

| AN INSPECTOR CALLS KO | | | | SKILLS (AO1, AO2 & AO4) | | Themes | | Stave | Key Moments |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|--|--|-----------------------|--|---|---|
| Vocabulary | Definition | Terminology | Definition | <p>Analysis using PEAZ:</p> <p>Point: A clear analytical point which shows insight and clearly answers the question Evidence: Support with a short quote(s) or example from the text. Analysis: Make explicit where the quote is from then explain the meaning and effect of the quote(s) you use – both explicit and implicit. Aim for two interpretations per quote. Zoom in on Language: Zoom in on a specific language choice (use subject terminology) and explore its connotations and effect on the audience. Consider whether Edwardian audiences would react differently to a contemporary audience. Refer to the writer: Evaluate Priestley’s motive and how it supports his intended purpose for the play</p> | | Social responsibility | The inspector’s powerful final speech is about how we are all responsible for each other; he stresses that the upper classes need to recognise that their actions impede others. The inspector highlights to every character that they have a duty of care and moral obligation to look after others such as Eva Smith. This often echoes Priestley’s own socialist views for a society which works to the benefit of the collective. | Act One | The Birlings are happily celebrating the engagement of their daughter Sheila to a young aristocrat called Gerald Croft. Mr Birling is pleased as this will lead to a rise in profit for his company as the Crofts and Birlings will now be business allies. Sheila admits she has her doubts about Gerald’s affections but he produces a ring to appease her. The inspector arrives and speaks to Mr Birling about Eva Smith- a girl who committed suicide by drinking disinfectant. It turns out Mr Birling fired Eva Smith when she helped to run a strike at Mr Birlings factory. Eva then got a job at a shop called Milwards where Sheila had her fired for being rude. Sheila is overcome with guilt whilst Mr Birling refuses to accept responsibility. The inspector then explains that Eva changed her name to Daisy Renton and this makes Gerald act suspiciously. |
| Omniscient | When something is always present | Motif | a theme, subject or idea that runs throughout the play | | | Guilt | The inspector wishes for the Birlings and Gerald to admit their mistakes and acknowledge their part in Eva’s death. Characters like Sheila and Eric admit their guilt and learn from it to become better people whilst the Birlings and Gerald refuse to accept responsibility and revert back to their original positions by the end of the play. | Act Two | Gerald admits that he had an affair with Daisy Renton last summer after saving her from a drunk man at the Palace bar. Gerald gave her a place to stay but ended the relationship when the summer had ended. Daisy went to the seaside to get over her feelings for Gerald. Sheila breaks off the engagement with Gerald and returns the ring to him. Gerald leaves in shame. Mrs Birling come to try and regain control over the inspector. The inspector reveals that Mrs Birling is head of the women’s charity and she made sure that a now pregnant Eva Smith is refused help only two weeks ago. Sheila is aghast at her mother, however, Mrs Birling maintains she did the right thing. She then says the inspector ought to punish the father, not realising that it’s her own son Eric who has been absent all this time. |
| Didactic | When something is intended to teach | Dramatic Irony | where the audience are more aware of the action happening than the characters | | | Class | Class and hierarchy propel most of the events in the play. Eva Smith is symbolic of the oppressed working class who are exploited by those in higher classes such as Mr Birling and his low wages and Gerald and his affairs. Gerald represents the aristocracy and it is clear that the importance of his reputation is his motivation for his actions throughout the play. Mr Birling is also very keen to protect his public image and avoid a public scandal. Mrs Birling also believes in social hierarchy and shows herself to be extremely prejudiced again Eva purely because Eva is from a lower class. Priestley highlights and criticises these damaging classist views through the inspector’s interrogations. | Act Three | Eric returns guiltily to the stage and confesses to drunkenly raping Eva Smith and getting her pregnant. He tried to do the honourable thing and offered to marry her but Eva rejected him, knowing he was too young and irresponsible. Eric also resorted to stealing money from his father’s company to pay for Eva. Mr Birling is outraged at this and it is clear his main worry is the public scandal rather than his own family. Mrs Birling admits to Eric what she did and Eric loses his temper. The family begin to break down. The inspector delivers a powerful speech about the importance of social responsibility and morality before leaving. The family then ponder over the inspector’s strange behaviour. Gerald triumphantly returns to say that he has found out that Inspector Goole is not a real police officer. Mr Birling calls the police and the infirmery to be sure and the family, apart from Sheila and Eric, begin to return to their old ways. The play ends with a phone call stating that a girl has died that evening from drinking disinfectant and that a police inspector is on his way to question the family. |
