

# Literature Paper 2

## Edna the Examiner's An Inspector Calls Workbook

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Arguably, this is the text you'll need to know your very best before the exam because you won't have an extract to fall back on. You'll have a simple question on a character, theme or attitude and you'll need to give your marker all they're going to want – without any help from the examiner.

# The Plot

1. An inspector arrives at the Birling house. He tells them how a girl called Eva Smith has killed herself by drinking disinfectant - he wants to ask them some questions.
2. The Inspector reveals that the girl used to work in Arthur Birling's factory and he had her sacked for going on strike. Mr Birling refuses to accept any responsibility for her death.
3. The Inspector then reveals that Sheila thought that Eva had made fun of her, complained and got her sacked. Sheila is deeply ashamed and feels responsible for the girl's death.
4. The Inspector forces Gerald to confess to an affair he had with Eva. Sheila respects Gerald's honesty but returns the engagement ring he gave her.
5. It is revealed that Sybil Birling had refused to help the pregnant Eva.
6. It turns out that it was Eric who got Eva pregnant, and stole money from his father to help her.
7. The Inspector leaves. The family ring the infirmary and there is no record of a girl dying from drinking disinfectant.
8. Suddenly the phone rings, Mr Birling answers it, to his horror the phone call reveals that a young woman has just died from drinking disinfectant and the police are on their way to question them about it. The curtain falls and the play ends.

# Key Contexts

**The Writer:** JB Priestley was born in 1894. After fighting in World War I, he became disillusioned and upset at the economic depression and widespread poverty in the UK. He was a socialist, and used his radio show in the 1940s to share his hopes for a better, fairer Britain.

This play is his message to the world: a call for people to look after other people, and to push towards full equality.

**Contexts present in the play:** What are the following and who represents them in the play?

## Capitalism

*What is Capitalism?*

*Who represents Capitalism in the play?*

*What is Priestley's message about capitalism?*

## Socialism

*What is socialism?*

*Who represents socialism in the play?*

*What is Priestley's message about socialism?*

## Class

*What is the class system?*

*Who represents the upper, middle and lower class?*

*What is Priestley's message about the classes?*

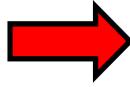
Why is it relevant the play is set in the **Midlands** in 1912?

Were **men and women** equal at this time?

How significant was **morality** in 1912?

# 1912 - 1946

The play is set in 1912



But was performed in 1946

For each of the following, explain what the context was like in 1912, and then what it was like in 1946:

	In 1912...	By 1946...
<b>War</b>		
<b>Class System</b>		
<b>Women</b>		
<b>Political leaders</b>		

**Priestley's Purpose:** Why do you think Priestley set his play in 1912? What is his message to the audience of 1945?

**STRETCH:** Do you think this message is still relevant to the audience of 2017?

# Setting: The Birling's House

*This is a play, so you are expected to write about stage directions – however not the same way you would analyse language. You need to be thinking how the stage directions reflect the situation, and how they show what the characters are thinking / feeling...*

The room has “good, solid furniture of the period... substantial and heavily comfortable, but not cosy and homelike.” What does this show about the Birlings? What are they not?

Priestley explains the stage should not be warm and comfortable: what might this imply is missing from their family home life?

The lighting is to be a rosy glow. How might this reflect the Birling's view on life? (Think rose-tinted spectacles)

When the Inspector enters, the lighting becomes 'brighter and harder.' Why?

What do their body positions reflect about the characters?  
Edna (the maid):

Mr Birling:

The family:

It's a 'suburban' house (meaning in a city or town). What does this show about the family's status?

They're drinking from 'champagne glasses.' What does this show about the family?

How does this contrast to Eva Smith?

# Mr Arthur Birling

Who is he? What does he do in the play?

*In the Inspector's Investigation:* What did Birling do?

How does he treat the Inspector when he leaves. What does this tell us about Birling?

Birling's actions	What do we learn about him?
At the start, he brags about the quality of his port and cigars.	
He warns Eric and Gerald, "a man has to make his own way – has to look after himself"	
He is delighted that Shela and Gerald's engagement has brought Crofts limited and Birling & Company together.	

**If there's one quote to know:** What does this quote tell us about Birling? How does this comment foreshadow his family?

*"Unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable"*

# Mrs Sybil Birling

Who is she? What does she do in the play?

*In the Inspector's Investigation:* What did Mrs Birling do?

What does she ask the Inspector to do to the man who got Eva pregnant? What does this tell us about her?

Mrs Birling's actions	What do we learn about her?
She follows her husbands lead (passes the message onto the cook, leaves the room so the men can talk)	
She speaks 'haughtily' and 'rather grandly' to the Inspector, and then boasts 'she was the only one... who didn't give in'	
She has a key role at the Brumley Women's Charity, yet turned down Eva's application.	

