

AIC MODEL ESSAYS

AQA GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE

Mr Birling – Grade 5 and 7

Sheila – Grade 7

Eric – grade 7

Gerald – grade 5 and 7

Gerald and Sheila's relationship – grade 7

Mrs Birling Morality – grade 5

Mrs Birling – grade 7

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Mr Birling Grade 5

Early in the play, Priestley presents Arthur Birling as selfish. During Birling's speech about how he runs his factory, Priestley has Birling state 'a man has to mind his own business, look after himself and his own'. In other words, Birling is saying that he must only use his money to help himself and his own family. Priestley's use of the words 'his' and 'himself' reveal how selfish Arthur Birling is. It is clear that he is not interested in taking care of his workers, which is not what you'd expect from someone in Birling's important position. Priestley uses Birling to criticise selfish upper class businessmen in 1912, who did not do enough to help the working class people who worked for them.

As the play continues, Priestley presents Arthur Birling as irresponsible. When the inspector questions Birling, the audience learns that he 'refused of course' when Eva Smith asked for a small pay rise. Priestley's use of the word 'refused' demonstrates that Birling didn't even carefully consider giving the pay rise, which reveals how irresponsible he is. As a factory owner, he should have been taking responsibility for his workers but, instead, he was only interested in looking after himself. He was too worried that a small pay rise would eat into his profits, so he didn't allow it. When the inspector tries to make Birling feel guilty that his actions contributed to Eva Smith's death, Birling says 'I can't accept any responsibility'. In other words, Birling is stating that he doesn't believe his actions led to Eva Smith's death. It is clear from Birling's presentation that Priestley wishes to criticise upper class people for not taking enough responsibility for working class people. He wants to convince his 1945 audience to take more responsibility and build a fairer society for everyone.

Later in the play, Priestley presents Arthur Birling as unwilling to learn. Priestley has Arthur Birling say to the inspector 'I'd give thousands'. It is clear from these words that Birling is trying to pay the inspector to keep quiet about his involvement with Eva Smith because he wants to protect his reputation. Even though Birling has realised that his actions helped kill Eva Smith, he is still only thinking about himself, which indicates that he hasn't learned at all. Priestley contrasts Arthur with his daughter Sheila, who says 'I started it', which demonstrates that she takes full responsibility for her actions. Unlike Arthur, Sheila recognises that her actions helped trigger the chain of events that led to Eva Smith's death. Priestley does this in order to show the difference between younger and older characters. Whereas the older characters are unwilling to learn, the younger characters learn and mature throughout the play. Perhaps he aimed to show his 1945 audience that it was up to the younger generation to change society because they were more willing to learn from their mistakes.

Mr Birling Grade 7

In 'An Inspector Calls' Priestley presents Arthur Birling as selfish and stubborn. Through Arthur Birling's character, Priestley not only challenges the capitalist viewpoint that dominates society but also criticises the irresponsibility of the wealthy, older generation.

Before the inspector arrives, Priestley portrays Arthur Birling as a selfish and foolish man to challenge his capitalist view. Just before the inspector enters, Priestley has Arthur Birling confidently deliver a speech to Eric and Gerald about his views on society. In this speech, Priestley has Arthur confidently declare that the Titanic is 'unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable'. Through the repetition of the words 'unsinkable', Priestley suggests that Arthur Birling is extremely confident in the new streamliner. By using dramatic irony, Priestley is able to immediately show the audience that Arthur Birling's views are foolish and arrogant because they would have known that the Titanic did sink. Perhaps Priestley wanted to instantly convey that Birling is foolish and wrong so the audience learns not to trust his views from the beginning. After Birling wrongly states that the Titanic will not sink, he boasts that a 'man has to mind his own business, look after himself and his own'. As an arrogant businessman, Arthur believes that a man should work hard to be successful in life and has no interest in helping his workers or the wider community. Priestley's use of the pronouns 'himself' and 'his' indicates that Birling is only interested in himself and supports the capitalist view that a man should only care about himself. By structuring Birling's speech in this order, Priestley has already revealed to the audience Birling is wrong so that they do not trust the capitalist views he proudly shares with Gerald and Eric. Additionally, Priestley has the inspector enter at this moment to demonstrate that Arthur's views are foolish and deserve to be interrupted.

During the inspector's questioning, Priestley presents Arthur Birling as irresponsible to criticise the behaviour of wealthy businessmen. Upon being questioned by the inspector, Arthur selfishly admits that he 'refused' to give his workers higher wages 'of course'. Rather than choosing to be a responsible employer and giving his workers a rise that he could easily afford, Arthur Birling proudly refuses to give his workers any more money. Priestley uses the words 'of course' to demonstrate that Birling believes he was right in refusing his workers any more money and that it was the obvious decision to make. By suggesting that Birling thinks this was obvious, Priestley implies many wealthy businessmen adopted the selfish model of paying their workers a minimum amount of money so that they could benefit from a higher profit. Not only does Birling not fulfill his duty of looking after his workers, he also refuses to admit that he played a role in Eva Smith's death. As the inspector continues to interrogate Birling, Arthur Birling admits that he 'cannot take any responsibility' for Eva's death. Despite knowing that by firing Eva he could have contributed to her death, he chooses not to acknowledge this. Priestley's use of the word 'any' could be used to imply that Birling is unwilling to take even a small part of responsibility in her death which shows he is unsympathetic of the difficulties faced by the working class. Not only does Priestley use Birling to criticise the wealthy businessmen who did not take responsibility for their workers, he also criticises the way in which the older generation were too stubborn to learn from their mistakes. Perhaps Priestley wanted to encourage his audience to see the consequences of selfish behaviour in order to encourage them to take more responsibility.

As the inspector prepares to leave, Priestley demonstrates that Arthur Birling is unwilling to learn in order to challenge the stubborn nature of the older generation. Just before the inspector leaves, Arthur Birling states that he would give 'thousands' in order to make the situation with Eva Smith disappear. Not only does Priestley reveal here that Birling is wealthy enough to pay his workers more money, he also insinuates that Birling only uses his money for selfish means. Rather than feeling guilty about his treatment of Eva Smith, Birling offers the 'thousands' in order to protect his own reputation, showing that he has learnt nothing from the inspector. Priestley makes clear to the audience that Birling only wants the situation with Eva Smith to go away so that he can maintain his reputation and still be in the running for a knighthood. A knighthood is awarded for achievements and commitments to your country so by having Arthur Birling in the running for a knighthood, Priestley could be suggesting that Arthur Birling is hypocritical. Birling is willing to accept his knighthood and judge other people based on their moral and responsible behaviour but is unwilling to accept his responsibility in Eva's death. Priestley might also be criticising society for being hypocritical because selfish, wealthy men like Arthur Birling are celebrated while moral working class people are often ignored and mistreated. As people in England were beginning to notice, and campaign against, the fact that society was unfair, perhaps this would have given Priestley's audience even more motivation to fight back against the inequality in society.

Overall, through the character of Arthur Birling, Priestley encourages his audience to move away from capitalism and towards socialism. Priestley's portrayal of Arthur as irresponsible and selfish highlights the foolish and destructive nature of capitalism and puts forward the need for a more equal society where people are responsible for each other.

Sheila: Grade 7

'An Inspector Calls' is about how people should be more responsible. Priestley explores the theme of responsibility throughout the play, notably through the differences between the older and younger generations, through which he gives his 1945 audience hope of a better society built on a model of social responsibility. As Sheila learns from her actions, accepts responsibility and challenges her parents to do the same, it could be argued that she learns the most in the play.

Early in the play, Priestley's portrayal of Sheila as smug and immature conveys the sheltered lives of many of the upper classes. In the opening stage directions, Priestley describes Sheila as 'pleased' with herself due to her recent engagement to the wealthy businessman Gerald Croft. Living in a 'heavily comfortable house' and toasting her engagement with 'champagne', Sheila has little to worry her at this stage of the play; she is smugly consumed with the celebration of her engagement. Priestley also has Sheila refer to her parents at the start of the play as 'mummy' and 'daddy'. These terms of address are an indication of the way her parents have infantilised her and sheltered her from the harsh realities of the world; this sheltered life is only possible for Sheila due to the wealth and status of her family. Additionally, the fact that Sheila uses these words to refer to her parents indicates that she still looks up to them and respects their views, something that changes dramatically as the play progresses. Perhaps Priestley presents Sheila in this way early in the play to demonstrate the sheltered and easy lives that many upper class young women led in 1912, in comparison to their working class counterparts, who suffered extreme hardship.