| Condescending | When you treat someone as though they are inferior or less intelligent than yourself | Foreshadowing | When the ending is hinted at through something or by someone | | | Family | The Birlings by all accounts are a very well-to-do family at the start of the play. However, it becomes clear this is yet another façade as Sheila and Eric bicker, and Mrs Birling tries to control everyone’s behaviour. It becomes clear that the family do not support each other: Mrs Birling infantilises both of her children, Mr Birling is condescending and it becomes clear that Eric resents his father. The theme of family also explores the generational differences between Eric and Sheila and their more traditional parents who refuse to adapt or change. | <p>EXAM REQUIREMENTS - English Literature – Component 2, Section A</p> <p>WHOLE PLAY ESSAY on An Inspector Calls – 40 mins – 40 marks (5 for SPaG)</p> <p>Prioritise your ideas in chronological order.</p> <p><u>Intro</u> – using words of the question give an overview that shows insight.</p> <p><u>PEAZ 1</u> - choose a moment from the play to explore with quotes & context <u>PEAZ 2</u> - choose a 2nd moment from the play to explore with quotes & context <u>PEAZ 3</u> - choose a moment from the play to explore with quotes & context <u>PEAZ 4</u> – choose a moment to explore with quotes and context</p> <p><u>Conclude</u> – Short summary of key insights linked to the question and writer. 2-3 sentences max.</p> | |
| Imperious | When you are arrogant and domineering | Protagonists | the main character who propels the action forward | | | Gender | In a heavily patriarchal world, power often lies with the men. Eva is often exploited by the men who are in power over her such as Mr Birling and his position as her employer. Eva also suffers at the hands of rich, upper class men when it states she was assaulted by the notorious Meggarty, and she is exploited by both Gerald and Eric. Sheila too is subject to marrying a man who her parents approve of however she soon regains power and asserts her own will. Mrs Birling, although she remains quiet initially, clearly has more social power than her husband and could be called the matriarch of the family, yet she showed no female solidarity towards Eva Smith due to her strict classist views. | | |
| Prejudiced | When you judge someone based on preconceived ideas | Props | Items used in the play with significance and purpose | | | | | | |
| Petulant | When you are childish and moody over something | Stage directions | The actions which show us how the characters deliver their lines or accompanying actions. | | | | | | |
| Narcissistic | When you love and are obsessed with yourself | Entrance & Exits | The timing of characters entrances and exits can have a purpose. | | | | | | |
| Aristocrat | The highest class of society | Aside | an individual character sharing their thoughts out loud to the audience and some characters on the stage, but not all of them | | | | | | |
| Capitalism | When you believe the society and the economy should be privately owned to work to the benefit of the individual | Imperative verbs | When you state a command word e.g. ‘stop!’ | | | | | | |
| Socialism | When you believe everyone should be equal in society and provide should be shared for a collective benefit. | Atmosphere | The feeling created in that scene for the audience | | | | | | |
| Morality | The knowledge of what is right and wrong. | Mood | He feelings of the characters and how they are interacting with each other. | | | | | | |
| Culpable | When you deserve blame for something | | | | | | | | |
| Patriarchal | A society when it is ruled by men | | | | | | | | |
| Hierarchy | A system or society in which members are ranked according to their status | | | | | | | | |

Props

- The dinner table – look at where the Birlings are sat and what it indicates at the start of the play.
- The telephone – how is it used to create suspense?
- The engagement ring – When does Gerald show Sheila the ring? How does she reclaim her identity by giving it back?
- The picture of Eva – how does Priestley use this prop to create mystery?