**If there's one quote to know:** What does this quote tell us about Mrs Birling?

*"Girls of that class"*

# The Birlings – STRETCH Analysis

**Mr Birling Key Character Traits:** What do you learn about him from the following...

<p>He is placed at 'one end' of the table, interrupts others and makes long speeches.</p>	<p>He gives orders to Sybil to praise the cook (rather than do it himself), without using the cooks name.</p>
<p>He has a 'provincial' accent, but hopes for a knighthood for being a 'sound party man'</p>	<p>He acknowledges Gerald's mother thinks the Birlings are socially inferior.</p>

**Mrs Birling Key Character Traits:** What do you learn about her from the following...

<p>She says about her children; "he's only a boy" and "it would be much better if Sheila didn't listen to this story"</p>	<p>She didn't know Eric has a drinking problem, and couldn't believe he'd have an affair.</p>
<p>She criticises Eva's lover's lack of morals.</p>	<p>She excuses her actions, repeating the word 'justified'</p>

# Sheila Birling

Who is she? What does she do in the play?

*In the Inspector's Investigation:* What did Sheila do? Why was her class a factor in this?

How does Sheila now feel about her actions?

Sheila's actions	What do we learn about her?
The opening stage directions say Sheila is 'very pleased with life and rather excited'	
She refers to Mr and Mrs Birling as 'Mummy' and 'Daddy,' yet she's engaged to Gerald.	
Whereas Arthur, Gerald and Sybil deny their responsibility, Sheila realises she cannot hid the truth.	

**If there's one quote to know:** What does this quote tell us about Sheila?

*"Mother – I begged you and begged you to stop"*

# Eric Birling

Who is he? What does he do in the play?

*In the Inspector's Investigation:* What did Eric do?

How does he deal with his actions?

Eric's actions	What do we learn about him?
The opening stage directions say he is 'not quite at ease'. He stops himself mid-sentence a few times.	
He bursts out laughing for no reason and has a squabble with Sheila. His parents talk down to him.	
He tells both his parents that he's never been able to talk to them: "You're not the kind of father a chap could go to when he's in trouble."	

**If there's one quote to know:** What does this quote tell us about Eric?

*"You killed them both – damn you, damn you"*

# The Young Birlings – STRETCH Analysis

**Sheila Key Character Traits:** What do you learn about her from the following...

She focusses on her own emotions on the night, “I’ve been so happy tonight. Oh I wish you hadn’t told me”

She goes on to say about Milwards, “I feel now I can never go there again” – what do these views tell us about her upbringing?



*“I know I’m to blame – and I’m desperately sorry – but I can’t believe – I wont believe – it’s simply my fault that in the end she – committed suicide”*

How does she feel?

Does she take responsibility?

What do the dashes reflect about her state of mind?

**Eric Key Character Traits:** What do you learn about him from the following...

He suggests Eva was right to go on strike.

When he returns in Act 3, his family do not support him, but are angry about the impending scandal. He is ‘explosively’ refused a drink.

**Priestley’s Purpose:** What is Priestley’s message through Eric and Sheila? Think about how they are different to their parents...

# Gerald Croft

Who is he? What does he do in the play?

*In the Inspector's Investigation:* What did Gerald do?

What were Gerald's intentions? How does he feel about her death?

Gerald's actions	What do we learn about him?
Gerald and Arthur agree with each other about the strike, and Arthur sticks up for Gerald after the affair is revealed.	
Birling lectures Gerald, yet confides in him about his impending knighthood.	
Sybil calls Gerald's story a "disgusting affair," whilst previously she had stopped Mrs Birling from teasing Gerald for working too much over the summer.	

**If there's one quote to know:** What does this quote tell us about Eric?

*"We're respectable citizens and not criminals"*

# Eva Smith / Daisy Renton

Who is she? What does she do in the play?

Eva's story demonstrates the struggles of being a woman in 1912. Where do we see the following in the play:

Dominance of men	
Treatment as a sexual object	
Difficulty in being independent	
Prejudice about sexual activity	

Eva / Daisy's actions	What do we learn about her?
She won't take Eric's stolen money and she organised the strike at the factory.	<p><i>STRETCH: How does this differ to the Birlings?</i></p>
She never appears on stage, yet she is central to all the characters' lives.	
Before he knows how the night would unfold, Mr Birling describes her a lively, hard-working and good-looking.	

**If there's one quote to know:** What does this quote tell us about Eva / Daisy?

*"Just used her... as if she was an animal, a thing, not a person"*

# Inspector Goole

Who is he? What does he do in the play?