During the inspector's questioning, Priestley uses Sheila's actions to demonstrate the need for the upper classes to take greater responsibility for the working classes. Upon being questioned by the inspector, Sheila admits to selfishly having Eva Smith fired due to petty jealousy. Rather than deflecting responsibility onto others, Sheila recognises her role in Eva Smith's death stating, remorsefully, 'I started it'. Priestley contrasts Sheila's remorse with the stubbornness of her parents, who claim they were 'perfectly justified' and 'can't accept any responsibility' for their actions. Priestley's portrayal of Sheila's actions in the department store indicate just how much power and status wealthy people had in England in 1912, and how frequently this could be misused, deeply affecting the working classes. His choice to contrast older and younger generation characters could indicate to his 1945 audience that hope for a better society in the future must be placed in the younger generation, who are more impressionable and more likely to learn from their mistakes.

After the inspector leaves, Priestley contrasts Sheila with her parents to reveal how much she has learned and her commitment to make a permanent change. In contrast to her parents, who are delighted to discover the inspector was just a 'hoax', Sheila remains contrite about her role in Eva Smith's death. Priestley has Sheila accuse her parents of not learning anything, saying 'I guess we're all nice people now'. The sarcastic tone in Sheila's words demonstrate how infuriated she is with her parents for being so willing to forget the actions they took, revealing that they were simply concerned with their own reputation, and have not learned the errors of their ways. Additionally, Priestley has Sheila accuse her mother of 'trying to build a wall' between the Birlings and the inspector. This metaphorical

wall symbolises the insight Sheila has gained into the huge divide between upper and lower classes, suggesting she has realised how unwilling many upper class people are to recognise their responsibility to others. Priestley's presentation of Sheila as such a changed character offers a powerful message to his 1945 audience, suggesting that he believes the socialist society that he envisions is achievable if younger people take greater social responsibility.

Priestley demonstrates that Eric also learns, but it is clear that Sheila learns the most. Priestley makes clear from the opening that Eric is not like the other Birlings, as he seems slightly awkward and, as noted by Sheila, drinks heavily. His transformation, therefore, is not as great as Sheila's; Sheila transforms from being a sheltered, selfish, childish individual, wrapped up in herself and her own happiness, into a more socially responsible young woman who appears to commit to changing in the future.

ERIC : Grade 7

'An Inspector Calls' is about how people should be more responsible. Priestley explores the theme of responsibility throughout the play, notably through the differences between the older and younger generations. Through Eric's changing character, Priestley not only challenges the selfish attitudes of the upper classes, but also gives his 1945 audience hope for a better society built on a model of social responsibility.

Early in the play, Priestley uses Eric's immaturity and sheltered life to mirror the easy lives of the upper classes in 1912. In the opening stage directions, Priestley writes that the Birlings live in a 'heavily comfortable house' and are sipping 'champagne' to celebrate the engagement of Eva Smith. It is clear from these directions that Priestley wishes to make immediately clear to the audience that Eric and his family live in wealth and comfort, which greatly contrasts the hardships endured by the working classes. As a result of this comfortable life, Eric behaves immaturely for a man in his early twenties, drinking too much, squabbling with his sister, and trying to provoke his parents. Perhaps Priestley is suggesting that Eric, like many young upper class men in 1912, has been sheltered from the hardships of life and, as such, takes the things he has been given for granted and is yet to mature

After the arrival of the inspector, Priestley presents a change in Eric's character, indicating that Eric is impressionable and easily influenced. When Arthur Birling rebukes the inspector's suggestion that he should have paid his workers more, Eric chimes in with the words 'why shouldn't they try for higher wages?'. This provocative question indicates that Eric is susceptible to the influence of the inspector and is willing to begin to consider the feelings of the working classes. Perhaps Priestley uses Eric to provoke his 1945 audience to ask similar questions about the treatment of the working classes, asking them to challenge the status quo and push for greater equality in society.

During the inspector's questioning, Priestley uses Eric's actions towards Eva Smith to demonstrate how many upper class men took advantage of working class women. The inspector's questioning reveals that Eric forced himself upon Eva Smith while drunk, after which he stole money from his father in order to support Eva Smith through her pregnancy. These two examples of immoral behaviour greatly contrast with the morality displayed by Eva Smith, who refuses the money as soon as she realises it was stolen. It is clear that upper class men like Eric felt they could mistreat working class women with impunity. Priestley uses Eric's actions to expose how harshly many working class women were treated, both due to gender and class inequality in 1912.

Following the inspector's questioning, Priestley makes clear Eric learns from his mistakes, giving his 1945 audience hope for a brighter future. Unlike his parents, who initially try to conceal their actions from the inspector and then insist that they were 'perfectly justified' and 'can't accept any responsibility' for their actions, Eric admits 'I did what I did'. This matter of fact statement indicates that Eric is willing to admit his behaviour and accept the consequences. After the inspector is revealed as a 'hoax', Eric accuses his parents of 'beginning to pretend that nothing really happened', which again reveals the stark contrast between them. Whereas his parents seem preoccupied with their reputation, thus are willing to return to celebrating as soon as they realise the inspector isn't real, Eric recognises that, whether or not the inspector is real, he still behaved in the way he did and must learn

from his mistakes. Priestley's choice to contrast Eric so starkly with his parents is indicative of a view that older generation upper class people were more likely to remain stubborn and stuck in their ways, whereas the younger generation were more likely to change.

In conclusion, it cannot be denied that Eric changes through the arrival of the inspector. Priestley's portrayal of Eric's treatment of Eva Smith exposes the way many working class women were treated in England in 1912. However, Priestley's choice to present Eric as a changing character who learns from his mistakes suggests that Priestley had hope that society could also undergo this change and become the socialist society that Priestley envisioned.

How does Priestley present the character of Gerald? Grade 5

Before Gerald is questioned by the inspector, Priestley presents him as a character who lies. Just before Gerald is questioned, Priestley makes clear Gerald wishes to lie to the inspector by having him say 'We can keep it from him'. In other words, Gerald is stating to Sheila that he thinks he can lie about the affair with Eva Smith. Priestley contrasts Gerald with Sheila, who didn't try to lie to the inspector. Sheila was happy to admit that she had Eva Smith fired from Milwards. By contrasting these characters, Priestley emphasises Gerald's selfishness. Unlike Sheila, he wishes to protect his reputation and sees this as more important than admitting his mistakes. Priestley could be presenting Gerald in this way to suggest that many middle and upper class men like Gerald had affairs and were happy to lie about it in order to protect their reputations.

During the inspector's questioning, Priestley makes clear Gerald took advantage of Eva Smith. When Gerald explains how he met Eva Smith, Priestley indicates that Gerald had sympathy for her by writing 'I felt sorry for her'. These words imply that, when he first met her, Gerald wanted to use his wealth and power to try to help her, by giving her money and a place to live. However, it is clear that Gerald took advantage of this power because he allowed an affair to develop between him and Eva Smith. Although he had an affair, Gerald never had any intention of marrying Eva Smith because she was from a lower class. Priestley uses Gerald's actions to criticise the actions of many middle and upper class men in 1912, who used working class women in this way.

After the inspector leaves, Priestley demonstrates that Gerald has not learned anything. At the end of the play, Priestley has Gerald say to Sheila 'Everything's alright now Sheila. What about this ring?'. The words 'everything's alright now' suggest that Gerald thinks everything can go back to normal because they've realised the inspector wasn't real. This demonstrates that he doesn't feel very guilty about the way he behaved and only really cared when he thought the news might come out in public and cause a scandal. The words 'what about this ring?' suggest that Gerald thinks he and Sheila can go back to being engaged, even though he had an affair. If he had learned from his mistakes, Gerald would not have re-proposed to Sheila, expecting her to forget the affair. Priestley uses Gerald's actions to criticise the rich for not learning from their mistakes and not learning to take responsibility for the working classes.

How does Priestley present the character of Gerald in *An Inspector Calls*? Grade 7

An Inspector Calls is about how people should be more responsible. Through Gerald's character, Priestley exposes the irresponsible behaviour of many upper class men in 1912. Priestley uses the character of Gerald Croft to highlight the ways in which issues of class divide and gender inequality were deeply ingrained in every aspect of Britain's social hierarchies during the Edwardian era.

Priestley uses the character of Gerald Croft to represent the upper class (aristocracy) in *An Inspector Calls*. Priestley makes it clear that Gerald Croft is of a higher class than the Birlings when Mr Birling enquires about Gerald's parents, Lord and Lady Croft. Mr Birling is very excited about his daughter's engagement to Gerald Croft because it represents an opportunity to merge with Croft Ltd. and climb up the social ladder. However, the audience is more likely to infer that Lord and Lady Croft's absence from Gerald and Sheila's engagement party reveals their upper class disapproval of their son's union with the middle class Birlings. People in Britain had strict social hierarchies in 1912; Priestley reveals how the upper class looked down on the middle class, just like the middle class Birlings looked down on working class people like Eva Smith.