| Characters | Characteristics | Quotes | Context |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Inspector Goole | A mysterious inspector who interrogates the Birlings and Gerald for their involvement in Eva's death. He makes sure they are held morally accountable for their actions: <i>omniscient, didactic, impressive, authoritative, cryptic.</i> | “The Inspector need not be a big man but he creates at once an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness.” (Act 1) Straight away the inspector has an effect on the atmosphere and is imposing on the previously happy atmosphere of the Birling’s celebration; the audience instantly know he’s there for a reason. “A Chain of events” (Act 1) The inspector highlights straight away that people in society are connected and therefore we are equally responsible for what happens to each other. “It’s my duty to ask questions” (Act 1) The inspector repeats the word ‘duty’ throughout the play to emphasise how he has a moral and professional obligation to find out the truth. “Well?” (Act 1) This represents the inspector’s omniscience showing he already knows what has been discussed between Gerald and Sheila despite not being on stage. “Each of you helped to kill her. Remember that. Never forget it” (Act 3) As part of his final speech, the inspector reminds them all that they are all responsible for the death of Eva Smith and they should learn from this mistake by considering the culpability of their actions in the future.. “There are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths still left [...] We don’t live alone.” (Act 3) In his final words, the inspector acts as Priestley’s mouthpiece voicing his socialist beliefs that we should strive for equality and recognise our collective social responsibility to each other. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The play was written after the Second World War so the audience would recognise Mr Birling’s arrogance and nativity as something very familiar. Titanic (a symbol of progress and luxury for the rich) sank which was the first disaster for the upper class in 1912. Before this, they believed they were untouchable. |
| Mr Birling | As head of the household, Mr Birling loves to patronise those around him and lecture them on life and business: <i>naive, capitalist, egotist, traditionalist</i> | “Heavy looking, rather portentous man” (Act 1) The opening stage directions show that he’s a greedy, pompous man. “I’m talking as a hard headed, practical man of business.” (Act 1) Mr Birling repeats this statement as he prides himself on being shrewd in business but it is clear that he does not know what he is talking about. “a man has to make his own way – has to look after himself” (Act 1) Mr Birling is a staunch capitalist and believes in looking after himself above others. “If you don’t come down hard on these people they’d soon be asking for the earth” (Act 1) As a capitalist, Mr Birling believes in maintaining the hierarchy and ensuring that labour forces remain powerless. “There’ll be a public scandal” (Act 3) Mr Birling cannot stand the fact that his reputation will suffer as a result of this investigation- it becomes apparent he cares more about his public image than the crimes he and his family have committed. “We’ve been had, that’s all.” (Act 3) Mr Birling is relieved at the idea of the inspector being a hoax and instantly reverts back to the way he was when the play began showing he has not changed or learned his lesson. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priestley fought in the First World War and was wounded. He was a staunch socialist and he wanted to challenge his audiences and their beliefs. There were many strikes between 1912-1945 including the General Strike of 1926. |
| Mrs Birling | As head of the household, Mr Birling loves to patronise those around him and lecture them on life and business: <i>imperious, obstinate, superior.</i> | “Be careful with that ring” (Act 1) We know Mrs Birling is socially superior to the rest of her family and as a consequence she often tries to control how they behave in accordance with her expectations. “You’re quite wrong to suppose I shall regret what I did” (Act 2) Mrs Birling shows she is obstinate and refuses to cow down to the inspector and admit her mistakes. “No, of course not. He’s only a boy” (Act 2) Mrs Birling infantilises her children and refuses to see acknowledge their immoral behaviour as culpability as adults. “oh- she had some fancy reason. As if a girl of that sort would ever refuse money!” (Act 2) Mrs Birling shows her prejudice against Eva here by stereotyping Eva because of her class and so she refuses to help her. “[agitated] I don’t believe it. I won’t believe it.” (Act 2) When she finally realises what she has done, Mrs Birling reacts almost childishly having finally lost her power to the inspector. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite the rising middle class, the class system was still quite rigid- especially if you were part of the lower class. Gender and marriage - although women were achieving more equality and power, it was expected that they follow the wishes of their fathers/husbands. it is clear that Sheila’s marriage is one of social gain not love and this was common place amongst the upper classes. |
| Sheila | The spoilt daughter of Mr and Mrs Birling who is engaged to Gerald Croft. Sheila soon matures and learns from her mistakes under the inspector’s influence: <i>petulant, shallow, envious, suspicious, shrewd.</i> | ‘Yes – except for all last summer, when you never came near me, and I wondered what had happened to you.’ (Act 1) Sheila’s comments here show that she does have doubt about her relationship with Gerald and the extent of his feelings towards her- this also foreshadows his confession later in the play. “But these girls aren’t cheap labour – they’re people” (Act 1) Unlike her father, Sheila shows more humility and recognises that the lower class are people with the same rights as her and not labour to be exploited for profit. ‘(laughs rather hysterically) Why – you fool – he knows. Of course he knows. And I hate to think how much he knows that we don’t know yet.’ (Act 1) Sheila attempts to get Gerald to confess, almost taking on the inspector’s role and shows that she already recognises what the inspector is doing. “you and I aren’t the same people who sat down to dinner” (Act 2) Sheila shows her independence here by handing Gerald the ring back and earning the audience’s respect. “You mustn’t try to build up a kind of wall between us and that girl. If you do, then the Inspector will just break it down.” (Act 2) Sheila desperately tries to get her mother to confess as Sheila has seen that the Birlings are not protected or entitled to anything more than anyone else. “No, because I remember what he said, How he looked, and what he made me feel. Fire and blood and anguish. And it frightens me the way you talk’ (Act 3) Sheila has changed and will not follow her parents in pretending to be ignorant of her role in society and she makes her disapproval of their behaviour clear. | |