**Priestley's Purpose:** What does Inspector Goole represent?

Inspector's actions	What do we learn about him?
In the opening stage directions, he projects, "an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness"	
When he walks on, the lighting becomes "brighter and harder"	
Despite being a lower class, he has all the power on stage (eg: he is not intimidated by Arthur or Gerald: "cutting through massively" and "cooly, looking hard at him")	

**If there's one quote to know:** What does this quote tell us about the Inspector's view on responsibility?

*"if men will not learn that lesson, when they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish."*

# Inspector Goole

**Inspector Goole Key Character Traits:** What do you learn about him from the following...

<p>What does Priestley's use of wordplay in Goole / ghoule suggest about the Inspector?</p>	<p>He stares at people before questioning them, only deals with one person at a time, and is clearly judgemental rather than objective.</p>
<p>He is like an omniscient narrator: he appears to already know everything about the Birlings.</p>	<p>At the end, we find out there is no Inspector Goole.</p>

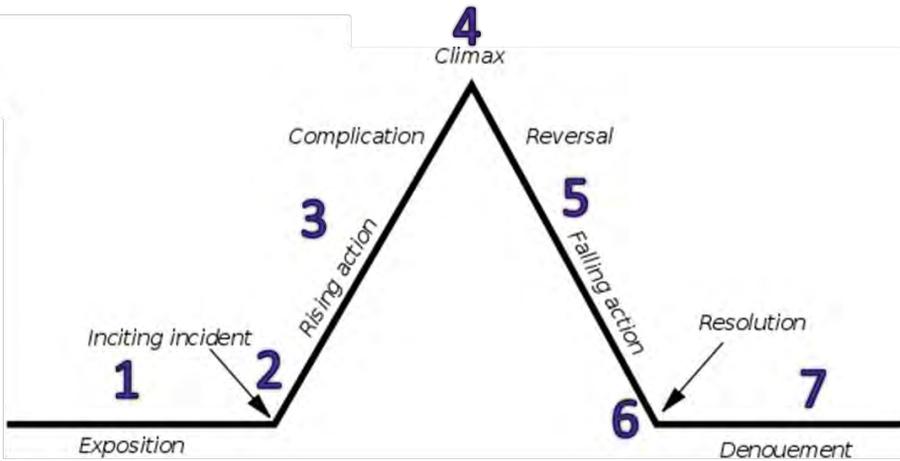
**The Inspector's Impact on the Characters:** When they find out he's a hoax, how do the characters react and what is Priestley's message through this?

Characters	Key Quote	How have they been affected? What is Priestley's message through this?
<p><b>Arthur and Sybil (Old, middle class)</b></p>	<p>'[imitating Inspector] You all helped to kill her [pointing ... laughing]</p>	
<p><b>Gerald (Upper Class)</b></p>	<p>"What girl? There were probably four or five..."</p>	
<p><b>Sheila and Eric (Young)</b></p>	<p>Sheila repeats Inspectors final words – "fire and blood and anguish"</p>	

# Structure of the Play

The easiest way of analysing structure is by considering Freytag's theory of dramatic structure

Freytag's theory is:



Why do you think Priestley uses a simple narrative structure (One plot, one set, one night)?

**Analysing Structure:** For each of the 7 points, state what is happening and then explain Priestley's message through this structural choice...

	What happens?	What is Priestley's message?
<b>1</b>	<i>Eg: The family are celebrating Sheila and Gerald's engagement. They're relaxed and happy.</i>	<i>Eg: That the middle classes are at ease in their luxury. They are unconcerned by any hardships beyond their home.</i>
<b>2</b>		
<b>3</b>		
<b>4</b>		
<b>5</b>		
<b>6</b>		
<b>7</b>		

# Themes: Young & Old

What do the actions of the young and old reflect about their age group at different times in the play?

## At the Start:

Mr Birling has the greatest number of lines, expects people to pay attention and doesn't like to be interrupted. Mrs Birling also snaps "please don't contradict me like that" to the children. What does this suggest about the older people?

Eric and Sheila stop squabbling when Mrs Birling tells them. Eric asks "[not to rudely]" a request.

## When Goole arrives

Sybil disapprovingly notes, "You seem to have made a great impression on this child, Inspector."

Sheila challenges her parent's behaviour. She tells her Dad not to "interfere" with Gerald's situation, and calls her mum "cruel and vile." Eric is more aggressive and extreme: "damn you" and "{almost threatening her}"

## When Goole leaves

The older generation mock and laugh at the Inspector. They share a relief their reputation is intact and offer no concern for Daisy Renton.

