood that he believes he is getting.	Sheila and Eric are honest and admit their faults. Eric refuses to try to cover his involvement in Eva's death and also admits that he stole money from his father's business to help Eva. Sheila admits all of her actions and her reasons behind them. She also tries to get her parents to do the same.
Mr and Mrs Birling have never been forced to examine their consciences before, and find they cannot do it now. Despite the Inspector's best efforts, they still refuse to accept responsibility for their actions.	Sheila and Eric are able to see the human side of Eva's story – she's a young girl who would have been unable to help herself because of the way society was at the time - and are very troubled by their part in it. They do examine their consciences, and are able to change as a result.
Mr and Mrs Birling have a lot to fear with a visit from the 'real' inspector as they know how much they have to lose. Their reputations are at stake within the community and beyond. As well as this, their relationship with their children hang in the balance.	Sheila and Eric have nothing to fear from the visit of the 'real' inspector because they have already admitted their faults and are determined to change for the better. They are utterly ashamed of the way their parents and Gerald are behaving, and their roles have reversed. The adults are behaving like children, whereas the children are taking on a role usually associated with parents.

### Gender:

Priestley explores the theme of gender throughout 'An Inspector Calls'. In 1912, men were the dominant gender, and women were treated as being less important, even in middle to upper middle class families such as the Birlings.

#### Top Tip:

When referencing Priestley's presentation of the different genders, it is a perfect opportunity to include AO3 references to help reinforce your point.

At the start of the play, the stage directions indicate that women and men are presented differently. Sheila's appearance is focused on first – "*pretty girl*" – rather than her intellect. By using the adjective "*pretty*," it suggests that Sheila is child-like and immature. The stage directions then go on to

describe her as *"very pleased with life and rather excited,"* which presents her as silly, frivolous and empty headed. It is important to know that it was only in 1849 that the first higher education institute for women opened, and in 1878 that the University of London allowed women the opportunity to be awarded a degree, and so society's attitude towards education for women at a higher level was still relatively new.

The men, on the other hand, are described positively using their physical and personal qualities. Gerald is described as *"attractive,"* which suggests that he is dignified, sophisticated and mature. He is also described as being *"the easy well-bred young man-about-town,"* implying that his status in high society is important and should be revered.

During the engagement celebration, there are many examples of the way women are treated as being less important, less intelligent, and should be removed from important issues within society. Sheila is told by her mother that *"when you're married, you'll realize that men with important work to do sometimes have to spend nearly all their time and energy on the business. You'll have to get used to that,"* implying that men have important work to complete, and women do not. Sheila stands up for herself, which would have been controversial in 1912, but would have impressed a 1945 audience. Sheila tells her mother *"I don't believe I will,"* which can be linked to the rise of the suffragette movement, that started to become more militant in 1912. Mrs Birling tries to remove herself and Sheila from the conversation taking place between the men – *"I think Sheila and I had better go into the drawing-room and leave you men –,"* as her generation of women would have been far removed from any masculine conversations.

Research gender attitudes in 1912 and 1945 to enhance your knowledge of relevant AO3.

The way that Eva was treated by the different characters can be attributed to the fact that she's a woman. Mr Birling and Gerald are incredibly controlling of Eva because they are able to be. When Eva asks for a wage increase, Mr Birling refuses. As a result, the women go on strike, but have to call this off as they have no way of earning an income – it was necessary to stop their fight because of the way they were treated by society. He allows some of the women to return after the strike but sacks *"the four or five ring-leaders,"* including Eva. He states that *"she'd had a lot to say – far too much – so she had to go."* Mr Birling did not like that Eva had a voice, and did everything within his power to remove it from his business, and society.

Analyse how Priestley uses parenthesis here to present Mr Birling as heartless.

Gerald Croft also controls Eva as he *"insisted"* that she take the room that he was looking after, he *"made her"* accept a small amount of money to keep her afloat and *"allowed her"* an amount of money over a longer period of time.

Eva Smith was an independent and outspoken young woman, which annoyed Mr Birling, Mrs Birling and Gerald. The fact that she feels that she has no other way out of her situation apart from committing suicide is used to show how powerful the men are in society, as well as those people who are in the middle to upper classes in society.

### Class:

Throughout the play, Priestley tries to show that the middle to upper classes are completely oblivious to the fact that the easy lives they lead are partly due to the poorly treated working classes below them. At the start of the play, all of the Birlings and Gerald are selfish, uncaring and immoral.

Mr Birling viewed the engagement and prospective marriage between Sheila and Gerald as a business opportunity – Gerald Croft and his family were business rivals with the Birlings

Eva Smith, on the other hand, is presented as morally superior to the Birling family, which is ironic seeing as they look down on her due to her social class. She was worried about the situation she was in (a working class, young, unmarried pregnant lady) for herself, but also for those it involved. She did not wish for Eric to get in trouble, and refused to accept money from him due to it being stolen – she tells him that “**she wouldn’t take any more [money] and she didn’t want to see [him] again.**” The Inspector reinforces this when she reminds the Birlings that Eva “**wanted to keep this youngster out of any more trouble.**” Eva behaved more respectable when in poverty than the Birlings did, despite all of their wealth.

**Productions of ‘An Inspector Calls’:**

**Top Tip:**

By referring to different productions of the play in your exam answer, you can evaluate how a production was trying to execute Priestley’s ideas. You will be able to explore ideas around stagecraft as well.

<b>Attitudes towards the working class:</b>	<b>Attitudes towards the upper class:</b>
Mr Birling believes the working classes are cheap labour, and not individuals with needs. He is dismissive of them as he doesn’t realise how little money they have to live off.	Mr Birling is excited about the prospect of a knighthood as he knows this will secure his social move from middle/upper to firmly upper class. He also encourages the marriage between Gerald Croft and Sheila as this will cement his place amongst the elite within society.
At the start of the play, Sheila believes that the working class are disposable and are there purely to serve the upper classes.	Sheila is happy to spend time amongst the wealthy clientele in shops such as Milwards. She knows that the upper classes can demand what they want and usually get it.
Gerald believes that the working classes are objects to be used at will, and discarded when they are no longer required.	Gerald is prepared to marry Sheila, despite her lower social position. Mr Birling is aware of this and understands why Gerald’s parents would have their reservations about their son marrying below him socially.
Eric believes that the working class can be seen as an easy person to sleep with at the end of a drunken night.	Eric is aware of his position in the higher levels of society and feels awkward about the fact that he belongs there, and that people like his father treat the working classes with little care.
Mrs Birling believes that the working classes should stay in their place at the bottom of society, and shouldn’t have any pretences about their place in the hierarchy.	Mrs Birling is socially superior to her husband and expects him to behave like an upper class member of society like herself. She is embarrassed by his awkward mistakes, such as when he wants to thank the cook for the excellent meal.



Stephen Daldry's 1992 production of the play was revolutionary at the time. The setting was a war-ravaged landscape, rather than a traditional Edwardian scene. This production has often been credited with generating a renewed interest in Priestley's work.

The staging showed the house as sitting above the stage itself. It was presented as if it was a dolls' house, with the front of the house able to be swung back to reveal the Birlings inside. The height of the family showed the Birling's separation from the rest of society, but the stilts on which the house was sitting seemed unsteady, which showed the Birling's fragility and how easily they could fall from their metaphorical position in society.

Towards the end of the play, an explosion took place and the house was seemingly destroyed, both internally and externally.

What do you think Daldry was trying to represent through the explosion and the destruction of the Birling family home?



Guy Hamilton's 1954 film production, starring Alastair Sim as Inspector Goole, is a traditional production, which stays very close to Priestley's original ideas.

Inspector Goole's exit is particularly striking. When it is time for him to leave the family, the camera pans to the chair that he was sitting in previously to reveal that he has completely vanished. Hamilton is suggesting that Inspector Goole is very much a ghost-like figure who can seemingly vanish into thin air. It also agrees with the notion that he is more of a representation of an all-knowing being rather than a physical inspector.



### **Ambitious Vocabulary:**

When producing an analytical response in the exam, it is important that you use sophisticated vocabulary when describing the characters and their behaviour. This will impress the examiner and show that you can use advanced language rather than simple words and phrases.

#### Top Tip:

Don't try to learn every word, as this might overwhelm you. Instead, choose two for each character and build up your vocabulary bank from there.

There are some characters who share the traits identified below - see if you can learn one word that can be used to describe more than one character.

Character	Advanced Vocabulary	Definition
Mr Birling	Intransigent Obstinate Grandiloquent Parsimonious Avaricious Dogmatic Immutable	Unwilling to change his views Stubborn Pretentious; pompous; arrogant Unwilling to spend money Extreme greed for wealth Has an arrogant attitude on false theories Unwilling to change
Mrs Birling	Intransigent Obstinate Condescending Insusceptible	Unwilling to change her views Stubborn Patronising; belittling Insensitive
Sheila	Intuitive Judicious Socially conscious Sagacious Contrite Prudent Altruistic	Behaving instinctively With a good sense of judgement Aware of social responsibility Wise Remorseful Sensible Concerned for others
Eric	Reticent Dipsomaniac Holds egalitarian views Naïve Contrite	Secretive; quiet Substance abuser Believes in the Socialist ideology Lack of experience, wisdom or judgement Remorseful
Gerald	Patrician Cunning Self-gratifying Ostensibly altruistic	Upper class Devious Praises himself Cares for others on the surface
Inspector Goole	Systematic Resolute Domineering Divisive Authoritative Inexorable Altruistic Egalitarian Intransigent	Works methodically and logically Purposefully determined Asserts his will over others Causes hostility and divisions between people Commanding Unable to stop or deter Concerned for others Believes that people deserve equal rights Unwilling to change his views
Edna	Socially neglected Proletarian Acquiescent	Forgotten by society Working class Willing to follow orders without protest

Write a paragraph that describes each character using the ambitious vocabulary above, rather than more simple words and phrases.



### Model Answers:

Use the model answers below to see what is included in a successful analytical response. The success criteria has been colour coded so that you know which aspect has been addressed and where. The answers have been written by both your teachers and previous students, so there should be nothing here that is out of reach to any of you.

#### Top Tip:

After writing your own responses, see which aspects of the success criteria you have included. This will help you to see which skills you need to include next time, and which you need to *continue* including.

**Question: How important do you think social class is in 'An Inspector Calls' and how does Priestley present ideas about social class?**

Success Criteria
Clearly address the theme or character specified in the question.
Use quotations from the play to support your ideas.
Analyse the use of language, form and structure.
Development of analysis in relation to language, form and structure.
Use of precise subject terminology.
Contextual links used to develop analysis of the text.
Comments on the purpose of Priestley's writing, and what he wanted to teach the audience.