Gerald's character represents the stereotypical upper class male who assumes superiority and privilege, particularly over the lower classes and women. Priestley uses Gerald's relationship with Eva Smith, who he knew as Daisy Renton, to reveal the unfair class and gender privilege of upper class males. Gerald's relationship with Eva Smith is unequally balanced from the beginning; he describes how he 'felt sorry for her' due to her desperate situation. Although Gerald has kind intentions initially, Eva's hardship is a situation that he is able to take advantage of, beginning a relationship that he has no intention of continuing long term. Gerald met Eva Smith at The Palace Bar, which is referred to as somewhere that 'women of the town' frequent, so Priestley seems to be suggesting that many women were forced into prostitution or taken advantage of (like Eva) because of poverty. Wages were low and there were no benefits prior to the Welfare state that was set up by the Labour party in 1946, which meant women like Eva Smith often had no choice. As a socialist, Priestley wanted to highlight the inequality and challenge the upper classes to take social responsibility, instead of just taking advantage.

Priestley also uses Gerald's character to highlight how sexism was deeply ingrained in the upper classes. Like Mr and Mrs Birling, Gerald treats Sheila like a child at the beginning of the play which reveals how middle/upper class females were also treated as inferiors within the patriarchal society of 1912. After the engagement meal, Sheila and her mother retire to the drawing room while the men discuss business. The absence of the females implies that they were considered intellectually inferior to the males. Moreover, when Sheila questions whether Gerald was really busy at work during the previous summer, her parents make excuses for him, almost as if it was acceptable for men to have affairs although higher class women were expected to stay pure for their husbands. Mr and Mrs Birling encourage Sheila to marry Gerald Croft even after he has admitted to the affair with Eva Smith, which suggests that his higher class and status excuse his immoral behaviour. Through the presentation of Gerald's relationships with women, Priestley therefore explores both gender inequality in both the higher and lower classes.

Whilst Gerald's character never admits full responsibility for his wrongs like Sheila and Eric, who represent the younger generation, he is not as hard hearted and selfish as Mr and Mrs Birling. Ultimately, Priestley's socialist message was that 'We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other.' By the end of the play, the younger generation accept full responsibility and represent the potential for social change. Sadly though, Gerald's character sides with the older generation and avoids taking responsibility for Eva Smith's death. After realising the inspector's visit was a 'hoax', Gerald tries to re-initiate his engagement with Sheila, stating 'Everything's alright now, Sheila. What about this ring?'. It seems Gerald, like Birling, was most concerned about the risk of a public scandal and potential damage to his reputation. Feeling reassured that 'everything's alright' after the revelation that the inspector isn't 'real', Gerald seems hopeful that he and Sheila can forget the affair and resume the engagement celebrations as if nothing happened. In this way, Priestley seems to be suggesting that it may take longer for the upper classes to change, but Gerald's tokens of kindness to Eva Smith imply that it is possible.

Gerald and Sheila's relationship Grade 7

An Inspector Calls' is about the need for all in society to take great responsibility, both for those they are entrusted to look after, and for the consequences of their actions. Through Sheila and Gerald's relationship, Priestley exposes the maltreatment of working class women and reveals the gender inequality that infiltrated all male-female relationships in England in 1912.

Priestley's portrayal of Gerald and Sheila's relationship is used to explore the way wealthy men treated women. Before the inspector arrives, Priestley hints that there is tension between Sheila and Gerald as Sheila begins to tease Gerald about his whereabouts last summer. By hinting that Gerald was absent from Sheila last summer, Priestley implies to the audience that Gerald was having an affair. Priestley could have chosen to hint at the affair before having Gerald explicitly reveal it to Sheila to criticise the fact that many wealthy men had affairs and tried to hide them. Priestley uses Gerald to challenge the way wealthy, upper class men believed they could use their power and wealth to behave immorally and irresponsibly while still appearing desirable. Priestley also explores this irresponsible behaviour from upper class men through Gerald's affair with Eva. Despite having good intentions towards Eva because he felt 'sorry' for her, Gerald still uses her desperate need for money and food to his own advantage. Although he knows that he is committed to Sheila, Gerald still irresponsibly lets his situation with Eva Smith develop into an affair, knowing that it could never end in a relationship. Through Gerald's actions, Priestley suggests wealthy men had different behavioural codes to women and used the power they had over women for their own gains.

Priestley uses Gerald and Sheila's relationship to challenge the gender inequality present in society at the time. Just before the inspector questions Gerald, he reveals to Sheila that he did have an affair last summer. Despite revealing to Sheila only seconds before that he has cheated on her, he still expects her to lie for him and 'keep it' from the inspector. Priestley makes clear to the audience that Gerald is desperate to keep the affair from the inspector and they can assume this is because he does not want his reputation destroyed. By having Gerald selfishly ask Sheila to lie for him, Priestley implies that in his desperation to protect himself, Gerald insensitively ignores the feelings of his fiancée. Priestley could be criticising the fact that many wealthy men had affairs and tried to hide them in society. Priestley might also be suggesting that Gerald assumes Sheila would be willing to lie for him because he has the most power in the relationship. After the inspector leaves, Gerald also assumes that Sheila will be willing to submit to his demands when he states that 'everything's all right now' and asks her 'what about this ring?' Priestley makes clear that Gerald is irresponsible because he is happy to forget everything that has happened and progress with his engagement to Sheila. Priestley implies that Gerald assumes Sheila will be happy to accept him because he is a desirable man of a higher class than Sheila. Again, Priestley insinuates that Gerald has no regard for Sheila's own emotions. Perhaps Priestley wanted to use Gerald to suggest that wealthy men will not learn from their mistakes because they believe they are entitled to treat women in this way.

Through Sheila and Gerald's relationships, Priestley challenges the gender stereotypes in England in 1912. Before the inspector arrives, Sheila is told by her mother that she should expect men to be preoccupied with work and not always around their wives. Priestley

immediately makes clear that women were expected to be subservient. However, Sheila states that she cannot get used to this which reveals she is beginning to challenge the gender stereotypes in England at the time. Not only this, Priestley has Sheila voice her own opinions during the play, contrasting the stereotypical idea that all women should be passive. At the end of the play, Priestley has Sheila state 'I guess we are all nice people now'. While this contrasts the viewpoint her parents share, it also contradicts the view that Gerald holds. Gerald is also willing to happily forget everything that has happened and is unwilling to learn from his mistakes. By having Sheila sarcastically challenge the view that they no longer have to be responsible, Priestley has Sheila stand against her fiance as well. Perhaps Priestley wanted to demonstrate that women should be allowed to voice their opinions and should not be expected to be submissive and passive.

How does Priestley use the character of Sybil to explore ideas about morality? Grade 5

Before the arrival of the inspector, Priestley presents Sybil Birling as superior and unsympathetic. Like the other Birlings, Sybil is **'pleased'** with herself at the start of the play. This suggests that she thinks too highly of herself but doesn't think enough about others. She tries to bully the Inspector by mentioning that her husband used to be mayor. This reveals that she tries to use status and power for her own advantage. Sybil scornfully looks down on working class women like Eva Smith. She calls them **'girls of that class'** and says that she can't understand them. She also sneers about Eva as **'a girl of that sort'**. Priestley uses Sybil's scornful character to show that the rich look down on the poor. This links to the divisions in 1912 and 1945 in England between rich and poor and the Labour movement's fight for workers' rights, conditions and fair pay. Priestley believed in a morality based on social responsibility not on class status. His character of Sybil is an attack on the judgmental arrogance of the rich who do not care about helping the poor.

During the inspector's questioning, Priestley makes clear Sybil refuses to take any responsibility for Eva's death. She admits that she was prejudiced against Eva from the beginning and influenced others not to help her. She repeats many times that she felt **'perfectly justified'**. This dialogue between Sybil and the inspector adds to the idea that she is selfish and stubborn. She accepts no blame for refusing help to a girl who soon after committed suicide. She says she did nothing wrong and nothing she's ashamed of. This implies that she is heartless and uncaring. Her repetition of the word **'justified'** suggests that she feels she is morally right. Priestley is criticising those who deny their social responsibility to look after others, especially the vulnerable in society. Writing in 1945, Priestley was in favour of the new Labour government's National Health Service to provide security for the 'millions' like Eva Smith in difficult positions.

Later in the play, Sybil's blaming the father of Eva's child badly backfires on her and her son Eric. At the climax of Act 2, she tries to deflect blame away from herself by saying: **'Go and look for the father of the child. It's his responsibility.'** She says she blames the young man and that the Inspector should make an example out of him. She suggests he should be forced to confess in public. Priestley uses dramatic irony because Sheila and the audience have realised that the young man is actually Sybil's son Eric, but Sybil hasn't realised this. This moment shows Sybil is hypocritical. She blames the father and makes things worse for Eric. The irony is that she has unknowingly blamed her own son. Eric later accuses her of killing his child and her own grandchild. Priestley attacks Sybil's uncaring morality and shows how it destroys her own family relationships. Priestley's Inspector exposes Sybil's heartlessness to show the failure of charity welfare and to suggest that socialist morality is better for looking after the poor.