Eric and Sheila have been deeply affected by the evening's events. They challenge their parents refusal to alter their behaviour: "You're ready to go on the same old way... and it frightens me"

**Priestley's Purpose:** What is Priestley's message here about young and old? Is this a hopeful message for the future or not?

# Themes: Personal Responsibility

The Inspector came with a mission to get everyone to understand and admit their personal responsibility for Eva's death: a "confession" as Sheila put it.

For each character, using the quote / actions, explain their view on their personal responsibility at the end and why they feel that way.

	Quote / Details	What's their view on their personal responsibility?
<b>Sheila</b>	<i>"I behaved badly. I know I did. I'm ashamed of it."</i>	
<b>Eric</b>	"I did what I did. And Mother did what she did. And the rest of you did what you did to her"	
<b>Gerald</b>	After being remorseful and guilty with the Inspector, at the end he asks Sheila to stay engaged to him and doubts the story of Eva's death.	
<b>Mr Birling</b>	They both explain and justify their actions throughout, never admitting any wrongdoing. When they prove the Inspector is fake, they laugh and joke about the night's events.	
<b>Mrs Birling</b>		

**Priestley's Purpose:** After these conversations, Priestley has the phone ring again with news an Inspector is on his way. How does this reflect his message on personal responsibility?

# Themes: Social Responsibility

What is social responsibility?

The Inspector is the voice of social responsibility in the play. How does he present his views here...?

Inspector's Quotes	How does this present his view on social responsibility?
"Their lives, their hopes and fears, their suffering, and chance of happiness, all intertwined with our lives..."	
"She needed not only money, but advice, sympathy, friendliness"	
"We'll have to share our guilt"	

"It's my duty to keep labour costs down"  
How does Arthur Birling present social responsibility?

On the Brumley Women's Charity Organisation, Sybil helps girls with "deserving cases" – but she saw to it Eva is refused. How does she present social responsibility?

**If there's one quote to know:** What does this quote tell us about Birling's view on social responsibility?

*"like bees in a hive – community and all that nonsense"*

# Themes: Morality

What is morality?

"We're respectful citizens and not criminals"  
How do Gerald and the Birlings believe morality is shown? Can you see an example in the play?

Priestley uses the Christian ideas of the seven deadly sins to show the characters lack of social morality, and to demonstrate how much that is exactly what Eva Smith needs. Complete the table below, just like the example...

	Where can you see this sin demonstrated?	How does this juxtapose with the victim, Eva Smith?
<b>Gluttony</b>	<i>The play opens with the table being cleared of 'dessert plates and champagne glasses.' Everyone drinks port. Eric's heavy drinking.</i>	<i>Eva is hungry and lives in poverty. She had so little to eat that Gerald started supporting her financially.</i>
<b>Greed</b>		
<b>Wrath (anger)</b>		
<b>Envy</b>		
<b>Pride</b>		
<b>Lust</b>		

# Themes: Love

## Sheila and Gerald

The play opens with the Birlings celebrating Sheila and Gerald's engagement: but how is their love presented?

Why is Mr Birling so happy about this engagement? What is implied about their romance?

Engagement Quotes	How does this present their love?
Sheila talked '[gaily]' and in a '[playful]' manner.	
Gerald says, "and I drink to you – and <b>hope</b> I can make you as happy as you deserve to be"	
To the ring, Sheila says "Now I feel really engaged"	

## Girls vs Boys

The characters' view on love is shaped by their gender. How is their view on love presented in the following:

Eric says of Eva, "She was pretty and a good sport"

Gerald says Eva, "became at once the most important person in her life."

Gerald admits about Eva "I didn't feel about her as she felt about me"

Sheila says Gerald was "the wonderful Fairy Prince"

# Themes: Inequality

Why does Eva Smith suffer from such inequality?

Priestley's key message is about the inequality in society. Eva's lifestyle was completely shaped by her inequality, whereas the Birlings massively benefitted from the social inequality that existed.

In the table below, explain how Eva Smith's experience and The Birling's experience juxtaposed because of their inequality. The first one has been done for you...

	Eva Smith	The Birlings
<b>Gaining Employment</b>	<i>Arthur asks if after she was sacked if she "got into trouble? Go on the streets?" – thereby suggesting that there was no other option of her but to turn to crime or prostitution as a means of making money.</i>	<i>Mr Birling had the luxury of removing peoples employment whenever he felt it in the best interest of the company.</i>
<b>Personal Relationships</b>		
<b>Keeping Employment</b>		
<b>Living Arrangments</b>		
<b>Democracy and Elections</b>		

**Priestley's Purpose:** What do you think is Priestley's message about inequality – as presented through the Inspector.