In the **exposition** of 'An Inspector Calls', Priestley introduces the theme of social class through references to the staging of the play. The Birling family are described as living in a "large house", though it is "not cosy and homelike." Instantly, the audience are informed of the family's middle to upper class background by using the adjective "large", yet it is suggested that the family are more interested in appearances than comfort due to it not being "cosy or homelike." The Birlings are seen to place their social status above all else. Furthermore, Priestley uses the lighting of the stage to present the viewpoint of the family. The lighting at the start of the play is "pink and intimate," which implies that the family have a somewhat rose tinted outlook on life. They don't have to concern themselves with anyone outside of their social class, which would conform to the rigid and immovable class system that was present in 1912. Mr Birling further proves this when he tells Eric and Gerald that "a man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own." However, as soon as the Inspector arrives, the lighting changes to be "brighter and harder." The comparative adjectives here allude to the family being put under a spotlight and interrogated by the Inspector for the attitudes they hold towards social class at the time. The Inspector can be seen as Priestley's mouthpiece, therefore demonstrating his belief that the social system at the time had to change in order to facilitate a more harmonious society, which will be achieved by scrutinising the family's beliefs, and in turn, the audience's. The fact that Priestley wrote the play at the end of World War 2 shows how much he was influenced by the fluidity of the class system at this time, and how it had prompted society's need and desire for change.

**Question: How does Priestley use the character of the Inspector to suggest ways that society could be improved?**

One way Priestley suggests the middle to upper class Edwardian society in the play might be improved is by changing people's attitudes towards community. Priestley uses the characters of the Inspector and Mr Birling to highlight the two extremely different ends of the spectrum, and what he believes should remain the same after the end of World War 2, which is when Priestley wrote 'An Inspector Calls'. Mr Birling refers to the concept of community as "nonsense" and that "a man should make his own way in the world" as to not rely on others. The Inspector contrasts these views and it could be argued that the Inspector is Priestley's proxy, as the Inspector shares and mirrors the Socialist views of Priestley. This is most evident in the Inspector's last lines with the phrase "we are not alone. We are members of one body." This phrase suggests that people and society should help each other and not go through life alone, only caring about themselves like Mr Birling believes. This illustrates the way Priestley believes society should change and how Priestley is appalled by the idea of turning back to the society they had before the war, the society the Birlings inhabited.

**Question: How does Priestley use the character of the Inspector to suggest ways that society could be improved?**

In 'An Inspector Calls', we see how Priestley provides hope for society through the younger generation. The Inspector's words change the characters of Sheila and Eric the most. Almost immediately, we see a change in Sheila, shown through Priestley's crafting of her voice. She shows "mock aggressiveness" towards Gerald, showing that despite the fact she had been neglected by him, her general mood is positive. However, when the Inspector informs her of Eva Smith's suicide, she becomes more serious and "distressed." By the end of the play, Sheila and Eric have changed dramatically from being "pleased with themselves" to adopting sole responsibility for the death. Sheila recognises that she "started" the "chain of events", and Eric admits "probably between us we killed her." To an Edwardian audience, this would provide great reassurance in the younger generation to bring about change for a capitalist society.

Whilst the device of the Inspector is incredibly effective in an Edwardian society to warn about the dangers of ignorance and capitalism, it poses the question as to whether a modern audience would receive the play in the same way. Britain today has a welfare state with a benefits system, and a largely equal society. This demonstrates that, along with other factors, Priestley's message about society has been heard by the people and was powerful enough to bring about change.

Other models:

Read the sample questions and answers. Could you colour code these answers using the key below?

**Explore how Priestley uses the character of Mr Birling to explore social responsibility.**

Success Criteria
Clearly address the theme or character specified in the question.
Use quotations from the play to support your ideas.
Analyse the use of language, form and structure.
Development of analysis in relation to language, form and structure.
Use of precise subject terminology.
Contextual links used to develop analysis of the text.
Comments on the purpose of Priestley's writing, and what he wanted to teach the audience.

Priestley uses the character of Mr Birling to explore the notion that a lack of social responsibility is often the result of purposeful ignorance and hubris. This is particularly evident, in his retort to the Inspector, 'Rubbish! If you don't come down sharply on some of these people, they'd soon be asking for the earth'. The use of the exclamatory 'Rubbish!' establishes an outraged tone and reveals the character's abhorrent dismissal of the proletariat's pursuit of a fairer wage. However, the noun 'rubbish' could also hint at genuine belief that to compromise and to listen to the issue raised by workers is not, as far as the character of Mr Birling is concerned, supported by any real evidence and that it is so different to his current way of working that it seems farcical. This perhaps hints that Mr Birling is a product of society in which there was little understanding or appreciation of the cycle of poverty and therefore little meaningful consideration of the rights of lower paid workers. Then again, the adverb 'sharply' suggests that the character advocates a harsh and unyielding approach to his workers and the hyperbolic phrase 'ask for the earth' reveals the character's hypocrisy in criticising his workers for asking for more money when his outrage stems from the fact that he believes that, due to his bourgeois status, that he is more deserving of the money. The latter suggests that Priestley uses the character of Mr Birling to explore the idea that whilst a lack of social responsibility could be viewed as slightly more forgivable in the Edwardian, capitalist context, in the case of Mr Birling, Priestley implies that to not consider the rights of wider society is a deliberate act of ignorance and that there would be more of compassionate attitude if people in positions of responsibility recognised that their responsibility lies in providing opportunities for all, not just the elite.

**Explore how Priestley uses the character of the Inspector to explore the theme of justice.**

Priestley uses the character of the Inspector to suggest that a civilised society should insist upon justice for all: not just for the privileged few. This is particularly evident in the quotation, 'your daughter isn't living on the moon. She's here in Brumley too'. It is clear that Priestley uses the character of the Inspector to expose the underlying, insidious misogyny of Mr Birling. The hyperbolic phrase 'living on the moon' highlights the absurdity of Mr Birling's belief that Sheila, and in indeed, all woman ought to be shielded from the more challenging realities of life and implies that to hide information from women, under the guise of 'protecting' them, is actually perpetuating the incorrect belief that there is a disparity in the way in which men and women are able to process the truth. The adverb 'too' further highlights that Mr Birling is no different to Sheila and therefore she is no less equipped to face the difficult conversation that is about to ensue. It is clear that Priestley uses the character of the Inspector to highlight the injustice of the treatment of Sheila and to expose the perils of propagating sexist beliefs. Contextually, the ill-treatment of women was particularly pertinent issue in the time in which the play was set, 1912, and therefore, through the character of the Inspector, Priestley is highlighting the dangers of oppressing women and not giving them an equal platform through which to listen to and communicate their own grievances.

**Explore how Priestley uses the character of Sheila to explore the theme of gender inequality.**

Priestley uses the character of Sheila to explore the idea that gender inequality is exacerbated by the societal belief that women ought to shape their views around men and that they should assume a passive role in decision-making. This is particularly evident in the quotation, 'Oh – Gerald – you've got it – is it the one you wanted me to have?'. In this quotation, Sheila is tentatively pleased at the engagement ring she has been given. However, the rhetorical question 'the one you wanted me to have?' suggests that she feels compelled to check if she ought to be pleased by Gerald and that she immediately questions her own emotions to ensure that they align with her fiancé's. Furthermore, the ordering of the pronouns, 'You...me' emphasises that she prioritises Gerald's feelings over her own and that she adopts a submissive role in their conversations. However, Priestley's decision to transform the character of Sheila as the play progresses, implies that such constraining societal beliefs can be shattered if women are empowered to believe that they have a voice. This is clear in the quotation, 'Don't interfere, please, father'. This command is given after the character's interaction with the Inspector who forces Sheila to have an opinion. Priestley's use of the imperative, paired with the verb 'interfere' which suggests that Mr Birling is being unhelpful and irritating, suggests that when women are encouraged and given the opportunity, they are perfectly able to be assertive and that societal norms around gender can be tackled by those in a more powerful position (in this case, the character of the Inspector) making space for the female voice.

### **How does Priestley use the character of Mrs Birling to explore generational differences?**

Priestley uses the character of Mrs Birling to suggest that generational differences are exacerbated by a lack of understanding and animosity towards the unfamiliar. This is particularly evident in the quotation, 'What an expression, Sheila! Really the things you girls pick up these days!'. The use of exclamatory sentences establishes Mrs Birling's tone of outrage and hints at her disdain for her daughter's choice of language. Priestley also uses the phrase 'pick up' to suggest that she believes that Sheila's use of the term 'squiffy' to describe Eric is beneath her and for her to use it is demeaning. Priestley's decision to include Mrs Birling's hyperbolic reaction to an informal adjective, also perhaps highlights Mrs Birling's concerning lack of understanding towards her son's behaviour: her annoyance at Sheila could be a way of disguising her embarrassment at the suggestion that Eric is drunk. This therefore highlights the notion that the divide between the generations is cemented by purposeful ignorance. Finally, Priestley's use of the noun 'girls' to describe Sheila, suggests that Mrs Birling wishes to establish her daughter, the younger generation, as inferior and both of the Birlings use this infantilising term to perpetuate the divide between the generations and to hint at a lack of maturity within their children to disguise their own insecurities about an ever-changing society.

### **How does Priestley present Mr Birling?**

Priestley crafts Birling's character as a symbol of capitalism to draw the audience's attention to the flaws of the self-absorbed and selfish way of living that capitalists are accustomed to. Priestley presents Birling as being extremely reluctant to show any remorse for Eva Smith's death and completely shuns the inspector with regard to being at blame for her suicide - highlighting that he has no sense of social responsibility. For example, 'Still, 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.' Here, Priestley suggests that Birling is only concerned about himself and has little care for anybody else and sees the rest of society as being beyond his need for care. The tone of the line 'I can't' emphasises how Birling feels he is unable to get involved with the suicide and he is intent upon this. Furthermore, the use of the phrase 'very awkward' highlights Birling's dismissive attitude to helping those in need; the adjective 'awkward', coupled with the intensifier 'very', serves to convey the notion that Birling feels uncomfortable about showing any 'responsibility' for anyone else other than the Birling family and Priestley uses this to show how this would not be in his nature – he is the very emblem of capitalism and shows no likening towards socialism. Contextually, these capitalist tendencies are evocative of the Edwardian society which was strictly hierarchical where the ruling classes did little in the way of helping those who were in less fortunate positions than themselves – there was no welfare state and therefore social responsibility was not a mantra so closely followed. Priestley intentionally writes Birling as such a character to warn his 1945 audience of the perils of capitalism - wanted to canvas support for the Labour Party in the upcoming Khaki Election – a

party with socialist intentions and therefore a complete contrast to the self-centered and uncharitable Mr Birling.