In conclusion, Sybil is unsympathetic, irresponsible and hypocritical, and her individualistic morality backfires on her in the play. Priestley wants the audience to realise that socialism is better for society, which explains why his play was first performed in socialist Russia in 1946. He wants spectators to change their morality to one based on social responsibility.

Mrs Birling Grade 7

'An Inspector Calls' is about how people should behave morally. Priestley explores the theme of morality throughout the play by criticising the immoral actions of the wealthy in society. Priestley challenges the immoral treatment of the working class by the wealthy in order to encourage his audience to be moral and to inspire change in society. Through the character of Sybil Birling, a stubborn and selfish member of the older generation, Priestley explores how damaging the immoral behaviour of the wealthy can be in order to emphasise the need for change.

Before the inspector arrives, Priestley's portrayal of Sybil Birling, an unsympathetic and superior woman, demonstrates the selfish nature that many upper class women possessed. In the opening stage directions, Priestley describes Sybil, a woman only concerned with the reputation of herself and her family, as 'pleased' with herself. Celebrating her daughter's engagement in her 'heavily comfortable house', Priestley implies that Sybil thinks too highly of herself and her family but does not think enough about others. Priestley also demonstrates that Sybil behaves immorally because she would rather bully the inspector by mentioning that her husband is a mayor rather than accepting that her family could have behaved irresponsibly. Priestley reveals that Sybil believes she is superior to other people in society because she is willing to use her status and power for her own advantage. Furthermore, the fact that Priestley chooses to have Sybil refer to Eva Smith as a girl of 'that class' conveys that Sybil snobbishly looks down on working class women and believes that she is superior to them just because she has more money. Priestley's use of the word 'that' is derogatory, indicating that Sybil Birling is unsympathetic of the difficulties they faced and views all of the working class as immoral. Priestley uses irony here because it is actually Sybil, a woman who is unwilling to use her wealth and power to help women, who is immoral not Eva who refuses to take stolen money despite desperately needing it. By juxtaposing the characters of Eva and Sybil, perhaps Priestley was challenging the stereotype that working class people were immoral and hopeless by asking his audience to consider the difference in moral standards between the wealthy and the poor.

During the inspector's questioning, Sybil's actions demonstrate a need for the upper class to take more responsibility for the working class. As an owner of a women's charity, Sybil is responsible for looking after the working class women who come to the charity for help, however, Sybil admits that she is prejudiced against Eva from the beginning. Priestley has Sybil repeat that she felt 'perfectly justified' in the way she treated Eva Smith. It is clear through the adverb 'perfectly' that Sybil is stubborn in her viewpoint and is unwilling to accept that the way she treated Eva was immoral. Additionally, Priestley also conveys that Sybil has no sympathy towards Eva Smith and her situation. By repeating that she is 'justified', Sybil appears to the audience as unashamed of her actions and unwilling to change, implying that Sybil believes she was morally right. Priestley's portrayal of Sybil as an unsympathetic and unashamed woman implies Sybil did not use the charity to help others but to improve her own social status. Perhaps Priestley wanted his audience to consider whether the wealthy upper class run charities to provide support for those in need or to benefit themselves. Priestley could have also portrayed Sybil as irresponsible in order to

challenge the fact that the working class only had private charities run by the immoral upper class to turn to for help and to call for the need for government help in the form of the NHS.

Later in the play, Sybil, a woman only concerned about the social status of herself and family, tries to deflect the blame of Eva's death away from her own family. At the climax of Act Two, Priestley has Sybil tell the inspector that he should 'look for the father' because she believes it is his responsibility. At this moment, Priestley suggests that Sybil, who is prejudiced against the working class, assumes the father is an immoral working class man who needs to step up and take responsibility for his actions. Priestley uses irony here as Sybil hypocritically is able to notice when the working class have acted immorally but cannot recognise her own immoral actions. The use of dramatic irony here also allows the audience to find Sybil foolish because they have already figured out that Eric is the father. Priestley might have chosen to have the audience discover before Sybil that Eric is the father to imply Sybil is blinded by prejudice; she is only willing to see the working class as immoral and is unable to comprehend that her own son could behave in this way. The attack on Sybil's uncaring morality could have been used by Priestley to challenge the way the upper class portrayed themselves as moral and the working class as immoral and hopeless. Perhaps he wanted his audience to consider whether the upper class were more immoral because they were unable to recognise the immorality in their own actions.

Overall, perhaps Priestley uses Sybil's immorality in order to help his audience recognise that morality is not linked to your status in society or the amount of money you own but linked to the way you do not let your situation influence your character. By exploring the immoral actions of the wealthy, Priestley highlights the need for a more socialist approach to society.

How does Priestley explore the difference in attitudes between older and younger generations in An Inspector Calls? Grade 5

'An Inspector Calls' is about responsibility. Priestley purposely contrasts the responsibility of the younger generation and the irresponsibility of the older generation to suggest the younger generation are the hope for the future.

Priestley presents the attitude of older characters through the character of Arthur Birling.

Before the Inspector arrives, Arthur Birling boasts to Gerald and Eric that 'a man has to mind his own business, look after himself and his own'. Arthur Birling appears proud of his selfish business model. The use of the words 'his' and 'himself' shows that Birling only wants to protect his own interests and does not take responsibility for his workers. Priestley also has him state 'I refused of course' which demonstrates that Birling is proud that he refused his workers a pay rise. The words 'of course' suggest that Arthur Birling believes it was an obvious decision and that he acted in the right way. Priestley makes clear that Arthur Birling accepts no blame for his actions. Additionally, he conveys that Arthur Birling is more concerned about his own reputation by having him offer the inspector 'thousands'. Priestley demonstrates that Birling has lots of money but still refuses to give his workers a pay rise which indicates that he only uses his money for selfish reasons. Priestley could have been criticising the selfish attitudes of the wealthy.

Priestley also presents the attitude of older characters through the character of Sybil Birling.

When questioned by the Inspector, Sybil states that she was 'perfectly justified'. The word 'perfectly' suggests that she feels she did absolutely nothing wrong and is surprised to even be questioned about her actions. Priestley has Sybil say the word 'justified' more than once, to emphasise how right she feels she was in denying help to Eva Smith. Priestley also presents Sybil as prejudiced when she describes Eva Smith as one of many 'girls of that class'. The words 'that class' conveys Sybil looks down on the working class and believes they are all bad people. Perhaps Priestley put Sybil in charge of a charity in order to criticise wealthy people who used charities to make themselves look good rather than helping the poor.

Priestley presents the difference between older and younger characters through the character of Sheila.

It is clear that, before the Inspector's arrival, Sheila is immature and selfish. She is extremely 'pleased' with herself at the start of the play because she is engaged. When the Inspector arrives, Sheila takes responsibility for her actions and admits she had Eva Smith fired. However, when the Inspector questions Sheila, Sheila goes as far as to say 'I started it'. Priestley makes clear that Sheila immediately accepts responsibility, unlike her father, who was the one who started it by refusing to give Eva a pay rise. Priestley contrasts Sheila with Sybil, who says 'I was perfectly justified' and Arthur, who says 'I can't accept any responsibility'. Whereas Sheila, a guilty character, acknowledges her mistakes, Arthur and Sybil refuse to admit that they did anything wrong. Through Sheila's character, Priestley suggests the younger generation are more responsible and will bring change to society.

Priestley also presents the difference between older and younger characters through the character of Eric. When questioned by the Inspector, Priestley makes clear Eric feels guilty by having him describe his actions as 'hellish'. The word 'hellish' shows Eric regrets his actions and takes responsibility. Priestley also presents Eric as responsible when he has him say 'you're beginning to pretend that nothing really happened'. These words show Eric is angry with his parents because unlike him they will not take responsibility. Priestley contrasts Eric, a guilty and ashamed man, with Sybil, who says to the inspector 'go and look for the father of the child'. Priestley's use of dramatic irony when Sybil says these words reveals how little Sybil understands about her son's actions. Priestley uses Eric to contrast the older generation because he realises that he should still feel guilty but his parents are happy to forget their actions.

How does Priestley explore the difference in attitudes between older and younger generations in *An Inspector Calls*? Grade 7

In 'An Inspector Calls', Priestley exposes the lack of responsibility among the middle and upper classes and offers a cry for change, commanding his 1945 audience to show greater compassion for the working classes and promote greater social responsibility in British society. Priestley uses the contrast between older and younger characters in the play to reveal the chasm between traditional classist attitudes and more progressive socialist ideals, hoping that the transformation of his younger characters will propel his audience on the same trajectory and build a fairer, more equal society for all.

