

Year 9- Module 2

An Inspector Calls

by J.B. Priestley



Character List:

Inspector Goole: He is the **catalyst** of the play. He is the **proxy** for J.B. Priestley's political beliefs of socialism. His role is to uncover capitalist's wrong doings that are inhumane and affecting society.

Mr Birling (Arthur Birling): He is a **capitalist**. He believes that every man should look out for themselves. He sees power in terms of wealth and tries to embed his capitalist values in his children. He is ignorant to what is going on in the world

Mrs Birling (Sybil Birling): She is also a capitalist. She is an unsympathetic character who has public influence. She is her husband's "**social superior**". She doesn't see any issues in her family and takes advantage of her social status.

Sheila Birling: She is engaged to Gerald Croft. She is quite immature but changes throughout the play. She is the first character to feel **remorse**. She is quite **envious** but is insightful and intelligent.

Eric Birling: He lacks confidence. Does not have a close relationship with his father. He is an alcoholic which causes him to act in terrible ways.

Gerlad Croft: Part of an upper-class capitalist family. He is sympathetic but is not always honest. He is seen as "a man about town".

Eva Smith/ Daisy Renton: She is a victim of class and misogyny. She is symbolic of the lower class.

Summary (3 Acts):

There are **three acts** in An Inspector Calls

Act 1: The audience are aware of the purpose of the evening - The Birling's are celebrating Sheila's engagement to Gerald. The family are dressed in evening wear as they begin to drink port. We are introduced to **Edna**, who is the Birling's maid. Mrs Birling reminds Birling how to behave at a table, as Eric reveals he is drunk through his uncontrollable laughter. Birling makes a speech about prosperity between the Crofts and Birlings. Edna appears with Inspector Goole who has just come to the door.

Act 2: Goole looks expectantly at Gerald who asks for Sheila to be excused. The Inspector is angry that he feels women should be excused from uncomfortable situations. Mr and Mrs Birling refuse to entertain the Inspector and insist that he leaves. The Inspector is quite forceful in his approach as he cares more about morals than manners. He is there to discuss the death of Eva Smith/ Daisy Renton.

Act 3: Mr and Mrs Birling refuse to change their capitalist beliefs and values. Gerald also does not take responsibility for his actions in the play. Sheila and Eric show signs of remorse, giving the impression that the younger generation is more hopeful of having higher morals and values. A phone call changes the direction of the play.

Setting:

The play takes place in The Birling's home, in the dining room. There is "pink intimate lighting". The house is described as "nice", "solid" and "with good furniture". It is "comfortable" but "not cosy".

The family has a solid foundation due to their wealth and prosperity in society. However, it does not protect them from being made aware of the reality of the world around them. The house is functional but not necessarily comfortable, giving the impression that there is tension between the different family members.

Mrs Birling and Sheila leave the dining room and retire to the drawing room in Act 2 to allow the men to speak - stereotypical role of women.

Themes:	Key Vocabulary/Spelling:	Context:	Subject Terminology:
<p>Morality: The play explores the divide between different attitudes and behaviours. The divide between good and bad can be seen through different characters.</p> <p>Feminism: The exploration of the treatment of women. Eva is taken advantage of three times. Sheila also has certain expectations as a young woman.</p> <p>Social Class: The play explores the divide between capitalism and socialism in society. There is a huge lack of equality caused by capitalists.</p> <p>Generation/ Age: The younger generation appear to be more easily influenced, giving the impression that there is hope and growth in the future. The older generation portray a fixed mindset.</p> <p>Gender: Similar to feminism. There are different roles and expectations depending on one's gender. The death of Eva Smith is more harrowing as she is a vulnerable young woman who experienced a traumatic death.</p> <p>Responsibility: Priestley explores how individuals need to take responsibility in order to create a functioning society.</p>	<p>Catalyst: a figure that causes an event to happen.</p> <p>Proxy: the authority to represent someone else.</p> <p>Capitalism: When the country is controlled by private owners for profit, rather than the state.</p> <p>Socialism: When production, distribution and profit is owned and regulated by the community.</p> <p>Morality Play: A play based on the principles of right and wrong.</p> <p>Misogyny: prejudice against women.</p> <p>Propaganda: information used to promote a political cause or point of view.</p> <p>Subservient: prepared to obey others unquestioningly.</p> <p>Interrogator: a person who questions someone closely, aggressively or formally.</p> <p>Omniscient: a third party that knows everything.</p> <p>Exploitation: the action of treating someone unfairly in order to benefit.</p> <p>Hubris: Excessive pride</p> <p>Remorse: deep regret or guilt for wrong doing.</p> <p>Naive: showing lack of experience, wisdom or judgement.</p> <p>Superficial: lacking depth of character or understanding</p>	<p>-Written in 1945 but set in 1912. Written after World War II but set pre-World War I.</p> <p>-It is a play based on Priestley's Political and Christian beliefs.</p> <p>-He was a key figure in The Common Wealth Party. The party joined The Labour Party who won a landslide victory over the Conservatives.</p> <p>-He was an advocate for equality between classes and was instrumental in creating the Welfare State.</p> <p>-Strong distinctions between upper and lower class.</p> <p>-Capitalists viewed technological advancements as a positive for improving the manufacturing industry. However, technological advancements made war easier. The higher class viewed the prospect of war as irrational. They were ignorant to the thought of any threat to their country.</p> <p>-Women were subservient to men. A wealthy woman will get married, a poorer woman was cheap labour. In 1945, women had a more valued role in society.</p> <p>-The play can be considered a propaganda play for The Labour Party.</p> <p>-Priestley also uses his Christian beliefs to present the characters as sinful. All characters show signs of either the seven deadly sins or the 7 virtues. Mr Birling: Gluttony, Pride, Greed. Mrs Birling: Pride, Anger, Wrath Sheila: Envy, Wrath Eric: Gluttony, Anger Gerald: Pride, Lust Eva: Courage, Justice, Temperance Goole: Justice, Courage, Hope</p>	<p>Fiction - untrue story</p> <p>Dramatic Irony- When the audience is aware of something that the character's are not.</p> <p>Stage Directions: an instruction in the text of a play indicating the movement, position, or tone of an actor, or the sound effects and lighting.</p> <p>Dialogue: a conversation between two or more people.</p> <p>Monologue: a long speech in a play, usually the characters train of thoughts.</p> <p>Prose- Written or spoken language in ordinary form.</p> <p>Foreshadowing- hints about future events</p> <p>Imperative: a demand/ command</p> <p>Proleptic Irony: Something that does not seem significant at first but becomes important later (a type of foreshadowing).</p>