| Eric | The son of Mr and Mrs Birling who is drunk and socially awkward. He steals from his family and rapes Eva, but he admits his mistakes: <i>juvenile, aggressive, culpable, repentant.</i> | “not quite at ease, half shy, half assertive” From the opening stage directions we can see that Eric is isolated from the rest of the family and that his behaviour is odd and erratic. This foreshadows his uncomfortable familial relationships which will rise to the surface later on in the play. I was in that state when a chap easily turns nasty” (Act 3) Eric admits his crime and reveals that he is a drunk who raped Eva Smith and did not even remember that he had done it. “Because you’re not the kind of father a chap could go to when he’s in trouble – that’s why” (Act 3) As the family relationships fully break down, we see how little Eric and Mr Birling know and understand each other. “and the child she’d had too – my child – your own grandchild – you killed them both – damn you-” (Act 3) Upon learning about what Mrs Birling had done two weeks earlier, Eric turns on his own mother revealing his rage and aggressive behaviour- it is clear that he has lost all control at this point in the play. “The money’s not the important thing. It’s what happened to the girl and what we all did to her that matters.” (Act 3) Despite his horrifying behaviour. Eric shows that he, like Sheila, has changed his ways and focuses on the lessons he has been taught by the inspector behaving morally in the end of the play and refuses to revert to his former behaviour. | Inspector Goole- sounds like ‘ghoul’ hinting that the inspector’s identity is ambiguous and he could have been supernatural. |
| Gerald | A young aristocrat, Gerald Croft holds the highest social status in the play. He has a good reputation and although he is morally corrupt : <i>hypocrite, patronising, aristocratic.</i> | “An attractive chap” & “rather too manly to be a dandy but very much the easy well-bred young man-about-town.” (Act 1) These opening stage directions show that Gerald is a handsome and well-bred aristocrat, hence Priestley is already setting up the importance of his reputation. “It was all over and done with, last summer. I hadn’t set eyes on the girl for at least six months. I don’t come into this suicide business.” (Act 2) Gerald immediately denies all culpability in Eva’s death, showing that he too will refuse to acknowledge his sins. “you’ve been through it- and now you want to see somebody else put through it.” (Act 2) As they are interrogated, Gerald and Sheila turn on each other rather than supporting each other revealing a lack of trust and understanding between them showing the audience that their relationship was indeed a farce. “There isn’t any such inspector. We’ve been had.” (Act 3) Gerald returns to the stage triumphant having saved their reputations by revealing the inspector is a fake demonstrating that his priority all along has been to protect his reputation. “Everything’s all right now Sheila [holds up the ring] what about this ring?” (Act 3) Gerald loses all respect for the audience as he too attempts to erase the events of the evening and believes that he can resume his relationship with Sheila as before showing that he has not learned anything from the inspector. | Eric & Sheila – More modern names which reflect how the children are more likely to change for the future than their traditionalist parents. |
| Eva Smith | Never on stage but she represents the oppressed and marginalised working class: <i>victim, dignified, silent</i> | “She was in great agony” (Act 1) The inspector makes a point of repeatedly stating how painful and agonising Eva Smith’s death was to make sure the Birlings and Gerald acknowledge their guilt and understand the horrific consequences of their actions. “a good worker” (Act 1) Mr Birling acknowledges she was a good worker and was considering promoting her, this shows Eva had a good work ethic and so it was unjustified to reject the worker’s pleas for a more decent salary and fire Eva Smith to make an example of her. Here she represents how the working class were exploited by their employers for maximum profit. “She wasn’t pretty when I saw her today, but she had been pretty” (Act 1) Often throughout the play, Eva is described as pretty, this draws parallels between Eva and Sheila and how they could have led similar lives if it were not for class prejudice. “She looked young and fresh and charming and altogether out of place down there” (Act 2) We have sympathy for Daisy Renton as she is vulnerable in the Palace bar and her beauty means that the entitled upper class men such as old Meggarty attempt to sexually exploit her “She wouldn’t take anymore, and she didn’t want to see me again” (Act 3) Eva Smith behaves maturely with Eric and shows she has moral character by refusing to take stolen money, despite her increasingly desperate situation. | Mr Birling – rhymes with sterling showing that his priority as a capitalist is financial gain. |
| Edna | Household maid to the Birlings: | “Yes Ma’am” and “Inspector Goole” Edna also represents the silent and oppressed working class ignored by the Birlings . She is only given one name and is physically marginalised in the play. Her responses are limited to her job. <i>oppressed, marginalised, working class.</i> | Gerald Croft- a typically traditional family name highlighting his aristocratic status. |
| | | | Edna – she is only given a first name to show her lowly status compared to the family she works for. |
| | | | Eva Smith- a generic name to show she was one of the many oppressed working class. As Smith is also a very common name, it also plays into the theory that Eva was potentially more than one person. |
| | | | Daisy Renton – as she needed a new identity, ‘Daisy’ could reflect how Eva is starting afresh in life whilst ‘Renton’ reflects how she has now resorted to prostitution as a means of getting by. |
| Significance of names | | | |