Priestley uses the character of Arthur Birling to exhibit the selfish, capitalist attitudes of many wealthy businessmen in the 1900s. Before the Inspector arrives, Arthur Birling boasts to Gerald and Eric that 'a man has to mind his own business, look after himself and his own'. Priestley's repetition of the words 'his' and 'himself' emphasise how much Arthur Birling protects his own interests, and how little responsibility he takes for others outside of his own family. This becomes even clearer when Arthur Birling states 'I refused, of course' in response to the Inspector's questions about Eva Smith. Birling 'refused' to give a very small pay rise to his workers because he is more interested in his own profits than their welfare. The words 'of course' suggest that Arthur Birling is arrogant, and is surprised to even be questioned about his actions, which he clearly feels were justified. Priestley uses the Inspector's arrival to challenge the way the Birlings behaved. While some of the characters respond well to the Inspector's questioning, Arthur Birling accepts no blame for his part in Eva Smith's death. He is more concerned about his own reputation and tries to pay off the Inspector, offering 'thousands' if the Inspector will keep quiet about his involvement. The fact that Birling can afford 'thousands', yet 'refused' a small pay rise to his workers, demonstrates his lack of responsibility for others. Priestley could have been criticising capitalist values through presenting Arthur Birling in this way.

Priestley's presentation of Sybil Birling as prejudiced and unsympathetic reveals the ineffectiveness of private charities as a means of support and welfare for the working classes in 1912. When questioned by the Inspector about why she influenced others in her charitable organisation to refuse help to Eva Smith, Sybil states that she was 'perfectly justified'. The word 'perfectly', a bit like the words 'of course' when Arthur Birling explains himself, suggest that she feels she did absolutely nothing wrong and is surprised to even be questioned about her actions. Priestley has Sybil say the word 'justified' more than once, to emphasise how right she feels she was in denying help to Eva Smith. It is clear that, although Sybil should be always looking to help others, she is too judgemental to offer help to the working classes. She describes Eva Smith as one of many 'girls of that class'. The words 'that class' have a very snobbish tone, suggesting that Sybil Birling sees herself as superior and looks down on the working classes. It is clear that she thinks the working classes are not deserving of help and should accept responsibility for the trouble they find themselves in. This is highly hypocritical, given that she is supposed to be working for an organisation that will help them. Priestley could have deliberately put Sybil in charge of a charity in order to criticise private organisations run by wealthy individuals, who were less interested in the

people they were helping, and more interested in how it made them look. Perhaps he was proposing that the only way people would be able to get the help they needed was through government run organisations, such as the NHS, which was established in the same year that he wrote the play.

Priestley contrasts Sybil and Arthur's unsympathetic attitudes with Sheila's guilt. It is clear that, before the Inspector's arrival, Sheila is immature and selfish. She is extremely 'pleased' with herself at the start of the play because she is engaged to a respectable gentleman, and the entire family are celebrating her engagement. When the Inspector arrives, Sheila is forced to face up to the fact that she selfishly had Eva Smith fired from her job at Milwards because she was jealous of her good looks. It is clear, therefore, that Sheila had quite willingly misused her parents' account at Milwards to get what she wanted. However, when the Inspector questions Sheila, Sheila goes as far as to say 'I started it'. The audience knows, in fact, that it was Arthur Birling who started it but, unlike Sheila, Arthur Birling feels no sympathy and no guilt. Through Sheila's character, Priestley offers hope to his audience that the younger generation will be more socially responsible, and will take actions that benefit others.

Priestley contrasts Arthur and Sybil's double standards with Eric's guilt. When the family learn that Eric is the father of Eva Smith's unborn child, both parents are shocked; they could never have imagined that their son would have got himself involved with a working class girl in this way. However, as soon as they learn from Gerald that the Inspector isn't real, they are happy to return to the way things were, feeling confident in the knowledge that Eric's actions won't damage their reputation. In this sense, they display double standards. Arthur Birling was highly critical of Eva Smith for stepping out of line in asking for a pay rise, yet seems happy to ignore and forget the irresponsible behaviour of his son. Sybil looks down on 'girls of that class' for getting themselves into difficult situations, yet is also happy to return to the celebratory mood in spite of the fact that it was her own son who contributed to Eva Smith's situation. Eric, on the other hand, feels terrible guilt for his actions. When questioned by the Inspector, he describes the circumstances in which he met Eva Smith as 'hellish'. It is clear that he regrets drinking too much and forcing himself upon her. He cannot believe it when his parents are prepared to go back to the way things were, accusing them of 'beginning to pretend now that nothing really happened at all'. Priestley uses Eric's confrontational attitude to highlight the extreme difference in the thoughts and behaviour of the older and younger characters and to suggest that the younger generation will need to be forceful in order to change the bad habits of the older generation.

Priestley challenges traditional age roles in the play. In 1912, it would have been expected that young people respected and obeyed their elders. By the end of the play, however, Sheila and Eric begin to challenge their parents' values, giving hope that society can change for the better. The Inspector has activated their conscience and, through displaying this, Priestley hopes to activate his audience's conscience too. Perhaps he hoped the audience would leave feeling proud that a new socialist Labour party had been voted in earlier that year, and were set to make changes that would create greater equality for all.

How does Priestley use the character of Eva Smith to present ideas about responsibility?

Grade 5

‘An Inspector Calls’ is about how people should be more responsible. Priestley explores the theme of class through the treatment of working class Eva Smith by the wealthy Birlings and Gerald Croft when she is in different situations throughout the play.

During the inspector’s questioning, Priestley presents Arthur Birling as an irresponsible and selfish man. When the inspector questions Arthur Birling about Eva Smith’s request for a payrise, Priestley has Arthur Birling state **‘I refused, of course’**. In other words, Arthur Birling is proud to admit that he denied Eva Smith a small pay rise. Priestley’s use of the words ‘of course’ not only indicate that Birling feels he was right to refuse a pay rise, but also that he doesn’t expect to be questioned about his actions. Later in the play, Priestley demonstrates that Arthur Birling is very selfish with his money by having him say **‘I’d give thousands’**. In other words, Birling is happy to pay thousands of pounds to the inspector in order to keep him quiet about the scandal with Eva Smith. The contrast between the thousands of pounds that Birling is willing to pay and the small pay rise that Eva Smith asked for demonstrates how selfish and irresponsible Birling is because he clearly had the money to give the pay rise but only wants to use the money for himself. Priestley hoped his 1945 audience would feel angry towards selfish Capitalist businessmen like Arthur Birling.

During the inspector’s questioning, Priestley presents Sybil Birling as a selfish and prejudiced woman. When the inspector questions Sybil about how she knew Eva Smith, Priestley presents Sybil as prejudiced by having her refer to the working classes as ‘girls of that class’. Priestley’s use of the words ‘that class’ suggest that Sybil is snobbish and superior, looking down on the working classes. It is clear that she allows her prejudice to influence her decisions about who to help. Priestley uses Sybil Birling’s attitude to criticise private charities in 1912. He hoped his 1945 audience would feel angry that man wealthy people ran charities to make themselves look good, while denying help to people who needed it most. Priestley also hoped his 1945 audience would realise that they needed help from the welfare state, like the NHS, which would mean that the poorest people in society could access help when they most needed it.

During the inspector’s questioning, Priestley presents Eric and Sheila as guilty and ashamed. When Sheila is questioned by the inspector about the way she treated Eva Smith, Priestley makes clear she feels responsible by having her state **‘I started it’**. In other words, Sheila admits that her actions triggered a chain of events that led to Eva Smith’s death. Similarly, Priestley has Eric refer to his actions as **‘hellish’**, which suggests he feels extremely guilty about the way he forced himself upon Eva Smith while he was drunk. Whereas Sheila and Eric feel guilty and admit their part in Eva Smith’s death, Arthur and Sybil do not. During their dialogue with the inspector, Priestley has Arthur state **‘I can’t accept any responsibility’** and Sybil say repeatedly that she was **‘perfectly justified’**. Priestley hoped his 1945 audience would feel surprised by the difference in attitudes between the older and younger characters and realise that they needed to behave more like Sheila and Eric in order to build a fairer, more equal society.

Responsibility Grade 7

'An Inspector Calls' is about how people should be more responsible. Priestley explores the theme of responsibility through the treatment of Eva Smith, a working class girl, to demonstrate the need for change in society. Through the character of Eva Smith, Priestley demonstrates the destructive nature of capitalism and encourages his audience to become more socialist.

