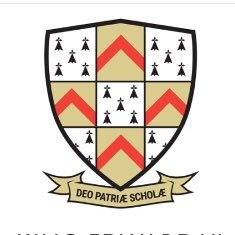


[](https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=i&url=https://twitter.com/keslichfield&psig=AOvVaw34zpYdEy5yz8dJ1xX5sdJs&ust=1586535606177000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAIQjRxqFwoTCNCuku_f2-gCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAQ)



**AO3:** Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.

Anagnorisis

Aristocracy Antithesis Bourgeoisie Catalyst Catharsis Capitalism Capitalist Commodity Conceited Classist Cyclical structure Dramatic irony Echelon Edwardian Egotistical Elite

Façade Frivolous Hierarchy Microcosm Mouthpiece Parsimonious Pivotal Poignant Proletariat Responsibility Socialism Socialist

**Vocabulary**

**AO1:** 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.



**Themes** Social responsibility Gender Social class Youth/Age Cause and effect

Time Social duty Power Status

Honesty and truth Poverty and wealth



**An Inspector Calls – Knowledge Organiser**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Link to Eva Smith** | **Who are they?** | **Key quotes** |
| **Mr Birling** A staunch capitalist, the antithesis of  Priestley’s ideals. | Fired Eva Smith from his factory after she requested a raise, she had “too much to say” so “had to go”. | A “hard headed” businessman, a capitalist who is elated that Sheila’s upcoming marriage to Gerald will unite his business with Croft Ltd. He attempts to intimidate the Inspector as he is used to being in control. He fails to take responsibility for his actions and is incredibly worried about his reputation. | "provincial in speech", "working together for lower costs and higher prices", "unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable", "The Germans don't want war", "a man has to mind his own business and look after himself", "Clothes mean something quite different to a woman...a token of their self- respect", "Lord Mayor two years ago", "wretched girl's suicide", "I can't accept any responsibility", "If you don't come down hard on these people they'd soon be asking for the earth", "Look, Inspector - I'd give thousands - yes, thousands", "there'll be a public scandal!", "This makes a  difference, y'know", "The famous younger generation who know it all" |
| **Mrs Birling** A traditionalist matriarch who refuses to  acknowledge her role in Eva’s death. She is elitist and the prospector of mixing with lower classes is  abhorrent. | Mrs Birling “used [her] influence” to refuse Eva help when she appealed to Mrs Birling’s charity for support. Mrs Birling disliked how Eva called herself “Mrs Birling” saying she was “impertinent”. | Mrs Birling is a “cold woman” and her “husband’s social superior” meaning that she was born into a more socially superior family than her husband. Despite being a woman, Mrs Birling likes to be in control throughout the play and refuses to back down in the face of the Inspector’s interrogation – something she is rather proud of at the end of the play. She patronises her children and fails to take any responsibility for her actions. She is quick to blame others for the death of Eva, labelling the “father of the child” the most at fault. | "Arthur you're not supposed to say such things", "Really, the things you girls pick up these days!", "When you're married you'll realise that men...have to spend nearly all their time and energy on their business", "I don't think you ought to talk business on an occasion like this", "girls of that class", "You know of course that my husband was Lord Mayor only two years ago", "It was simply a piece of gross impertinence", "she had only herself to blame", "If you think you can bring any pressure to bear upon me Inspector, you're quite mistaken", "I did nothing I'm ashamed of", "You have no power to make me change my mind", "Go and look for the father of the child. It's his responsibility", "As if a girl of that sort would ever refuse money", "that was one of the things that prejudiced me against her case", "I accept no blame for it at all", "He should be made an example of", "I was the only one who didn't give in to him" |
| **Sheila Birling** Undergoes the most rapid transformation in the play. Has a moment of anagnorisis and seemingly becomes a socialist convert. | Sheila visited Milwards in a “furious temper” and thought Eva was mocking her whilst she was trying on a dress. Sheila used her influence to get Eva fired from her employment.  Ultimately, Sheila was  jealous. | Mr and Mrs Birling’s daughter and fiancée of Gerald Croft, Sheila begins the play very much like her parents, she is frivolous, materialistic and naïve. She undergoes the most rapid transformation in the play. She reacts in a rather childish manner upon first learning of her connection to Eva but then appears to be genuinely sorry and encourages the rest of the family to be truthful. She seems to understand the role of the Inspector early on. | "Look Mummy isn't it a beauty?", "but these girls aren't cheap labour, they're people", "gives a half-stifled sob and then runs out", "(Miserably) So I'm really responsible?", "If I could help her now I would", "Why you fool he knows", "I know I'm to blame and I'm desperately sorry", "You mustn't try to build up a kind of wall between us and that girl", "He's giving us the rope so that we'll hang ourselves", calls Gerald a "fairy prince", "(with sudden alarm) Mother - stop - stop!", "You don't seem to have learnt anything", "between us we drove that girl to commit suicide", "But that won't bring Eva Smith back to life will it?", "I remember what he said, how he looked and what he made me feel", "it frightens me the way you talk" |
| **Eric Birling** Other half of the “famous younger generation” who takes responsibility for his actions. | Eric met Eva in the Palace Bar and went back to her lodgings and “insisted” that he went in despite Eva’s refusal. They continued to meet and Eva revealed she was pregnant. Eric offered Eva £50 he had stolen from  his father’ – she refused. | Eric is presented as an outsider from the very outset of the play as he seems to be uneasy at his sister’s engagement. He is an alcoholic and clearly a troubled young man. He has a poor relationship with his father and remains in the shadows for most of the play. Unlike his father, Eric takes responsibility for his actions and, by the end of the play, is unafraid to criticise his parents for their role in Eva’s death. | "not quite at ease", "half shy, half assertive", "squiffy", “he could have kept her on instead of throwing her out”, “Why shouldn’t they try for higher wages? We try for the highest possible prices”, “I’d have let her stay”, “(Eric goes for a whisky. His whole manner of handling the decanter and then the drink shows his familiarity with quick heavy drinking)”, “I was in that state when a chap easily turns nasty”, “she was pretty and a good sport”, “You’re not the kind of father a chap could go to when he’s in trouble”, “(nearly at breaking point) Then – you killed her. She came to you…and you turned her away”, “(almost threatening her) You don’t understand anything. You never did”, “I’m ashamed of you both as well”, “he was our police inspector all right” |
| **Gerald Croft** | Knew Eva as Daisy Renton and met her at the Palace Bar, ‘rescued’ her from Joe Meggarty. Gave her food, money and shelter. She became his mistress. Broke it off with her before going on  business. | Gerald is an upper-class aristocrat from a very noble family. He is engaged to Sheila and like Mr Birling, is a wealthy capitalist. When he learns of Eva’s (or Daisy’s) death, he seems to be genuinely upset by it. He is the only character who seems to have made Daisy happy for a short while. However, when he learns the Inspector was a fake, he acts as though nothing really happened. He does not take any responsibility but the question  arises: did Gerald do anything wrong? | “too manly to be a dandy”, “well-bred young man about town”, “you seem a nice well-behaved family”, In response to Mr B firing Eva “You couldn’t have done anything else”, “Getting a bit heavy handed aren’t you Inspector?”, upon hearing the name Daisy Renton “(startled) what?”, “Why should I have known her?”, “I don’t come into this suicide business”, “we can keep it from him”, “I think Miss Birling ought to be excused”, “(distressed) Sorry – I – well, I’ve suddenly realized – take it in properly – that she’s dead”, “I became at once the most important person in her life”, “I didn’t feel about her as she felt about me”, Sheila: “fairy prince”, “that man wasn’t a police officer”,  “we’ve been had”, “everything’s all right now Sheila…what about this ring?” |