### **How does Priestley present Sheila at the start of the play?**

At the opening of the play, Sheila is presented as a privileged young woman who is mostly concerned with her engagement to Gerald. Priestley highlights her immaturity by describing her as a 'pretty girl' who is 'very pleased with life and rather excited'. The noun 'girl' suggests that she is perhaps a little naïve, a result of her cosseted upbringing so far, while the adjective 'pretty' is perhaps chosen to show that Sheila is herself quite preoccupied with her appearance. This immature, naïve, shallow side to Sheila is also shown in the way that she refers to her parents as 'mummy' and 'daddy' and in the way that she acquiesces to them. For example, she apologises to Mr Birling when he thinks she is not listening to him and is keen to reassure him – 'Actually, I was listening'. So far, Sheila embodies the Edwardian view of women – judged by their appearance and with little status in society beyond securing an advantageous marriage.

However, there are also hints in this early part of the play about how Sheila will develop. Firstly, we see that she is an observant person when she chastises Gerald for his neglect of her 'all last summer'. Her manner towards Gerald is 'half serious, half playful' and the repetition of this stage direction draws our attention to the possibility that Gerald's behaviour towards her at that time has bothered her. Secondly, the arrival of the Inspector and the news of Eva Smith sees Sheila start to look beyond her privileged world of engagement rings and wedding plans. Responding to the Inspector's description of Eva Smith's life, she speaks 'warmly', observing that 'It's a rotten shame'. The adverb 'warmly' shows that Eva's unhappy life is something that Sheila feels strongly about. Furthermore, it is Sheila who first voices Priestley's socialist message – 'But these girls aren't cheap labour – they're people'. Finally, she begins to question her father's authority. When Mr Birling suggests a quiet one-to-one with the Inspector, Sheila interrupts him, demanding 'Why should you?'. She understands straight away that she must face the Inspector's questions herself. It is through Sheila that Priestley can show how the desire for a socially responsible nation starts with each individual. Sheila's immediate concern for Eva Smith, a character completely outside of her own social sphere, shows her to be open to Priestley's socialist, inclusive message. Sheila embodies Priestley's belief that change in post-war Britain would be effected by young people and the clues to her character development are present in the opening stages of the play.

### **How does Priestley present the theme of conflict in the play?**

Priestley presents the Birling family as conflicted to highlight the weaknesses in capitalist ways of living and to suggest that society will not run smoothly if it continues to be selfish and self-centered. By the end of Act 1, Priestley presents the Birlings as somewhat more divided than they were at the beginning of the play when they are 'pleased with themselves'. For example, Priestley presents conflict between Sheila and Gerald when she comes to the realization that he has been having an affair and acted in a selfish way, she says: 'Oh don't be stupid' and 'Why – you fool – he knows.' Here, Sheila shows her anger towards Gerald and their relationship turns to disharmony. The use of the insults 'stupid' and 'fool' highlights Sheila's frustration and contempt at finding out about Gerald's adulterous behavior. Such name calling and affronting from Sheila very much contrasts with the more respectful character we see at the opening of the play. The offensive language symbolises how Sheila, under the influence of the Inspector, has started to realise the backward and dismissive nature of Edwardian society towards women; she begins to show signs of subverting the patriarchy and standing up for herself in the face of deceit and betrayal by Gerald – hence showing the two characters no longer as a unit, but, instead, conflicted. Moreover, Priestley intentionally crafts this change in Sheila's character – from submissive to outspoken – to highlight the progress that the value of women had made since 1912 and would make under the new Labour government of 1945 (they gained suffrage in 1918 and assumed 'male' jobs during the war). The conflict between Sheila and Gerald is one of many in the play; through such clashes Priestley draws the audience attention to the notion that the Edwardian upper classes were very good at keeping up with appearances,



but in reality they were not always moral and their behavior was somewhat sinful. It could be argued that when looking at the works as a morality play, Priestley wants to teach his audience a lesson that we should think about the consequences of our actions and think about others, instead of only caring about ourselves and our own desires – if such a lesson is followed, then conflict wouldn't triumph in society.

### How does Priestley present Inspector Goole in the play so far?

When Inspector Goole first arrives at the Birling family home he is presented as being powerful and in charge of the situation he has entered. This will immediately unsettle the Birling family, and in particular, Arthur Birling who is used to being in control, and has been up to this point in the play. The Inspector arrives during a time of celebration and interrupts Mr Birling half way through his speech on the importance of being self-sufficient and *not* being mindful of the community around you: "...that a man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own – and--" This interruption suggests the importance of the Inspector's visit, and that no time can be wasted in teaching the Birling family that capitalist beliefs are not conducive to a successful society, but to instead follow a more Socialist way of living. His interruption also suggests that the Inspector needs to intervene before Mr Birling's dangerous ideas are believed by his impressionable children, and threaten the prospects of future generations. Inspector Goole is Priestley's mouthpiece, and so through this character he was able to teach his audience the important message that society should be open, tolerant and willing to help those in need rather than following a rigid class system with a lack of community spirit. This was especially important after the Second World War, when society was in desperate need for change. By having the Inspector interrupt Mr Birling in his own home shows the power that he has over the family, and how strongly he feels about them needing to change their way of life. Moreover, the fact that the adjective "sharp" is used to describe the sound of the doorbell ringing implies that the Inspector is someone who will cause shock and unpleasantness amongst the family, and that he isn't afraid of disrupting people in a higher social class than himself. In fact, he feels that this disruption is needed in order for the family to be unsettled enough to want to change. The double meaning of the adjective "sharp" to also mean intelligent further suggests that the Inspector will unsettle the Birlings due to his quick and astute nature, something the audience will already know that Mr Birling lacks, as observed in his foolish remarks about the Titanic being "unsinkable". This places Inspector Goole above the family with a high ranking social status, and further proves how powerful he is. It also shows that such a rigid class system is flawed and needs to be changed in order to guarantee the future success of the country.

### How does Priestley present Gerald's character in Act 2?

In the opening of Act 2 Priestley uses the character of Gerald to explore some of the more deceitful elements of the upper classes. He is not only shown to be disingenuous in his relationship with Eva/Daisy but also how expected standards of behaviour were different for men and women. In Gerald's confession Priestley writes of the Palace theatre bar that it is "A favourite haunt of women of the town-". This refers to the possibility that the bar at the Palace Theatre is used by prostitutes in order to attract business. The euphemistic phrasing "women of the town" suggests a need for Gerald to continue to hide the facts from both Sheila and the Inspector as if this is a taboo subject in polite society. It seems strange to the audience as the adjective "favourite" suggest that the women are there frequently and are able to get a lot of trade from the men that regularly go to the bar. This raises questions as to why Gerald seems to attend such a place given that he is the "well mannered" aristocrat. Priestley emphasizes a disparity between the "manners" of the bourgeoisie and their actions in society. The fact that the verb "haunt" is used to suggest something spectral about the prostitutes they are ghostly and so are not fully acknowledged by society, absolving them of guilt. Women on the lowest rungs of society were at great risk of turning to prostitution as a way of surviving. Priestly is reminding his 1945 audience that through nostalgia the Edwardian era may have appeared to be one of manners, social structure and etiquette, however, it had a much more sinister under-

belly which it could not admit to itself. Furthermore, Priestley shows that this was not just exceptional circumstances as Birling confirms when he says “a lot of young men –” before Sheila cuts in. The noun “lot” here conveys that it was not only common but almost expected that young men would frequent these places or keep mistresses as Gerald has done. Priestley therefore uses Gerald as the typical “man about town” in order to critique some of the attitudes of the Edwardian era in order to allow the 1945 audience to continue the societal change and progress following on from World War 2.

### **How does Priestley criticise the selfishness of people in An Inspector Calls?**

Priestley’s modern morality play “An Inspector Calls” challenges audiences to reflect on their treatment of others. His mouthpiece, Inspector Goole, instructs the affluent but selfish Birling family to reconsider their capitalist attitudes and to care more about the most vulnerable people in society, shown through the character of Eva Smith.

Mr Birling’s selfishness is criticised when Priestley invites his audience, through the use of dramatic irony, to mock Mr Birling’s foolishness. Mr Birling’s conceited and pretentious comments that “the Germans don’t want war” and that the Titanic is “unsinkable – absolutely unsinkable” allow us to appreciate how misguided he is, in spite of his certain tone. The intensifying adverb “absolutely” underlines his arrogance, allowing the modern audience to appreciate how wrong he is and giving them no faith in his claims later in the play.

Birling’s selfishness shows itself specifically in his exploitation of Eva Smith: the symbolic representative of the proletariat. Her involvement in the strike at Birling and Co is all the justification he needs to fire her: “she’d had a lot to say – far too much – so she had to go”. The fact that Eva has identified herself as a ‘troublemaker’ simply because she has something to say, is a stark reminder of gender roles and expectations in the patriarchal society of Edwardian England. Women would be expected to consult to men about all things. Birling’s primary concern is for his business and its moneymaking potential (“It’s my duty to keep labour costs down”), rather than for Eva and her wellbeing. In 1918, there was no welfare state, so no safety net for someone like Eva, who would have struggled to survive without employment. Mr Birling’s selfishness means that he concerns himself only with his company’s success and is both obstinate and utterly unrepentant when he learns of the consequences of his actions.

Priestley is openly critical of Birling’s capitalist attitude here, promoting a more caring and socialist viewpoint through his characterisation of the Inspector.

### **How does Priestley use the character of Mrs Birling to present ideas about social class?**

Priestley explores the concept that capitalism promotes moral corruption through the Birlings, particularly through the characters of Mr and Mrs Birling, who are presented as being prejudiced towards the lower classes throughout An Inspector Calls. Mrs Birling, who represents the wealthier, privileged classes and their selfish attitudes, collectively refers to Eva and other females alike as ‘girls of that sort’, and ‘girls of that class’. By addressing Eva as ‘girl’ Mrs Birling highlights her ‘cold’ nature that is referred to in the opening stage directions, as she draws our attention to the fact she feels she is socially and morally superior to Eva Smith who she regards with contempt. As well as this, the determiner ‘that’ highlights her disgust towards the proletariat, and her complete lack of conscience as she is conveyed as someone who is entirely unsympathetic towards Eva’s situation, which is as a result of her own son’s actions. Being a morality play, it’s this lack of compassion that Priestley wants to draw the audience’s attention to as they question their own morals and actions (or lack of) towards lower class society.