Priestley explores the hierarchy between Arthur Birling, a wealthy businessman, and Eva Smith, a working class girl, to demonstrate the inequality of the class system in 1912 England. During the inspector's interrogation of Arthur Birling, the audience learns that Eva Smith was fired from Arthur Birling because she asked for higher wages. By choosing to have the workers strike, something that was becoming increasingly popular in England, Priestley suggests that wealthy businessmen were not responsibly supporting their workers. During the questioning, Priestley has Birling reveal that he 'refused of course' to give his workers more money which implies Birling intends to pay his workers as little as possible so he has more profit. Priestley's use of the words 'of course' in Birling's speech convey that Birling believes he was justified and it was an obvious decision to make. They could also show that Birling had no intention of providing his workers with a pay rise and was determined to maintain power over them by refusing to give into their demands for more money. By having Birling appear so confident in his running of the business, Priestley might be implying many businessmen were irresponsible, favouring their own profit over fulfilling their duty to support their workers. As a capitalist, Arthur Birling, along with many other businessmen, believed that the key to success was hard work and looking out for yourself. Through his unfair treatment of Eva Smith and the rest of his working class workers, Priestley uses Birling's character to demonstrate the consequences of this capitalist viewpoint and to convince his audience that socialism is the way forward.

Priestley's portrayal of Sybil Birling as a snobbish and superior woman highlights the damaging effects of prejudice in an unequally divided society. During the questioning of Sybil Birling, Priestley suggests the preconceptions wealthy people had of the poor were irresponsible and led to the downfall of many working class people. While being questioned, Priestley has Sybil describe the working class as 'girls of that class' which immediately conveys the judgemental attitude Sybil Birling had towards the women of the working class, including Eva Smith. Priestley's use of the noun 'girls' is derogatory and could imply that Sybil Birling views them as so inferior that they do not even deserve to be classed as women. This snobbish view is also expressed through the words 'that class' which implies Sybil views all of the working class as the same. Priestley suggests that Sybil is prejudiced against Eva Smith and all of the working class because she believes them to be immoral, a view that was common amongst wealthy people in England in 1912. Additionally, Sybil uses her superiority to determine which working class women are deserving of her help. Sybil uses her influence to refuse Eva help at the charity and believes she was 'perfectly justified' in this decision. Ignoring her responsibility to help all women who come to the charity, Sybil chooses to refuse Eva help based on her prejudiced view that Eva is lying and immoral. Priestley makes clear through the adjective 'perfectly' that Sybil is stubborn in the view that

she was right to turn Eva away and, therefore, has no sympathy for Eva. By presenting Sybil in this way, Priestley could be encouraging his audience to consider whether it was right that wealthy people, who had no sympathy for the working class because they had no understanding of the difficulties they faced, were allowed to run the only charities available for the poor in 1912. Perhaps Priestley wanted to use Sybil's character to criticise the wealthy people who ran charities to improve their status rather than helping the poor. He could also be emphasising the need to move forward towards organisations like the NHS.

Priestley uses Gerald and Eric, a representation of young wealthy men, to criticise the way working class women were taken advantage of. Both men met Eva Smith at the Palace Theatre Bar, a place where prostitutes go to find work from middle and upper class men. They meet her at a time when she is desperate and hungry as a result of being thrown out of her job with Mr Birling and at Milwards. Although Priestley implies Gerald had good intentions at first towards Eva, it is clear that Gerald used Eva's vulnerability to his own advantages. While being questioned by the inspector, Gerald reveals that he felt 'sorry' for Eva Smith. Priestley has Gerald imply that he only gave Eva Smith money and a place to stay because he wanted to help her. However, it becomes clear that Gerald used his money and power in order to take advantage of Eva. By allowing his interactions with Eva to develop into an affair, Gerald becomes irresponsible because he knows the relationship cannot proceed any further. Priestley insinuates that Gerald knew by helping Eva, it would develop into something more which suggests that he intended to take advantage of Eva's vulnerability. Unlike Gerald, Eric does offer to marry Eva but only when he realises that Eva is pregnant with his child which suggests he only offered in order to protect his reputation. Although Eric eventually takes responsibility for his actions, to begin with Priestley suggests Eric used his superior status to force himself on Eva. Priestley could be using Eric and Gerald to indicate that many wealthy gentlemen used their money and power to take advantage of working class women and then irresponsibly hide their actions. Perhaps Priestley wanted his audience to realise that wealthy gentlemen needed to take more responsibility for their actions and to recognise the devastating effects of taking advantage of working class women.

Priestley uses Sheila Birling's character to criticise the sheltered lives wealthy young women were forced to lead. By having Sheila refer to her parents as 'mummy' and 'daddy' at the beginning of the play, Priestley conveys that Sheila is heavily influenced by her parents. Priestley insinuates that Sheila is only exposed to the capitalist and selfish viewpoints of her parents resulting in her also sharing these ideas. The nouns 'mummy' and 'daddy' could also show that Sheila looks up to her parents and respects their views. Priestley chooses to present Sheila as heavily influenced by her parents at the beginning of the play to demonstrate that Sheila, like many other wealthy young women at this time, has led a sheltered life and does not have an understanding of the difficulties faced by the working class. It is as a result of this sheltered life, that Sheila uses her power and wealth to have Eva Smith fired without realising the consequences of her actions. Priestley could be suggesting that bringing the younger generation up as capitalists influenced by their parents, society is only going to repeat its problems rather than getting better. Although Sheila mistreats Eva, she begins to realise the consequences of her actions and is willing to change. By the end of

the play, Sheila states that she 'started it' conveying that she takes full responsibility for the way she treated Eva. The contrast from Sheila's selfish nature at the beginning to the responsible woman she has become by the end of the play indicates that she has been influenced by the inspector's socialist views. Priestley might have wanted to have Sheila's character develop in this way to demonstrate that by allowing the younger generation to be influenced by others, they are more likely to inspire the need for change in society.

Through the questioning of these characters, Priestley encourages his audience to take responsibility themselves. Priestley chooses to have the Birlings and Gerald give their accounts of what happened with Eva to demonstrate they have the power in society because they are wealthy but use it irresponsibly. In contrast, he makes Eva Smith voiceless and powerless to convey the lack of power the working class had. Priestley makes clear that society is unequal and uses the terrible and unfair treatment of Eva Smith to encourage his audience to move towards a more responsible and socialist society where everyone is equal.

How does Priestley use the character of the Inspector to suggest that society needed to change? Grade 5

An Inspector Calls is about responsibility. Priestley uses the inspector to expose the lack of responsibility that many people took for the working classes. He hopes his audience will realise that they need to take action to build a fairer and more equality society for everyone.

During the inspector's questioning of Arthur Birling, Priestley makes clear wealthy men in 1912 needed to change. When the inspector questions Arthur Birling about Eva Smith's request for a payrise, Priestley has Arthur Birling state **'I refused, of course'**. In other words, Arthur Birling is proud to admit that he denied his workers a small pay rise. Priestley's use of the words 'of course' not only indicate that Birling feels he was right to refuse a pay rise, but also that he doesn't expect to be questioned about his actions. Later in the play, Priestley demonstrates that Arthur Birling is very selfish with his money by having him say **'I'd give thousands'**. In other words, Birling is happy to pay thousands of pounds to the inspector in order to keep him quiet about the scandal with Eva Smith. The contrast between the thousands of pounds that Birling is willing to pay and the small pay rise that Eva Smith asked for demonstrates how selfish Birling is because he clearly had the money to give the pay rise but only wants to use the money for himself. Priestley hoped his 1945 audience would feel angry towards selfish Capitalist businessmen like Arthur Birling.

During the inspector's questioning of Sybil Birling, Priestley makes clear wealthy women in 1912 needed to change. When the inspector questions Sybil about how she knew Eva Smith, Priestley presents Sybil as prejudiced by having her refer to the working classes as 'girls of that class'. Priestley's use of the words 'that class' suggest that Sybil is snobbish and superior, looking down on the working classes. It is clear that she allows her prejudice to influence her decisions about who to help. Priestley uses Sybil Birling's attitude to criticise private charities in 1912. He hoped his 1945 audience would feel angry that man wealthy people ran charities to make themselves look good, while denying help to people who needed it most. Priestley also hoped his 1945 audience would realise that they needed help from the welfare state, like the NHS, which would mean that the poorest people in society could access help when they most needed it.

During the inspector's questioning of Sheila and Eric, Priestley presents younger characters as willing to learn. When Sheila is questioned by the inspector about the way she treated Eva Smith, Priestley makes clear she feels responsible by having her state **'I started it'**. In other words, Sheila admits that her actions triggered a chain of events that led to Eva Smith's death. Similarly, Priestley has Eric refer to his actions as **'hellish'**, which suggests he feels extremely guilty about the way he forced himself upon Eva Smith while he was drunk. Whereas Sheila and Eric feel guilty and admit their part in Eva Smith's death, Arthur and Sybil do not. During their dialogue with the inspector, Priestley has Arthur state **'I can't accept any responsibility'** and Sybil say repeatedly that she was **'perfectly justified'**. Priestley hoped his 1945 audience would feel surprised by the difference in attitudes between the older and younger characters and realise that they needed to behave more like Sheila and Eric in order to build a fairer, more equal society.