**The Play: An Overview**



**Eva Smith**

Interestingly, we never hear from perhaps the most important character in the play: Eva. However, we learn a lot about her through other characters. It appears that Eva is microcosmic: she represents the lower classes who are subject to maltreatment by those in the upper echelons of society.

Throughout the play, Eva is referred to as “pretty” and a rather spirited character who is determined to stand up for what is right. Unlike the Birlings, Eva seems to have a sound moral compass and understands right from wrong.

**Key Quotes** “a lively good looking girl” (Mr Birling), “had far too much to say” (Mr Birling), “wretched girl’s suicide” (Mr Birling), “she was a very pretty girl” (Sheila), “she was very pretty and looked as if she could take care of herself” (Sheila), “she was very pretty – soft brown hair and big dark eyes” (Gerald), “she looked young and fresh and charming…altogether out of place down there” (Gerald), “she was young and pretty and warm-hearted – and intensely grateful” (Gerald), “girls of that class” (Mrs Birling), “girl of that sort” (Mrs Birling), “she wasn’t the usual sort” (Eric), “good sport” (Eric), “she refused to take any more” (Eric), “one Eva Smith has gone but there are millions and millions of Eva Smiths” (IG)



**Act 1:** The play begins with Sheila and Gerald's engagement party where the mood is optimistic. Sheila is presented as a frivolous, childish character who seeks her mother's approval. Eric is clearly uncomfortable and drunk (foreshadowing his later issues). Gerald and Birling discuss business more than love and Birling delivers lengthy monologues about the unsinkable Titanic and that there is no chance of war. Birling also speaks to Gerald about a potential knighthood to impress him. Birling is talking about how a "man has to make his own way" when the Inspector arrives. The Inspector's arrival immediately causes tension: the lighting changes from "pink and intimate" to "brighter and harder" and he creates an impression of "massiveness, solidity and purposefulness". Despite his attempts to intimidate the Inspector, Birling is interrogated first and reveals he fired Eva Smith as she requested more money. Sheila is the next to be interrogated, she has an initially selfish response ("I wish you hadn't told me" and "runs out") but then has a moment of realisation (anagnorisis) and takes responsibility. She reveals she used her influence to have Eva fired from Millwards after she thought Eva was mocking her. The Inspector reveals Eva changed her name to Daisy Renton and Gerald appears to recognise the name - Sheila notices and encourages Gerald to tell the truth.