Mrs Birling’s ‘cold’ nature is emphasised further towards the end of the play as we witness a rather speedy recovery when the Inspector leaves, highlighting her unchanged lack of compassion for lower class society, as well as the lack of remorse she has for the part she has played in the death of her own grandchild, as through her ignorance she refuses to accept that any member of her family and class can do any wrong.



This ignorance is supported by early feminists who criticised allegedly altruistic women like Mrs Birling who failed to acknowledge the seriousness of the appalling living conditions and situations that members of the proletariat like Eva found themselves in during this time.

### **How does Priestley present the difference between Sheila Birling and Eva Smith in the play?**

Priestley draws a stark contrast between Sheila Birling and Eva Smith at the very beginning of his play, with Sheila described in the stage directions as “very pleased with life and rather excited” in contrast to the increasingly neglected and desperate Eva Smith who is a victim of an unforgiving and unjust Edwardian society. However, although Sheila and Eva are the antithesis of each other in terms of background, social class and opportunity, Priestley suggests that there are clear parallels between them: both young women are restricted and objectified by the society in which they live.

Priestley initially presents Sheila as an archetypal, privileged Edwardian young lady who has been sheltered and cosseted by her parents. Her use of the terms “Mummy” and “Daddy” are childish affectations, and are repeatedly used by Priestley to present her as spoilt and naive. She unquestioningly accepts her father’s authority, and it seems that this pattern of deference will continue when she is married. She is initially submissive to Gerald and, on receipt of her engagement ring, asks “Oh...is it the one you wanted me to have?” Here, Priestley’s use of direct address in her question confirms her compliance: her primary concern is that the ring she wears is chosen for her by Gerald. Thus, at the beginning of the play, Priestley make it clear that Sheila understands and adheres to the role she is expected to play as a dutiful daughter and soon-to-be wife in the Edwardian era. Not only this, but her fixation on “admiring her ring” indicates that she is superficial, materialistic and, in the context of the play as a morality play, potentially guilty of avarice. However, it soon becomes clear that Priestley’s point is that – like her engagement ring – Sheila is a commodity; her marriage will ensure the prosperity of the two families and will secure their futures (at the expense of those who work for them, like Eva Smith). In the bleakest terms, Priestley presents her as a participant in a business transaction that her father and fiancé prize above everything else. Thus, Sheila is objectified by an Edwardian society which values women merely by their appearance and their ability to secure an advantageous marriage.

Like Sheila, Priestley uses the character of Eva Smith to reveal the ways that women at the time were exploited by men, not only economically but also sexually. She is an object of desire for both Eric and Gerald who, although they treat her differently, can be seen as taking advantage of her vulnerability – and their own social position – to use her. Eric describes her as “pretty” and “a good sport”, and Gerald remembers her as “fresh and charming” and “very pretty”, a stark contrast to the “dough-faced” women in the Palace bar where he meets her. Priestley’s choice of adjectives emphasises her innocence, purity and almost child-like naivety, and they deliberately contrast with the setting, as the Palace bar symbolises Eva’s fall from grace and innocence, from a respectable job at Milwards to a place where “women of the town” congregate. Eva’s new name is also symbolic: the name “Daisy” suggests an innocent flower that is about to be plucked, whilst her surname “Renton” suggests that she is for hire. Priestley’s suggestion is that Eva has become a commodity – like Sheila – and that Gerald swiftly purchases her, in much the same way that he buys an engagement ring for Sheila. As Sheila herself astutely observes, Gerald likes to see himself as a “Fairy Prince” in his ‘rescue’ of Eva, but Priestley’s view is different. He invites his audience to decide whether Gerald is, rather, a predator, who picks up Eva when she is at her most vulnerable, “desperately hard up and...hungry.” Like Sheila therefore, Eva is judged by her looks and exploited by the men around her, although the circumstances are, on the surface, very different. Through Eva, he reveals the plight of female workers during the Edwardian era but also – through her name – suggests that she is a symbol of all women at all times. Priestley’s socialist beliefs meant that he believed in emancipation for women – for example, he intentionally sets his play in a period of intense change which saw the rise of the suffragette movement – and so Eva Smith is a symbol of women’s oppression. Crucially, it is also Sheila who is the most moved by Eva’s oppression – “these girls aren’t cheap labour – they’re *people*” – and who becomes the most passionate advocate of the Inspector’s, and Priestley’s, message.

### **How does Priestley present Eric in the play so far?**

Priestley uses the character of Eric to explore the concept that the young people of a post-war Britain would be the answer to a hopeful future. However, linking with the theme of a morality play, he also uses Eric to address some concerns he had about the dangers of immoral behaviour. Through Eric, Priestley shows that

excessive drinking and casual relationships and the exploitation of the proletariat can have consequences, but he also portrays that young people are more open to change and are the key to society moving forward. At the beginning of the play, Eric lacks confidence and is unsure of himself. He is described through the stage directions as 'half-shy, half-assertive'. Through the adjectives, Priestley makes Eric an awkward character, a young man who is expected to live up to the expectations of his capitalist father, but Eric is someone who does have a sense of moral value. Priestley wanted to encourage this moral conduct within Eric and make a 1945 audience find it within themselves. When Birling is behaving in an ingratiating manner in front of the Inspector, Eric challenges him and declares 'why shouldn't she try for higher wages, we try for the highest possible prices...just because she has a bit of spirit?' He is the first character to accept or acknowledge any social responsibility for the proletariat in the play. He describes Eva's 'spirit' as something that should be commended, but he's quickly shot down by his father for daring to challenge his actions, 'unless you brighten your ideas, you'll not be in a position to let anybody stay or let anybody go.' The verbs 'let' and 'tell' evoke that Birling's attitude is the opposite to Eric's. He is set on a sense of hierarchy and control. Eric feels that division between the bourgeois and proletariat should be more narrowed, suggesting that a 1945 audience, who had just witnessed a landslide victory for Labour, would have warmed to Eric's character from the beginning of the play.

Secondly, Eric's experience with the Inspector caused him great emotional turmoil and Priestley is warning his audience, that like Eric, they need to accept the consequences of their actions and learn from them. '(bursting out) What's the use of talking about behaving sensibly? You're beginning to pretend now that nothing's really happened at all. And I can't see it like that. This girl's still dead, isn't she? Nobody's brought her to life, have they?' The stage direction (bursting out) really displays Eric's heightened sense of emotion by the end of the play. He is outraged that both his parents and Gerald feel that they can return to their previous way of life just because they have discovered that the Inspector may not be real. His line 'and I can't see it like that' informs us as a reader, that Eric has learned his lesson. His use of repetitive rhetorical questions towards his parents and Gerald are effective because it highlights his sense of passion and emotion towards moral justice and he is trying to get them to realise that their actions have not changed. They still behaved in the way that they did. He asks the stark question 'This girl's still dead, isn't she?' He is clearly distressed and understands the gravity of the situation, he can't understand why the others don't. He is astounded that they cannot recognise this.

### **How does Priestley present the theme of responsibility in the play?**

Priestley suggests that sharing responsibility for one another plays an intrinsic part in making a successful and cohesive society. During the inspector's final speech, Priestley uses Goole as his mouthpiece to air his ideas about the importance of taking responsibility for your actions and those around you. The inspector says to the Birlings: 'There are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths left with us.' Here the inspector is trying to make the Birling family realise that there is still time left to change the error of their ways and to become empathetic and understanding of the situation of the proletariat who live a less fortunate life than themselves. The use of the repetition of 'millions' emphasises the notion that there are far more people who are in a compromising situation in society than the Birlings like to acknowledge. Furthermore, Priestley purposefully uses the surname 'Smith', which is synonymous with a working class occupation and is common place in British society, to symbolize the idea that the working classes need support and care – without the more privileged in society taking more responsibility, their lives could be at risk as well as just Eva Smith's. Contextually, this echoes Priestley's concerns about society in 1945 – by setting the play in 1912 he encourages his audience to reflect on the selfish and self-centred attitudes of the Edwardian upper classes who were supercilious and often acted in their own self-interest. As a writer with a strong socialist voice, and as a member of the Labour party, Priestley was keen to use his play in a propagandist way in order to persuade the electorate to vote Labour in the Khaki Election of 1945. Ultimately, Priestley felt that taking responsibility for those from all sections of society was at the centre of building a community.

### **Example Questions:**

It is vitally important that you not only revise the content of the play, but also test whether you can apply that content in an exam response. It is advisable that you revise the content first, then complete the past

papers so that you have the relevant knowledge to include in your response. For this part of the exam, you will not have an extract or a copy of the play, and so you need to refer to the *whole* play in any answers you produce.

It is also important that when you attempt these past paper questions, you do so under timed conditions. This will allow you to see how much you can realistically produce in 45 minutes. Try to produce a response using the same method that you would in the exam (if you don't work on a laptop in the exam, ensure that you hand write your response).

Top Tip:

Look at the wording of the questions and their structure. Try to create your own past papers on different themes and characters not included in ones below.

Top Tip:

If you don't feel confident enough to attempt a full question, a useful revision activity is to plan a response instead. This will still test your knowledge of quotations, analysis and context. If you prefer to revise in groups, try planning the same question and sharing your ideas in order to test yourself, and potentially discover ideas you hadn't thought about yourself.

Complete the past paper questions to test your knowledge and whether you can apply it successfully.