Throughout the play, Priestley presents the inspector as powerful and moral. Within the stage directions, Priestley makes clear how powerful the inspector is by writing that he should 'cut in massively' over the Birlings. This demonstrates that the inspector is not afraid of the Birlings simply because they are a higher class than him. Priestley uses the inspector to cut through traditional class barriers and show that people should be treated equally. As a socialist, this is what Priestley believed. During the inspector's dialogue with the Birlings, Priestley has the inspector state 'we are all members of one body. We are all responsible for each other'. Priestley's repetition of the word 'we' indicates that he believes that people should not only think about themselves. Priestley's use of the word 'we' also contrasts Arthur Birling's use of the words 'him' and 'himself', demonstrating the difference between Birling's selfishness and the inspector's morality. Priestley's use of the words 'one body' demonstrate that he believes everyone should work together. The inspector acts as Priestley's mouthpiece, offering the Birlings and Gerald ideas about a new society, in which everyone takes responsibility for each other in an effort to reduce inequality. Priestley hoped that his 1945 audience would realise that they needed to take more responsibility for others.

The inspector Grade 7

'An Inspector Calls' is about how people should be more responsible. Priestley uses the Inspector as his mouthpiece, to challenge the selfish capitalist views of many of the middle and upper classes and to promote his belief in greater equality for everyone. Through the Inspector's questioning of each of the characters, Priestley demonstrates how a lack of responsibility for others can have tragic consequences. Eric and Sheila's ability to take responsibility for their actions conveys Priestley's belief in the chance for a better society for the future.

The Inspector's questioning of Arthur Birling reveals how poorly some of the working classes were treated by wealthy business owners. Early in the play, Arthur Birling proudly boasts that 'a man has to mind his own business, look after himself and his own'. Priestley makes it clear that Arthur Birling prioritises his own interests above the interests of his workers. When questioned by the Inspector about how he responded to his workers' request for a payrise, Birling responds with the words 'I refused of course'. The words 'of course' demonstrate the arrogance in Arthur Birling's character; he feels entirely justified in behaving in the way he did and does not wish to be questioned by the Inspector. The fact that Birling 'refused' without even discussing the payrise with his workers, and went as far as firing the person leading the strike, demonstrates how few rights the working classes had in 1912. Priestley deliberately presents Arthur Birling as a character who is unable to accept any responsibility for his actions and who remains concerned with his own reputation throughout, even offering the Inspector 'thousands' in order to keep quiet. Priestley does this in order to demonstrate to his audience that society will only improve if wealthy business owners like Arthur Birling admit their mistakes and try to take more responsibility for their workers.

Priestley uses the Inspector's questioning of Sybil Birling to demonstrate the need for a welfare system to help the working classes. When questioned about her actions, Priestley makes it clear that Sybil Birling was prejudiced towards Eva Smith. Priestley has Sybil refer to the working classes as 'girls of that class' and 'of that sort', which demonstrates that she is snobbish and looks down on the working classes. He also has Sybil proudly say she was 'perfectly justified' in doing what she did, admitting that she was prejudiced against Eva Smith due to her 'impertinent' use of the Birling name. Priestley deliberately chooses to have Sybil Birling run a private charity as he is able to use her character to suggest that charities run by wealthy people would never offer the help that society needed. Priestley wanted to make the case for a welfare state, which would offer more help to the working classes. Many of Priestley's 1945 audience would have voted for the Labour Party, who came into power in 1945 and established the NHS, thus would have felt equally critical of Sybil Birling's actions.

Through the Inspector's questioning of Sheila and Eric, Priestley demonstrates that the younger generation may be able to change society for the better. Whereas Sybil and Arthur Birling are relieved and delighted when they realise the Inspector wasn't real, Sheila and Eric remain guilty and remorseful for their actions. Eric challenges his parents for pretending that 'nothing really happened at all', which highlights the difference in the way

the characters take responsibility for their actions. Priestley wanted to propose to the audience that the younger generation, many of whom may have voted for the recently elected Labour Party in 1945, would be able to change society for the better, as they were more willing to recognise their mistakes.

The Inspector is Priestley's mouthpiece throughout, challenging capitalist views and proposing different ways of thinking. Priestley uses stage directions to indicate that the inspector is willing to interrupt the Birling's capitalist views by having the inspector cut 'in massively' while the Birlings are talking. Whereas Sybil and Arthur Birling believe themselves to be superior, Priestley makes clear it is in fact the inspector that is more powerful. Priestley's choice to have the inspector 'cutting in' on Birling's and Sybil's speeches conveys that the inspector is not intimidated by their superior class. Priestley could have decided to have the inspector cut in on the Birlings to show that capitalist viewpoints deserve to be interrupted and ended. Furthermore, the adverb 'massively' demonstrates that what the inspector has to say is more important than what the Birlings have to say. The audience is therefore encouraged to trust the Inspector and to believe the things he is saying to the Birlings. Priestley has the Inspector promote socialist ideals when he says to the Birlings 'We are all members of one body. We are all responsible for each other'. Priestley's repetition of the pronoun 'we' when the Inspector talks contrasts with the way Arthur and Sybil Birling speak, as they more often say the word 'I', seeming more preoccupied with their own interests. This demonstrates Priestley's belief in the clear distinction between socialism, which focuses on the many, and capitalism, which focuses on self-interest.

How are women presented in 'An Inspector Calls'? Grade 5

In 'An Inspector Calls', Priestley presents ideas about women through Sheila and Gerald's relationship. When Gerald is questioned by the inspector, Priestley has Gerald admit that he had an affair with Eva Smith. The fact that Gerald had this affair shows a lack of respect for both Sheila and Eva Smith, who he had no intention of continuing a relationship with due to their class differences. After the inspector leaves, Priestley has Gerald say to Sheila 'how about this ring?'. This demonstrates that Gerald is happy to forget everything that happened after he learns that the Inspector wasn't real and expects Sheila to forget all about the affair. Priestley presents him as irresponsible and as somebody who had not learned from their careless treatment of both Eva and Sheila. Priestley uses Gerald to suggest that wealthy men often had affairs and took advantage of women with no damage to their own lives.

Priestley also explores ideas about women through Eva Smith's treatment by Arthur Birling. When the Inspector questions Arthur Birling about Eva Smith's request for a payrise, Priestley has Birling state 'I refused, of course'. The words 'of course' suggests that Arthur was not even considering paying Eva fairly for her hard work at his factory. The word 'refused' also suggests that Arthur unkindly turned her away when Eva wanted equality. This is surprising given that, later in the play, Birling offers 'thousands' to the inspector in order to bribe him to remain quiet about the scandal. It is clear that Birling could have afforded to give Eva Smith more money but chooses not to due to his selfish attitudes. Priestley's 1945 audience, who had socialist values, would have criticised Arthur for treating a vulnerable member of society in this way. Priestley does this to criticise those in power and highlight the need for equality and change.

Finally, Priestley presents ideas about women through Sybil Birling's treatment of Eva Smith. During the inspector's questioning, Priestley has Sybil admit she was prejudiced against 'girls of that class'. The words 'that class' suggest that Sybil views all working class girls as beneath her. The audience may have found this attitude surprising from a charity worker, who should be trusted to look after the people who come to them for help. Priestley demonstrates that women like Eva Smith were treated the worst of all. Not only is Eva Smith a woman, which means she is treated poorly by men, but also she is working class, which means that she is also treated poorly by rich women. Priestley reveals that working class women had the most hardship because they were treated poorly for both their gender and their class. Priestley hoped that his 1945 audience would realise that there needed to be fairer treatment for all women.

Women Grade 7

In 'An Inspector Calls' Priestley uses the systematic and clockwork abuse of the Birling family and Gerald Croft in order to criticise the upper class and their treatment of working class women in 1912. Although the play revolves around Eva Smith's death, the negation of her appearance and the presence of the selfish Birlings, are used to criticise poor women and demonstrate their absence of power.

In 'An Inspector Calls', Priestley wanted to show that society was very unequal and that working-class women were abused by society. Priestley has each member of the Birling family, and Gerald Croft, play a huge role in Eva Smith's suicide. As a working-class woman with very little money or rights, she relied on help from those who had better opportunities than her. When the Inspector questions Arthur Birling about Eva, he states 'I refused, of course' when he tells the Inspector that Eva asked for a pay rise. The words 'of course' suggests that Arthur was not even considering paying Eva fairly for her hard work at his factory. The word 'refused' also suggests that Arthur unkindly turned her away when Eva wanted equality. Priestley's 1945 audience, who had socialist values, would have criticised Arthur for treating a vulnerable member of society in this way. Priestley does this to criticise those in power and highlight the need for equality and change.