**Act 2**: Gerald tries to encourage Sheila to leave before he is questioned but she refuses. Gerald admits his relationship with Daisy Renton and then, apparently upset by the revelation, asks to leave. The Inspector then turns his attention to Mrs Birling who pretends to not recognise the girl. We learn that Mrs Birling is a "prominent member" of Brumley Women's Charity Organisation who refused Eva Smith help when she needed it the most as she called herself "Mrs Birling". Mrs Birling refuses to take responsibility for her actions and is quick to blame “firstly the girl herself” and then the father of the child. Tension builds as Mrs Birling labels the father a criminal and says he should be made an example of. The audience and Sheila work out that the father is Eric but Mrs Birling is oblivious.



**Inspector Goole (IG)**

IG is the moral, socialist voice of the play and argued mouthpiece of JB Priestley himself. His role is to unearth the truth of Eva’s death and encourage the Birling’s (and Gerald) to take responsibility for their actions. IG represents the progressive few post WWII who actively sought change and for the class system to be abolished. He is also Priestley’s way of controlling the play insofar as he dictates who speaks when and frequently interrupts characters to keep them on track. The question as to who IG really is remains deliberately ambiguous: a ghoul? The Birling’s moral conscience? His arrival is critical, note how he interrupts Mr Birling’s speech about a “man has to look after himself” and how the lighting will change from “pink and intimate” to “brighter and harder”.

**Key Quotes:** “I’m on duty”, “(Cutting in massively)”, “(coolly)”, “a chain of events”, “it’s my duty to ask questions”, “(dryly) I don’t play golf”, “there are a lot of young women living that sort of existence in every city”, “it would do us all a bit of good if sometimes we tried to put ourselves in the place of these young women”, “a nice little promising life there…and a nasty mess somebody’s made of it”, “one line of inquiry at a time”, “(cutting in calmly)”, “(with authority)”, “(sharply) your

daughter isn’t living on the moon”, “(very sternly) Her position now is that she lies with burnt-out insides on a slab”, “Don’t stammer and yammer at me again…I’m losing all patience with you people”, “(sternly)”, “you’re offering money at the wrong time”, “one Eva Smith has gone – but

there are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths still left with us”, “We don’t live alone. We are members of one body”, “We are responsible for each other”, “if men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish”.

**Act 3:** Eric enters and understands that people know of his connection to Eva. He reveals he met her at the Palace Bar and she was pregnant with his child. He admits to stealing from his father to help support Eva but she refused his help. Eric is angry at his mother for her role and blames her. Birling attempts to salvage his reputation offering "thousands" to try and fix it. The Inspector makes it clear that this is not his priority. He then delivers his final (very socialist) speech where he uses Eva as a symbol for the working classes and delivers his true message: that "we are responsible for each other". He uses metaphorical language to describe how if people will not learn their lesson, they will be taught in "fire and blood and anguish", arguably foreshadowing the impending world wars. The Inspector leaves and Birling worries about his knighthood. Sheila criticises her parents for not having learned anything from the Inspector and Mr and Mrs Birling question whether he was a real Inspector. Gerald returns and reveals that there is no Inspector Goole on the police force. Everyone rejoices apart from Sheila and Eric who say they still "helped kill her". Gerald suggests that perhaps they were shown different photographs. The phone rings and it is revealed a young girl has committed suicide and there is an Inspector on his way to question the Birlings.



**Contextual Information**

*An Inspector Calls* was written in 1944 and first performed in Russia in 1945 but is set before the outbreak of WWI in 1912. In 1912, rigid hierarchical divisions permeated society: you were either a member of the proletariat (lower/working class) or the bourgeoise (upper class, the elite) - the notion of ‘middle class’ ceased to exist. Women were subservient to men and their life options were limited (irrespective of class): if you were a wealthy woman you were to marry and raise a family, if you were poor you were a commodity and viewed as cheap labour. At this time there was no NHS system nor any form of benefits to support society’s most vulnerable. This opposed Priestley’s socialist notion that society was responsible for each other and Priestley was adamant that something needed to change. However, in 1945 people had endured two horrific world wars and many people wanted change. This desire for change was reflected in the 1946 general election where Clement Atlee’s Labour party were victorious over Winston Churchill’s Conservatives. In 1948, the National Assistance Act was passed which abolished the Poor Law system and established a social safety net for those who did not pay National Insurance contributions (e.g. the homeless, the handicapped, unmarried mothers).

**Who was JB Priestley?**

JB Priestley was born in Bradford in 1894. During WWII, Priestley delivered a series of short propaganda radio shows (Postscripts) on the BBC which sought to strengthen civilian morale during the Battle of Britain. During this time, he was almost as popular as Churchill (the Prime Minister) himself. Priestley's left wing (socialist) views brought him into conflict with the government but he did help to influence the birth of the Welfare State.

Priestley set out writing an Inspector Calls during a period of unprecedented upheaval and change and through his characters, Priestley exemplifies the change needed in society and attempts to show that society will thrive when we remain “responsible for each other”.