<p>How and why does Sheila change in <i>An Inspector Calls</i>?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Sheila responds to her family and to the Inspector</li> <li>• How Priestley presents Sheila by the ways he writes.</li> </ul>	<p>How does Priestley explore responsibility in <i>An Inspector Calls</i>?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ideas about responsibility in <i>An Inspector Calls</i></li> <li>• How Priestley presents these ideas by the ways he writes.</li> </ul>
<p>How does Priestley present some of the differences between the older and younger generations in <i>An Inspector Calls</i>?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the different generations respond to events and to each other</li> <li>• How Priestley presents the different generations in the play.</li> </ul>	<p>What do you think is the importance of the ending of <i>An Inspector Calls</i>?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the ending of the play presents some important ideas</li> <li>• How Priestley presents these ideas by the ways he writes.</li> </ul>
<p>How does Priestley explore the differences and contrasts between people/ in society in <i>An Inspector Calls</i>?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The differences and contrasts in <i>An Inspector Calls</i></li> <li>• How Priestley presents these differences and contrasts by the ways he writes.</li> </ul>	<p>How does Priestley use the idea of the well-made play to explore some of his ideas in <i>An Inspector Calls</i>?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Priestley presents the conventions of the well-made play</li> <li>• How Priestley uses the well-made play to explore ideas about society and people.</li> </ul>
<p>How does Priestley present some of the differences between social classes in <i>An Inspector Calls</i>?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How he presents some of these differences</li> <li>• How he explores differences between social classes in the play.</li> </ul>	<p>‘Eva Smith is the real victim in the play.’ Explore how far you agree with this statement.</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Priestley presents the character of Eva</li> <li>• How Priestley uses the character of Eva to explore some of his ideas.</li> </ul>
<p>‘Only some characters are able to learn from their mistakes’. Explore how far you agree with this statement.</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Priestley presents characters who learn in the play</li> <li>• How Priestley uses these characters to explore some of his ideas.</li> </ul>	<p>Who do you think is the kindest character in the play?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Priestley presents your chosen character</li> <li>• How Priestley uses your chosen character to explore some of his ideas.</li> </ul>
<p>Who do you think is the most selfish character in the play?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Priestley presents your chosen character</li> <li>• How Priestley uses your chosen character to explore some of his ideas.</li> </ul>	<p><i>An Inspector Calls</i> has been described as ‘a play that shows the need for change in society.’ To what extent do you agree with this view?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Priestley presents his ideas</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How Priestley uses his play to explore some of his ideas about society.</li> </ul>
<p>How does Priestley present characters pretending/ lying/ deceiving (to) each other/ themselves in <i>An Inspector Calls</i>?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How some of the characters pretend/ lie/ deceive</li> <li>How Priestley presents these characters pretending/ lying/ deceiving.</li> </ul>	<p>How does Priestley present tension/ conflict in <i>An Inspector Calls</i>?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How some of the characters deal with tension/ conflict</li> <li>How Priestley presents them dealing with tension/ conflict.</li> </ul>
<p>How does Priestley present inequality/ injustice in <i>An Inspector Calls</i>?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How some of the characters deal with inequality/ injustice</li> <li>how Priestley presents them dealing with inequality/ injustice</li> </ul>	<p>How does Priestley present some of the differences between Eva and other members of society in <i>An Inspector Calls</i>?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How Priestley presents Eva as different to other members of society</li> <li>How Priestley uses the character of Eva to explore ideas about difference.</li> </ul>
<p>How does Priestley use the character of Eva Smith to explore some of his ideas in <i>An Inspector Calls</i>?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How Priestley presents Eva</li> <li>How Priestley uses Eva to explore ideas about society and people.</li> </ul>	<p>How does Priestley use the character of Inspector Goole to explore some of his ideas in <i>An Inspector Calls</i>?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How Priestley presents the Inspector</li> <li>How Priestley uses the Inspector to explore ideas about society and people.</li> </ul>
<p>How does Priestley use the setting to explore some of his ideas in <i>An Inspector Calls</i>?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How Priestley presents the setting</li> <li>How Priestley uses the setting to explore ideas about society and people.</li> </ul>	<p>Who do you think is the most powerful character in <i>An Inspector Calls</i>?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What your chosen character says and does and how they are powerful</li> <li>How Priestley presents your chosen character.</li> </ul>
<p><i>An Inspector Calls</i> has been described as ‘a play that is a warning to society’. To what extent do you agree with this view?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How Priestley presents his ideas</li> <li>How Priestley uses warnings to explore some of his ideas about people.</li> </ul>	<p>How does Priestley present class differences in <i>An Inspector Calls</i>?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What some of the class differences are</li> <li>How Priestley presents some of these differences.</li> </ul>
<p>How does Priestley use the characters of Mr Birling and Inspector Goole to explore ideas about class?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How Priestley presents Mr Birling and Inspector Goole</li> <li>How Priestley uses these characters to explore ideas about class.</li> </ul>	<p>How does Priestley use the character of Eva Smith to explore ideas about power and powerlessness?</p> <p>Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How Priestley presents the character of Eva</li> <li>How Priestley uses Eva to explore ideas about power and powerlessness.</li> </ul>

<p>Do you think Mr Birling (<i>any other character?</i>) is an important character in <i>An Inspector Calls</i>? Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Priestley presents the character of Mr Birling</li> <li>• How Priestley uses Mr Birling to present ideas about people and society.</li> </ul>	<p>What do you think is the importance of Inspector Goole in <i>An Inspector Goole</i>? Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How different characters respond to Inspector Goole</li> <li>• How Priestley uses Inspector Goole to explore ideas about society and people in the play.</li> </ul>
<p>How does Priestley use the character of Eva Smith to explore ideas about power and oppression in <i>An Inspector Calls</i>? Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Priestley presents the character of Eva Smith</li> <li>• How Priestley uses the character of Eva Smith to explore ideas about power and oppression in the play.</li> </ul>	<p>How does Priestley present the ways Sheila and Eric's attitudes towards Eva changes during the course of the play? Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Priestley presents their changing attitudes towards Eva</li> <li>• How their attitudes towards Eva are influenced by the society in which they live.</li> </ul>
<p>How does Priestley present the differences between generations in <i>An Inspector Calls</i>? Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Priestley presents some of the differences</li> <li>• How Priestley uses these differences to explore ideas about society.</li> </ul>	<p>How does Priestley present the differences between men and women in <i>An Inspector Calls</i>? Write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Priestley presents some of the differences</li> <li>• How Priestley uses these differences to explore ideas about society.</li> </ul>



## Answers:

### Page 3, Question 5:

-“Just because the miners came out on strike, there’s a lot of wild talk about possible labour trouble in the near future. Don’t worry. We’ve passed the worst of it.

-“We’re in for a time of steadily increasing prosperity.”

-“There isn’t a chance of war. The world’s developing so fast that it’ll make war impossible.”

-“The *Titanic*...unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable.”

-“In twenty or thirty year’s time – let’s say, in 1940 –...by that time you’ll be living in a world that’ll have forgotten all these Capital versus Labour agitations and all these silly little war scares. There’ll be peace and prosperity and rapid progress everywhere.”

### Page 10, Question 1:

Priestley may have wanted to use a naturalistic setting in ‘An Inspector Calls’ in order to present a realistic and, more importantly, relatable setting for the audience. The audience will be able to imagine themselves in a house like the one presented on stage, and see a familiar scene in front of them. Priestley wanted to appeal to the conscience of his audience in order to present his beliefs on society at the time, and by using a naturalistic setting, he is able to explore his ideas in a way that is not too farfetched for the audience to believe.

### Page 16 (Opening Stage Directions)::

1. The Birlings are a wealthy family who live out of the city in an affluent area. “Fairly” implies the family are middle class, as opposed to upper class.

2. Mr Birling is a self-made man, which reinforces that he and his family are middle class. This could also hint as to why he holds such strong capitalist ideas.

3 and 4. The staging suggests the furniture is impressive, and perhaps used to prove their societal status to potential visitors.

5. The furniture and home don’t create a cosy atmosphere, perhaps hinting that the perfect family image that they try to portray is not as perfect as it seems.

6 and 7. The pink lighting suggests that the family are wearing ‘rose tinted glasses’ – they see their family life as perfect and tightly knit. The Inspector’s arrival shatters this image so the family are more exposed and vulnerable. The change in lighting indicates a shift in the atmosphere.

8. The two heads of the house are separated by the table – they appear as ‘book ends’ keeping the family together. However, their separation could indicate the fractions that appear as the play progresses.

9. Eric, Sheila and Gerald are separated on the stage, possibly suggesting the level of seriousness in their involvement with Eva/Daisy's death. Eric being downstage could imply that he is more to blame, with Sheila and Gerald being less so.
10. The family have a servant to wait on them, indicating their wealth, but also that they are using members of the lower classes for their own gains.
11. The family try to keep up appearances, but the lack of a cloth on the table suggests all isn't perfect and the family's appearance is different to the reality.
12. Champagne glasses signify the celebratory nature of the evening, and also wealth.
13. The characters are smartly dressed, showing their wealth, social status and again, the celebratory nature of the evening.
14. Mr Birling is a large man, suggesting his wealth – rich/heavy food would not have been easily available in 1912 for all classes in society.
15. Portentous – *behaving pompously to impress others*. Mr Birling is self-important throughout the play, and uses his position as owner of a manufacturing company and links to important members of society to support this.
16. Provincial – *an inhabitant of the regions outside the capital city of a country, especially when regarded as unsophisticated or narrow-minded*. Mr Birling comes across as ignorant in his comments about responsibility and community – he thinks everyone should look after themselves when in reality this often isn't possible, especially for working class members of society who did not have a welfare system to fall back on in times of need.
17. Mrs Birling is presented as unwelcoming, unfriendly and aloof, especially when the Inspector arrives.
18. Mrs Birling is a snob and treats those below her in society poorly – she scolds Mr Birling for praising the cook in front of Gerald.
- 19 and 20. The younger generation have their appearance commented on – Sheila is seen as empty headed, childish and the implication is that there is little more to her than a pretty face. Gerald's description is developed in more detail, perhaps as a way of putting Sheila (a woman) in her place in society.
21. Gerald is socially superior to all of the Birlings. His family are aristocratic.
22. Gerald enjoys spending his free time drinking and enjoying life. It suggests he is sociable and well-liked by others.
23. Eric's opening description implies that he is awkward both socially, and in himself. He doesn't know how to behave appropriately in social situations, as demonstrated in the way he behaves with Eva.
24. The family are set up for a fall from the start – they are “pleased with themselves” and seemingly have no cares in the world. They are oblivious to the struggles that the lower class members of society had to deal with.

## Section B: Poetry Anthology (Power and Conflict)

### Social and Historical Context (AO3):

#### Ozymandias:

Percy Bysshe Shelley first published 'Ozymandias' in 1818. Shelley and his friend, the poet Horace Smith, had challenged themselves to write a poem with the same subject, title, form and theme. Thus, there are two strikingly similar sonnets entitled 'Ozymandias' published just weeks apart in 'The Examiner'.

Shelley's poem takes its title from the Egyptian pharaoh, Ramesses II, known to the Greeks by the name Ozymandias. In 1817, news broke that archaeologists had discovered fragments of a funeral statue of Ramesses II and intended to send the pieces to the British Museum. At the bottom of the statue the inscription read (translated): "King of kings am I, Osymandis. If anyone would know how great I am and where I lie, let him surpass one of my works." This discovery inspired Shelley's poem. Pharaohs believed that they were gods in mortal form and that their legacy would last forever, which is an idea explored in the poem.

#### London:

William Blake was born in London in 1757. His father, a hosier, recognised his son's artistic talents and sent him to study at a drawing school when he was ten years old. At 14, William asked to be an apprentice to the engraver James Basire. It was under his direction that he further developed his innate skills. As a young man Blake worked as an engraver, illustrator, and drawing teacher.