Priestley uses the selfish, careless behaviour of male characters to highlight how women were considered unimportant. Both Gerald and Eric use Eva Smith or Daisy Renton, and Sheila is cheated on by Gerald. Eric takes advantage of Eva when he is drunk and Gerald has an affair with Eva knowing that he cannot offer her a long-lasting relationship due to their class differences. Although this becomes clear through the Inspector's questioning, Gerald attempts to return to the engagement with Sheila when Priestley has him say 'how about this ring?' This shows that Gerald is happy to forget everything that happened after he learns that the Inspector wasn't real. Priestley presents him as irresponsible and as somebody who had not learned from their careless treatment of both Eva and Sheila. Priestley uses Gerald to suggest that wealthy men often had affairs and took advantage of women with no damage to their own lives.

Priestley makes the victim of his play, Eva Smith, a woman in order to show how unfair society was in 1912. Eva Smith never once appears in person in the play: she is voiceless and powerless. She is also dead before the play begins due to the selfish and careless actions of the Birlings and members of the upper class. Priestley deliberately makes Eva Smith voiceless to represent how little power working class people had. The name 'Smith' is very common. Priestley chose a common name to suggest that there are many people like Eva Smith in society and that society needs to change. When Priestley wrote his play, the Labour party had just been voted in and society was very interested in equality. Priestley deliberately sets the play in 1912 so that his audience can reflect on the inequality of life in 1912: a time when women did not even have the right to vote. Priestley wanted his audience to realise how much had changed but also how much work still needed to be done.

<https://sites.google.com/inspirationtrust.org/jacenglishrevision/home>

In conclusion, Priestley uses the vulnerable and unseen character of Eva Smith, in addition to the cruelty exhibited by the Birlings, in order to criticise capitalist societies and their treatment of the poor. Priestley suggests that cruel treatment at the hands of the wealthy to end: a message that would have been warmly received by his post-war audience who were keen to end class division.

How does Priestley present ideas about class? Grade 5

Priestley presents ideas about class through the character of Arthur Birling. When the inspector questions Arthur Birling about Eva Smith's request for a payrise, Priestley has Arthur Birling state **'I refused, of course'**. In other words, Arthur Birling is proud to admit that he denied his workers a small pay rise. Priestley's use of the words 'of course' not only indicate that Birling feels he was right to refuse a pay rise, but also that he doesn't expect to be questioned about his actions. Later in the play, Priestley demonstrates that Arthur Birling is very selfish with his money by having him say **'I'd give thousands'**. In other words, Birling is happy to pay thousands of pounds to the inspector in order to keep him quiet about the scandal with Eva Smith. The contrast between the thousands of pounds that Birling is willing to pay and the small pay rise that Eva Smith asked for demonstrates how selfish Birling is because he clearly had the money to give the pay rise but only wants to use the money for himself. Priestley hoped his 1945 audience would feel angry towards selfish Capitalist businessmen like Arthur Birling.

Priestley also presents ideas about class through the character of Sybil Birling. When the inspector questions Sybil about how she knew Eva Smith, Priestley presents Sybil as prejudiced by having her refer to the working classes as 'girls of that class'. Priestley's use of the words 'that class' suggest that Sybil is snobbish and superior, looking down on the working classes. It is clear that she allows her prejudice to influence her decisions about who to help. Priestley uses Sybil Birling's attitude to criticise private charities in 1912. He hoped his 1945 audience would feel angry that man wealthy people ran charities to make themselves look good, while denying help to people who needed it most. Priestley also hoped his 1945 audience would realise that they needed help from the welfare state, like the NHS, which would mean that the poorest people in society could access help when they most needed it.

Priestley uses the inspector to challenge his audience to think differently about the class system. Within the stage directions, Priestley makes clear how powerful the inspector is by writing that he should 'cut in massively' over the Birlings. This demonstrates that the inspector is not afraid of the Birlings simply because they are a higher class than him. Priestley uses the inspector to cut through traditional class barriers and show that people should be treated equally. As a socialist, this is what Priestley believed. During the inspector's dialogue with the Birlings, Priestley has the inspector state 'we are all members of one body. We are all responsible for each other'. Priestley's repetition of the word 'we' indicates that he believes that people should not only think about themselves. Priestley's use of the word 'we' also contrasts Arthur Birling's use of the words 'him' and 'himself', demonstrating the difference between Birling's selfishness and the inspector's morality. Priestley's use of the words 'one body' demonstrate that he believes everyone should work together. The inspector acts as Priestley's mouthpiece, offering the Birlings and Gerald ideas about a new society, in which everyone takes responsibility for each other in an effort to reduce inequality. Priestley hoped that his 1945 audience would realise that they needed to take more responsibility for others.

Class Grade 7

'An Inspector Calls' is about how people should be more responsible. Priestley explores the theme of class through the treatment of working class Eva Smith by the wealthy Birlings and Gerald Croft when she is in different situations throughout the play.

Priestley uses Birling's treatment of Eva Smith to highlight that 1912 England was a class ridden society, which did not treat the working class fairly. In Act One, Priestley uses the Inspector's questioning of Birling to highlight the poor conditions the working class faced. When he describes how his employees asked for a pay rise, Birling states 'I refused of course'. Here Priestley explores how Birling immediately ignores their request. The word 'refused' suggests Birling has no understanding for what it is like to be poor, whilst 'of course' suggests his arrogance. Priestley goes on to suggest that Birling is not only unsympathetic to the living conditions of the working classes, but he takes advantage of this for his own gain. The Inspector states, 'desperate, poor people make cheap labour'. Here Priestley has the Inspector use emotive language to emphasise how Birling takes advantage of the poverty of his workers. By hiring 'cheap labour' Birling is able to increase his own profits and therefore make more money. Priestley uses this interaction between the Inspector and Birling to criticise capitalist Britain for not being more responsible for the working classes. He suggests that this lack of responsibility leads to huge inequality and harsh living conditions for the working class.

Priestley uses Gerald Croft and Eric Birling's treatment of Eva Smith to emphasise the way in which wealthy gentlemen could take advantage of working class women. Both men met Eva Smith at the Palace Theatre Bar, a place where prostitutes go to find work from middle and upper class men. They meet her at a time when she is desperate and hungry as a result of being thrown out of her job with Mr Birling and at Milwards. While Gerald did seem to have good intentions when he first met Eva Smith (renamed Daisy Renton), it could be argued that he eventually took advantage of her gratitude and allowed their relationship to develop into an affair, even though it was clear that he'd have no intention of marrying someone of a lower class than himself. Unlike Gerald, Eric did offer marriage to Eva Smith after he got her pregnant. However, he forced himself upon her when he first met her, taking advantage of his superior status because he thought that no one would find out about his behaviour. Through their actions, both characters moved Eva Smith closer to her death. Priestley uses Gerald and Eric to suggest to his 1945 audience that wealthy gentlemen needed to take more responsibility for their actions and realise the terrible consequences of taking advantage of working class women.

Priestley uses Sybil's unsympathetic and prejudiced treatment of Eva Smith to highlight the inequality between the upper and working classes in the early 20th century. When questioned by the Inspector, Priestley makes it clear that Sybil has a prejudiced and judgemental attitude to the working class when he has her describe the working classes as 'girls of that class'. At this point Priestley makes her judgemental attitude towards the working class clear. The words 'that class' indicate she views all people of the working class as the same. They also suggest that she looks down on the working classes because she sees herself as superior. Her unsympathetic attitude to the working class is also explored when

she says, 'I was perfectly justified'. Here Priestley conveys her unsympathetic tone of voice. The words 'perfectly justified' suggest that she takes no responsibility for her actions. Not only does Priestley use Mrs Birling to explore class divisions in early 20th century England, but he also uses this character to highlight the hypocrisy of the upper classes at the time. Mrs Birling sat as the head of a charitable organisation, but rather than using her position to provide comfort and support for those who need it, she uses her position to elevate her own status in society, to create the appearance of a sympathetic member of society who wants to do good. Priestley could also be promoting the need for a welfare state to his 1945 audience by suggesting that private charities run by middle class people were too prejudiced to take proper responsibility for working class people.

Though Priestley presents early 20th century England negatively, he suggests that the younger generation have the potential to change things for the better. At the start of the play, Sheila is presented as immature and smug. This is clearly see through the way she describes having asked for Eva to be dismissed purely because she was in a foul mood and jealous of her. However, Sheila is quick to admit her responsibility and guilt when she states 'I started it', which clearly shows how she is affected by what she did. Priestley also uses Eric to suggest that the younger generation are more likely to take more responsibility for others when he has Eric say to Arthur Birling, 'why shouldn't they try for higher wages?'. Here Priestley uses the question to show how Eric challenges his father's capitalist views and questions what's wrong with asking for fairness.

To conclude, Priestley uses the treatment Eva experiences from the Birlings to portray a class-ridden society, which shows a lack of responsibility for the working classes. However, Priestley does suggest that society can learn and can become a better place through the way the younger generation is presented as more sympathetic.