Blake published almost all of his works himself, by an original process in which the poems were etched by hand, along with illustrations and decorative images, onto copper plates. These plates were inked to make prints, and the prints were then coloured in with paint. This expensive and labour-intensive production method resulted in a quite limited circulation of Blake's poetry during his life.

William Blake produced a double collection of poems, one entitled 'Songs of Innocence', the other 'Songs of Experience'. Most of the naïve and simple poems in 'Songs of Innocence' had a counterpart in the more bitter and cynical 'Songs of Experience'. 'London' appears in 'Songs of Experience' and does not have a counterpart poem.

The poem was set during Victorian/Edwardian London, a time when life was difficult for large numbers of the population. Poverty, child labour and crime rates were high, which made life for the poor very tough. Women had no rights, and disease and malnutrition were killing many. Blake explores how London, seen by many as the greatest city in the world, was in fact dirty and corrupt.

#### Extract from, The Prelude:

Wordsworth is often regarded as one of England's greatest poets. He is a Romantic poet. 'The Romantics' were a group of poets who wrote most of their poems around the theme of nature. Critics cannot quite decide when this period starts and ends, but it roughly begins in the early 1780s and ends in the 1830s.

Other poets who belong to this group are Blake, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Keats. The majority of their poems focused on nature as something powerful and possibly mystical, emotions and feelings, what makes us individuals, solitude and man's relationship with nature.

He grew up and lived in the Lake District, Cumbria. He was surrounded by beautiful landscapes, but was also incredibly isolated.

His parents died when he was a child, but he did have one sister called Dorothy. After university, Wordsworth went to Europe, where he encountered the French Revolution – there have been suggestions that this influenced some of his work.

He went on to marry a childhood friend and had five children, although tragically two of them died. He began writing 'The Prelude', an autobiographical poem, in 1798, but didn't finish it – it was published (and named) by his wife after his death.

### *My Last Duchess:*

The poem was written in 1842 but was actually set in the 1560s.

It is based on real historical figures: Duke Alfonso II and Lucrezia de' Medici.

Duke Alfonso ruled a town in northern Italy called Ferrara between 1559 and 1597. The Duchess (Lucrezia de' Medici) was his first wife and died in 1561 aged 17. They had only been married for two years and her death was shrouded in mystery and suspicious circumstances. It is believed that she was poisoned.

The poem tells the story of the Duke wanting to marry a Count's daughter. The count's representative visits the Duke at his home and they have a tour of his grand palace. They come across the painting of his "last Duchess" – the poem is told from the Duke's perspective.

- Neptune – The God of the sea, known for his fiery temper
- Claus of Innsbruck – A famous sculptor
- Frà Pandolf – The painter of his "last Duchess"

### *The Charge of the Light Brigade:*

Alfred, Lord Tennyson was one of the most important poets of the Victorian period. He was the poet laureate - the country's official poet - from 1850 until his death in 1892, making him the longest ever serving laureate.

He was born in Lincoln in 1809, as the Napoleonic Wars raged in Europe. He was the fourth of 12 children. While he came from respectable stock - his father was a clergyman - Tennyson's early home life was unstable.

His father suffered from mental illness and, disappointed by his station in life, he took to drink and drugs. Many of Tennyson's siblings had mental breakdowns, and Alfred himself occasionally fell into unexplained trances.

His fear, which turned out to be unfounded, was that he had inherited epilepsy from his father.

Tennyson's unhappy childhood helps explain the themes of murder, madness, conflict, greed and loveless marriage that run through his work.

Perhaps to escape a harsh reality, Alfred started writing poetry from a young age. He published his first poems while still a student at Cambridge.

The Crimean war saw British troops fighting in Russia. At this time, while there were basic guns and cannons, people would still fight on horseback, to rush in and attack before they could reload or stop them. However, the light brigade were very lightly equipped. They were more likely to be scouting or attacking from the back or sides rather than charging at the enemy.

During the battle, a miscommunication sent the Light Brigade charging head first into the cannons of the other side, it was a huge catastrophe and many died. It showed to the British that even mistakes could happen. The men were respected for following orders, even though they knew they might have been wrong. Some, however, have criticised the way they blindly followed orders. Lord Tennyson was the poet who was asked to write about their glorious sacrifice. He wrote the poem based on newspaper reports he read about the battle, which contrasts greatly with Owen, who wrote 'Exposure' and his other poetry based on first-hand experience of the horrors of war.

### Exposure:

Wilfred Owen is one of, if not the most well known war poet in modern history. He painted a realistic picture of trench warfare and the conditions the soldiers faced daily.

He joined the Western Front in January 1917. He suffered from shellshock – which we would recognise today as PTSD. He was sent to Craiglockhart War Hospital in April 1917 for treatment. He returned to France in August 1918, but was killed in November, 4 days before Armistice Day.

He wrote a number of letters to his mother about his time on the front line and the conditions that he and his men had to live through:

“No Man’s Land under snow is like the face of the moon; chaotic, crater-ridden, uninhabitable, awful, the abode of madness...my platoon had no dug-outs, but we had to lie out in the snow under the deadly wind...Hideous landscapes, vile noises...everything unnatural, broken, blasted; the distortion of the dead, whose unburiable bodies sit outside the dug-outs all day, all night, the most execrable sights on Earth.”

### Storm on the Island:

Heaney grew up in a farming community in Northern Ireland and wrote about its farms and cities beset with civil strife, its natural culture and language overrun by English rule. As a Catholic (more common in the Republic of Ireland), his identity was in conflict with the Protestant British hegemony.

Like Wordsworth, Heaney’s poetry captures the detail of nature, and rural life with precision - showing man in nature. He frequently evokes the pre-modern worlds of older poets like William Wordsworth and this poem links well to ‘Extract from *The Prelude*’. It can also be linked well to the first half of ‘Exposure’ or to ‘Bayonet Charge’.

During the 1960s, the predominantly catholic IRA were carrying out bombings in Northern Ireland (and parts of Britain) to try to get the British to leave Ireland.

Heaney wrote the poem in 1966 and set in a remote community on an island during a harsh storm, similar to those faced by people living in the more extreme landscapes of Ireland.

### Bayonet Charge:

A bayonet (from French baïonnette) is a knife, sword, or spike-shaped weapon designed to fit in, on, over or underneath the muzzle of a rifle, musket or similar weapon, effectively turning the gun into a spear.

This poem seems to be heavily influenced by the fact that Hughes' father was a veteran of the First World War (having survived his regiment's massacre at Gallipoli), as well as by the poetry of Wilfred Owen. Ted Hughes served in the RAF, but he did not see combat. He spent much of his time in the services reading.

Ted Hughes (1930-1998) Served as the British Poet Laureate from 1984 until he died, for which he received the Order of Merit from Queen Elizabeth II. Born in West Yorkshire, he studied at Pembroke College, Cambridge, later spending most of his life in Devon.

### Remains:

Simon Armitage wrote 'Remains' based on the testimonies of various ex-soldiers for a collection called 'The Not Dead'.

Each poem in the collection is based on an incident that one of the ex-soldiers found difficult to forget.

Post-traumatic stress disorder and mental illness is very common in soldiers who struggle to come to terms with the experiences they have been through. They can suffer with nightmares, panic attacks, depression and sometimes suicidal tendencies.

### Poppies:

Scarlet corn poppies grow naturally in conditions of disturbed earth throughout Western Europe. In late 1914, the fields of Northern France and Flanders were ripped open as World War One raged through Europe's heart. Once the conflict was over the poppy was one of the only plants to grow on the otherwise barren battlefields.

The significance of the poppy as a lasting memorial symbol to the fallen was realised by the Canadian surgeon John McCrae in his poem 'In Flanders Fields'. The poppy came to represent the immeasurable sacrifice made by his comrades and quickly became a lasting memorial to those who died in World War One and later conflicts.

Jane Weir was born in 1963 and grew up in Italy and England. Her mother was English, her father was Italian. She has continued to absorb different cultural experiences throughout her life and lived in Northern Ireland during the Troubles of the 1980s.

'Poppies' was commissioned by Duffy as part of a collection of ten contemporary war poems which were published in the Guardian in 2009, as part of a response to the escalating conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq.

She said: "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."

In 'Poppies' she tells the 'story' of a mother's experience of pain and loss as her son leaves home to go to war. She has indicated that: "I was subliminally thinking of Susan Owen [mother of Wilfred]... and families of soldiers killed in any war when I wrote this poem. This poem attempts on one level to address female experience and is consciously a political act."



### War Photographer:

The poem is written about a war photographer who has returned home and is developing his photos. The process of developing old style film photos is rather unusual for many to understand today. Old style film is very sensitive to light, so it must be done in a dark room lit with red light. The photo itself is developed using chemicals which slowly bring out the photo, it is then hung to dry. All of this can create quite a sinister atmosphere, red light, surrounding by hanging photos and chemical smells.

The poem is also looking at the contrast between the war zones and safety of being back home and the way people just do not understand the truth, after all a single photo cannot show everything. War photographers do a very dangerous job, many are killed and injured as they must get in harms way to get the photos they are after.

In the poem there is a reference to a very well-known photograph taken in 1972 during the Vietnam War. The Pulitzer Prize winning photograph, taken by Nick Ut in Trang Bang, Vietnam, shows the aftermath of a Napalm attack on innocent civilians. The photograph shocked the world as it showed a group of children screaming in pain after the attack.

### Tissue:

Imtiaz Dharker is a poet and film maker, she has Pakistani origins and was raised in Glasgow. A great number of her poems look at issues such as religion, terrorism and global politics/identity. As a result her work can be difficult to grasp.

The poem is written from the point of view of someone today looking out at the conflict and troubles of the modern world; destruction, war and politics, money and wealth as well as issues like terrorism and identity. The poem remarks how nothing is meant to last, that it would be better not to hold too tightly to that and instead we should be willing to let go and pass things on in their time to be remade.

In short, that the world would be better if it shared more qualities with 'tissue'.

### The Emigrée:

The poem explores the memory of the poet and their experiences in a far off city they spent time in as a child. The poet is looking at this city through the eyes of a child and the happy memories she had, she compares these to the truths she knows as an adult which is much harsher.

Emigrée relates to the word emigrate, the idea that a person goes and settles in another country, sometimes not feeling welcome to return.

The poet bases many of the ideas on modern examples of emigration from countries like Russia or the Middle East where people are fleeing corruption and tyranny, or those countries change in their absence to some form of dictatorship.

### Checking Out Me History:

John Agard was born in British Guiana (now called Guyana) in the Caribbean, in 1949. He moved to the UK in the late 1970s where he began educating people about Caribbean culture. He has been writing poetry since the age of 16 and is as well-known for his powerful and entertaining performances of his work as for the work itself.

He often uses his own Caribbean style of speaking in his poems to give full expression to the voice of his homeland.

8	“Toussaint L’ouverture”	Toussaint L'Ouverture or Toussaint Bréda, was the best-known leader of the Haitian Revolution. His military and political acumen saved the gains of the first Black insurrection in November 1791.
25	“Nanny de maroon”	Queen Nanny or Nanny (c. 1686 – c. 1755), Jamaican national hero, was a well-known, 18th-century leader of the Jamaican Maroons. Much of what is known about her comes from oral history, as little textual evidence exists. She was born into the Asante People in what is today Ghana, and escaped from slavery after being transported to Jamaica.
33	“Shaka de great Zulu”	Shaka kaSenzangakhona (c. 1787 – 22 September 1828), also known as Shaka Zulu was one of the most influential monarchs of the Zulu Kingdom.
35	Caribs and de Arawaks”	The story of the Arawaks, the Caribs and the Spaniards is a well known tale told to every Caribbean child. People accept it almost instinctively that there were, before the Europeans landed on these our islands, a peaceful and gentle tribe of Amerindians called the Arawaks who had inhabited the entire Caribbean archipelago.
39	“Mary Seacole”	Mary Seacole went to the Crimean War (1854 - 1856), to help British soldiers. She nursed sick and wounded soldiers. When battles were raging, she gave everyone food, blankets, clean clothes and kindness. The soldiers called her 'Mother Seacole'

### Kamikaze:

During WW2, the Japanese feared the advancement of the US forces and deployed pilots to purposely crash their planes into American warships. The first of these attacks took place on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1944, and was initially made up of a group of 24 men. More than 5000 kamikaze pilots died during the war, and took out 34 warships in total.

There is some discussion as to whether the men volunteered or were forced into these missions, but those who did volunteer believed that their suicide missions were for the greater good of Japan. According to one of the men who ‘failed’ in his mission – his engine failed before getting to the target and therefore had to return to base – he felt ashamed of surviving and often thought of committing suicide.

The literal translation of kamikaze is 'divine wind' and refers to a typhoon that destroyed an enemy fleet in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Commander Asaiki Tamai asked a group of 23 talented student pilots, all of whom he had trained, to volunteer for the special attack force. All of the pilots volunteered to join the operation.

Later, Tamai asked Lieutenant Yukio Seki to command the special attack force. Seki is said to have closed his eyes, lowered his head and thought for 10 seconds, before saying:

"Please do appoint me to the post." Seki became the 24th kamikaze pilot to be chosen.

However, Seki later said: "Japan's future is bleak if it is forced to kill one of its best pilots." and "I am not going on this mission for the Emperor or for the Empire... I am going because I was ordered to."

Read through the poetry connections grid, to help you generate some ideas for the following questions.

1. Compare the ways the poets in **Kamikaze** and one other poem present internal conflict. (30)
2. Compare the ways **Emigree** and one other poem present conflict between the past and the present. (30)
3. Compare the ways the poets in **Bayonet Charge** and one other poem present conflict in war. (30)
4. Compare the ways the poets in **The Prelude** and one other poem present nature's power. (30)
5. Compare the ways the poets in **London** and one other poem present the power of a place. (30)
6. Compare the ways '**Checking out me History**' and one other poem present conflict over identity. (30)
7. Compare the ways **Storm on the Island** and one other poem present conflict with nature. (30)
8. Compare the ways **War Photographer** and one other poem present attitudes to conflict. (30)
9. Compare the ways the poets in **Tissue** and one other poem present ideas about conflict. (30)

10. Compare the ways the poets in **Poppies** and one other poem explore the power of memories. (30)

11. Compare the ways the poets in **My Last Duchess** and one other poem present the power of pride. (30)

12. Compare the ways the poets in **Remains** and one other poem present the effects of conflict. (30)

13. Compare the ways **Exposure** and one other poem present ideas about suffering in conflict. (30)

MODEL ANSWER: Compare the ways poets present ideas about power in Storm on the Island and in one other poem from 'Power and Conflict'.

Checklist for success:

- Clear links to the theme in question
- Relevant evidence used from each poem
- Comments on poetic devices and language
- Comments on poetic structure
- Comparisons made between the two poems
- Contextual links made

14. Compare the ways **Charge of the light brigade** and one other poem present ideas about conflict. (30)

15. Compare the ways **Ozymandias** and one other poem present a decline in power. (30)

Both Heaney's Storm on the Island and Owen's Exposure present ideas about power through focusing on the power of nature and war throughout their poems. Despite the disparity in settings, power is shown have great influence on both poets throughout their work.

Firstly, the power of nature is presented to the reader within the title of the poems. By immediately referencing a 'storm', Heaney encourages the reader to view nature negatively, as the noun 'storm' often connotes destruction and strength. The isolated setting of 'the island' implies vulnerability, and could be seen to reinforce the power of nature as there is no protection from it. Similarly, Owen's title of 'Exposure' also connotes vulnerability, and - as the poem begins - the reader learns that the World War One soldiers are exposed to the harsh weather within the trenches. The single worded title demonstrates the conditions they lived in, with nothing to protect them from the 'merciless iced east winds'.

Wind is also shown to be powerful within Storm on the Island through Heaney's use of personification. In suggesting that they 'are bombarded by the empty air', Heaney personifies the air to be a threat to the island's

inhabitants. The use of the verb 'bombarde'd' develops the semantic field of war used by Heaney throughout the poem with words like 'salvo' and 'exploding' exemplifying the power nature had on the island, as though they are at war against the storm itself. It can be argued that the storm referenced in the poem is actually an extended metaphor for the infamous Troubles in Northern Ireland, therefore adding a different layer of meaning to the language of war used by Heaney as he highlights the devastation caused by the conflict at the time. Similarly, alongside the brutality of nature within Explore, Owen presents the power war held upon the soldiers in World War One (having been a soldier himself, and dying at war, Owen writes from his own personal experience). Heaney repeats the phrase 'But nothing happens' throughout his poem, demonstrating the boredom and unease of the soldiers as the war dragged on. The use of the conjunction 'but' to open the repetitive line exemplifies how the soldiers remain expectant, only to find themselves in the same situation once more, highlighting the power the war had over their lives.

Furthermore, the power nature holds over the island is shown through the repetitive nature of the storm and, as in Exposure, the islanders are constantly preparing for something to happen. In the opening line, Heaney uses the inclusive pronoun 'we' in suggesting that 'we are prepared'. The use of the pronoun unites the islanders against the storm, highlighting the power it holds over them as they have to ensure that they are ready to fight it – they have to adapt to nature as it is uncontrollable and more powerful than them. This idea is furthered through the oxymoronic description of the sea 'exploding comfortably' which implies that this is how it is most comfortable, but the verb 'exploding' has devastating connotation for the island. Similarly, in Exposure Owen questions 'is it that we are dying?', also uniting the soldiers using the inclusive pronoun 'we'. The rhetorical question indicates the power nature has over the soldiers as the harsh conditions leave them questioning how long they can survive, again showing that nature is uncontrollable and something much stronger than them.

Finally, Heaney highlights the power that nature has over one's emotions. In suggesting that the storm is 'a huge nothing that we fear', Heaney suggests that even though they are used to the storms and know they can survive it unscathed, they still 'fear' it. The use of 'fear' illustrates the emotional impact the storm has, as fear is a powerful emotion, and the oxymoron 'huge nothing' shows that whilst they know their emotions

Checklist for success:

- Clear links to the theme in question
- Relevant evidence used from each poem
- Comments on poetic devices and language
- Comments on poetic structure
- Comparisons made between the two poems
- Contextual links made

are unreasonable, the storm still holds power over them. This is reinforced through Heaney's use of the single stanza and enjambment within his poem which can be seen to reflect the pace and power of the storm as it forces the reader to continue reading with increased speed. On the other hand, in Exposure Owen presents the weather as something which should be feared, and uses separate stanzas of similar length to demonstrate the repetitive nature of life in the trenches. He also uses zoomorphism to describe the soldiers like animals as they 'cringe in holes' to escape the elements, showing the dehumanizing power of nature and war on the soldiers of World War One.

Other models:

Read the sample questions and answers. Could you colour code these answers using the key below?

**Compare the ways the poets present ideas about identity in 'Checking out Me History' and one other poem from 'Power and Conflict'.**

It is clear that in both 'Checking Out Me History' and 'Tissue' the writers wish to highlight the notion that identity can be crafted, subliminally, by outside forces and that is important to cultivate an authentic



identity for yourself. In 'Checking Out Me History', Agard repeats the pronoun within the Caribbean dialect, 'Dem' in the phrase 'Dem tell me' to highlight the notion that his identity has been crafted by an ambiguous, powerful force and, consequently, he has not had any ownership over the historical information that has been chosen or omitted throughout his education. The notion that the speaker in the poem feels that his identity has been carved as a result of oppression and through being deliberately deceived is emphasised through the quotation, 'Bandage up me eye with me own history, Blind me to me own identity'. The verbs, 'Bandage...blind' suggests that the speaker feels that the depiction of the historical figures that should play a part in his identity have been purposely hidden from him to perpetuate colonialist ideas. Furthermore, the verb 'bandage' suggests that, disturbingly, this omission of information has been hidden under the guise of protecting and caring for the people it actually oppresses. The importance of cultivating an authentic identity and rejecting archaic ideas is emphasised in 'Tissue'. In the quotation, 'If buildings were paper, I might feel their drift, see how easily they fall away on a sigh' the writer suggests that, in modern society, people's identities are often influenced by outdated institutions. The noun 'buildings' represents corporations/ institutions that continue to exist and exert power over others purely because no one has thought to question their role within a progressive society. The writer includes the metaphor of 'paper' to highlight that society would be much better and people would feel more empowered to craft their own view of the world if such institutions were viewed as temporary. This notion is further supported by the verbs 'drift...fall' which hint at the sense of peace and ebullience society would feel if the existence of such buildings were fleeting...

### **Compare the ways poets present ideas about memory in Remains and one other poem from 'Power and Conflict'.**

Both poems 'Remains' and 'War Photographer' explore the notion that the memories of past traumatic events can powerfully shape and manipulate our present recollection of them, often causing the pain of the memory itself to exceed the initial experience.

In *Remains*, Simon Armitage explores the insidious power of memory and how the everlasting pain of a traumatic event can be somewhat inescapable. Initially, the poem uses informal and colloquial language, injecting a nonchalant attitude from the speaker, such as "we get sent out" to give a sense of a real person telling their story in a conversational mode. Reflecting upon his past as a soldier in conflict, the speaker of the poem almost attempts to dehumanise the event, perhaps in an attempt to escape the memories that haunt him presently. Armitage juxtaposes this conversational tone with the sudden violence that enters the poem with the death of 'the looter'. The verb "rips" conveys a graphic example of what happens to the civilian as he is hit with the bullets of the soldiers. The use of the pronoun 'I see' which is repeated serves to emphasise the visual horror of the scene and further corroborates the notion that such traumatic memories continue to cause pain and emotional suffering. Yet this event haunts the present experiences of the soldier as it states 'he's here in my head when I close my eyes, dug in behind enemy lines'. The powerful metaphor depicts an image of torment and torture as the memory of the shooting has become engrained within him, an inescapable and self destructive memory which now permeates his present thoughts and actions.

The notion that the pain of a memory can transcend the suffering experienced during the traumatic event is echoed in the poem War Photographer. It is evident in the quotation, 'He has a job to do....hands, which did not tremble then though seem to now' that the speaker in the poem finds the process of developing and thus reliving the traumatic images he captures, more distressing than the original incident. The verb 'has' paired with the noun 'job' hints at the sense of obligation the speaker feels: that he finds the experience of facing his photographs simultaneously painful and absolutely necessary. Furthermore, the verb 'tremble' highlights the speaker's distress at having to re-experience the events in the photographs, whilst the time connectives 'then.....now' emphasises the disparity between his previous drive to capture and report the suffering depicted in the picture and his anguish in the present day at having to revisit the disturbing scenes. This further establishes the concept that the memory of an upsetting event envelopes the victim and causes them to relive and remain in the painful incident, long after the event has taken place.

### **Compare the ways poets present ideas about nature in 'Exposure' and one other poem from 'Power and Conflict'.**

In 'Exposure', Owen emphasises nature's power over human life through his opening description of 'the merciless iced East winds that knife us'. Here, Owen creates a callous impression of nature in its blatant disregard for human life and its enforcement of suffering on the fleeting lives of the soldiers in the trenches. Owens use of personification implies that nature is persecuting the soldiers perhaps as a punishment for the unnatural nature of human conflict which causes death on such an enormous scale. The adjective

'merciless' creates the notion that nature is irreverent to human suffering. Additionally, the verb 'knife' signifies that nature has the power to cause physical pain and suffering. Furthermore, Owen wrote his poetry to highlight the reality of life for soldiers in World War One and to challenge the patriotic propaganda and reporting of the war to civilians in Britain. Therefore he uses the inclusive pronoun 'us' to show that he is speaking for all soldiers and that nature, in this case exposure to severe weather, spares no one in war.

Similarly in 'The Prelude', Wordsworth highlights nature's power to captivate and govern human life: 'one summer evening (led by her)'. Unlike Owen, Wordsworth creates gentle imagery in the opening of his poem through 'summer evening'. The poet deliberately makes nature seem welcoming and creates a genial tone in his opening. Wordsworth also personifies nature through 'led by her' implying that nature has the power to mesmerise and captivate humans. Wordsworth creates the notion that nature can make human will subservient to its whims. Here those whims are seemingly congenial whereas in 'Exposure' the whims of nature seem insidious (subtly killing the soldiers as they wait for morning). Wordsworth was a romantic poet and a common trope of romantic poetry was a reverence for nature and the natural world. In this section of 'The Prelude' Wordsworth clearly idealises nature.

Overall, whilst Owen creates a savage image of nature, Wordsworth presents nature as gentle (at this point in the poem). Whilst the narrator in 'The Prelude' seems connected to and in awe of nature, Owen highlights its destructive power.

### **Compare the ways poets present ideas about impact of war in 'Bayonet Charge' and one other poem from 'Power and Conflict'.**

Ted Hughes presents the dichotomy between patriotism and fear in the central character of Bayonet Charge, an unknown soldier who "suddenly" finds himself "running – raw in raw-seamed hot khaki" as part of a bayonet charge across No Man's Land. Hughes' soldier begins to question his conscription when faced with the horrifying reality of death on the battlefield. His use of the powerful metaphor "In what cold clockwork of the stars and the nations was he the hand pointing that second?" illustrates the menacing impact of the conflict: the moment at which the soldier understands his place as a cog in a machine. The description of the authorities as "clockwork" exemplifies this notion of a vast war machine in which the individual soldiers are small and insignificant components, unquestioning in their loyalty and willingness to die for their country. Additionally, the fact that the clockwork is described with the adjective "cold" underlines the uncaring and callous nature of the powers that be, willingly sacrificing subservient soldiers in the name of war.

Similarly, Simon Armitage suggests the long term and damaging impact that war can have on a soldier's mind and body in the poem "Remains". Here another anonymous soldier recounts the day he and some colleagues shot a looter. His dispassionate narration belies the devastating impact of the event. The seemingly casual language: "sort of inside out", "tosses his guts back into his body" contrasts with the evident psychological trauma the killing has inflicted on the perpetrator: "he's here in my head when I close my eyes". The fact that the soldier sees his victim every time he tries to sleep reveals his existential crisis. The victim is "dug in behind enemy lines" and this military imagery illustrates how the insidious presence haunts him. It is interesting that the soldier regards his own head as "behind enemy lines": his own thoughts and memories have become the enemy. This clearly identifies the damaging effect that war has had. The soldier in Bayonet Charge is about to lose his life; in "Remains" the soldier is losing his sanity.

### **Compare the ways poets present ideas about power in 'London' and in one other poem from 'Power and conflict'.**

Both 'London' and 'My Last Duchess' share a similar theme of power, but both poets depict their assessment of power dissimilarly. Whilst describing the city where Blake spent most of his life, Blake forms an overwhelming and political study, written in intense anger, of his hatred towards those who have divided society and their exploitation of the proletariat. Whereas, Browning portrays power within a relationship through an egocentric, jealous and arrogant duke and how he is obsessed with materialistic possessions, including that of his wife.

Blake begins by repeating the verb 'charter'd' to depict a sense of ownership within the royals, government etc. Immediately we feel a sense of anger at the lack of freedom that the people of London have. Rivers are natural objects, not man-made; therefore, they should be free for everyone to enjoy, not restrained and bound. Here, Blake is hinting at the literal bounds and restrictions of the river, but also at the lack of rights that English citizens had. Furthermore, Blake describes the 'mind-forg'd manacles' that he feels controls the people of London, something else that is restrained and bound. However, through the metaphor, Blake

feels that the people are somewhat responsible for this themselves and they have created prisons in their own minds and imposed self-restrictions. Blake was a non-conformist; he believed in freethinking, and was not the kind to conform to society's standards. This poem particularly condemns the stringent rules of society. Similarly, power and control are the main themes in Browning's 'My Last Duchess', but it is presented through the relationship of a husband and wife. The opening lines present a painting of the duke's wife: 'That's my last Duchess painted on the wall, looking if she were alive.' The adjective 'last' reveals that the duke has possibly had many wives and this suggests that he does not marry for love but rather for personal gain. The ambiguous language also hints to the reader that the Duchess is no longer alive; it leaves the reader feeling suspicious that she has come to harm and the reader forms a sense of dislike towards the Duke as he has had the Duchess painted and placed on the wall as a prize possession. His sense of control is reinforced when he states: 'the curtain I have drawn for you' as the painting is under his complete control and can only be seen by others when he chooses to reveal it which reminds the audience of a curtain drawn at the theatre. The audience can only see what the director permits them to see. It also begs the reader to question, is it the lack of control over his wife that caused the Duke to kill her? Just as the Duchess suffered from the tyranny of her proud and arrogant husband, Browning's wife, Elizabeth Barrett Browning suffered at the hands of her tyrannical and cruel father. He later eloped with his wife to Italy, freeing her from her father's rule.

### Compare how suffering is presented in 'London' and one other poem.

The poems 'London' and 'War Photographer' both present suffering as a powerful force but something that is ultimately caused by external factors. Both poets suggest that suffering is intensified when it is a result of something that is beyond the sufferers' control. However, the external factors that cause the suffering, and the extent to which suffering can be spread, is different in both poems: Blake explores a group of people suffering as a result of a lack of wealth whereas Duffy explores the individual suffering of a photographer.

In 'London', Blake suggests that suffering is caused by the people in power and consequently, explores the idea that suffering can be widespread and targeted at a particular group of people: in this case, the poorer people in society, for example, 'the chimney sweepers...harlots'. The notion that the government are the perpetrators of the suffering is shown through language that indicates ownership and control. This begins with the Blake's purposeful repetition of the adjective, 'chartered' which, when modifying the 'Thames', highlights the injustice of the rich and powerful owning something (the Thames) around which the majority of people who lived there, in the 1700s, were from poorer backgrounds and living in slums. The fact that is 'chartered' emphasises that such conditions were the responsibility of the government and exposes Blake's view that those in power were deliberately allowing the poor to suffer through their living conditions. The idea of suffering being linked with control is further emphasised through the metaphor, 'the mind-forged manacles'. The word, 'manacles' is significant because it has connotations of being trapped, persecuted and confined and implies emotional suffering. However, Blake's use of the phrase 'mind-forged' is particularly important because it shows that the government's neglect and attitude to the poor was so potent, that it infiltrated the thoughts of the poor and, analysing further, resulted in their freedom of thought being taken away. This links to the idea of social-dominance theory and the notion that people in power maintain such power by encouraging discrimination against particular groups, in this case the poor, more vulnerable people in society. This theory suggests that encouraging society to turn against one group eventually causes the group to turn on themselves. Therefore, Blake suggests that suffering can be caused deliberately through the excessive power of one group.

Unlike Blake, Duffy focuses on the suffering of an individual. Similarly to Blake, Duffy implies that suffering is caused by an external factor but in this case, the external factor is witnessing the torment of others. For example, 'a hundred agonies in black and white' in this quotation, Duffy is describing the pictures that war photographer produces. By using the word 'agonies' as a noun, Duffy, on one level, shows the pain felt in the pictures as well as, on another level, the pain felt by the viewer of the image. However, the numerical term, 'a hundred' indicates that images are numerous and consequently implies that the suffering of those viewing the image is diluted by the amount. Therefore, Duffy indicates that suffering can be caused by a lack of concern. This is shown through the use of verbs, 'Their eyeballs prick with tears.....he stares impassively.....they do not care'. Duffy's use of the verb, 'prick' highlights the brevity of emotion felt by the general public to the images of suffering, whilst 'stares' shows the suffering (which manifests itself as a self-imposed separation from society, 'impassively') of the war photographer, as a direct result of public's detachment. Duffy ultimately suggests that suffering can be two-tiered: at first felt by the victim and then felt by the powerless observer.