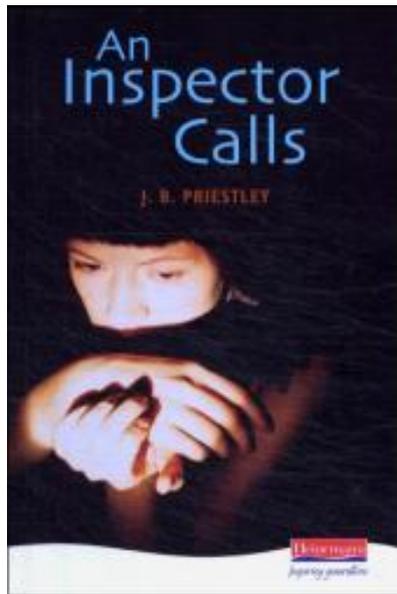


Year 10 English Literature  
**An Inspector Calls**  
Spring Term 2018



**Key Knowledge Pack**

- *Context*
- *Quotations*

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

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

## How to use this pack to make the quotes and analysis stick in your memory!

### Learn the quotations by:

- Oral rehearsal: Rehearsing saying them like the character / using different tones/ expressions/ mouthing them.
- Physical rehearsal: Miming them, adding big gestures to key words.
- Retrieval: Quiz yourself straight after. *Say, cover, retrieve.*
- Spacing: Quiz yourself after leaving some space in between learning.
- Retrieval/ meta-cognition: Write a quote quiz for yourself by writing the quote with blanks in key words.
- Retrieval/ meta-cognition: Write a quote quiz for yourself by creating tasks like: 'Write 5 quotations said by Birling in the play'.
- Retrieval/ meta-cognition: Little and often, so...Make a deal with yourself: Every time you open your bedroom door, you have to think of a quote!

### Learn the quotation analysis by:

- Note-taking: Taking a blank Freyer Organiser, and converting the full sentence analysis into notes.
- Retrieval: Taking a blank Freyer Organiser, and seeing how many notes you can make in each quarter from memory
- Peer-to-peer teaching: Explain the importance of a quote to your partner as they make notes of analysis on their Freyer Organiser. Then swap, using a different quote.

**Stretch! Develop the detail of the quotation analysis by using IT'S POWO to find new ideas.**

### **Priestley's Political Views:**

J. B. Priestley was a socialist.

J. B. Priestley's purpose was to show his audiences that socialism would make Britain a fairer society.

J. B. Priestley presents the opposing viewpoints between capitalism and socialism in the play.

J. B. Priestley made popular regular wartime radio broadcasts in WW2 but they were stopped by the government because of their political nature and their apparent support of socialism..

Priestley was advocating socialist reform in 1945 for a fairer future Britain.

### **Other:**

The Titanic sank in 1912.

WWI broke out in 1914.

An Inspector Calls was first performed in Moscow, 1945.

## Key Context

J. B. Priestley wrote An Inspector Calls in 1945. He set the play in 1912.

### **Social:**

In 1912, Britain was rigidly divided by class.

Priestley wanted a Britain with fewer class divides.

In 1912, women did not have the right to vote.

There were increasingly violent Suffragette protests (women protesting to get the right to vote).

By 1945, when Priestley wrote the play, Women had the right to vote.

### **Poverty:**

In 1912, there were no unemployment pay, no free healthcare and no Welfare state. Those in need depended on charities to support them, like Mrs Birling's charity.

In 1912, there was heavy strike action from working classes, but the Trade Unions had little power against capitalist powers.

*'The lighting should be pink and intimate'*

- comfortable atmosphere / celebratory
- creates a soft, flattering light, hides imperfections. Represents characters seeing each other through 'rose-tinted spectacles' early in play
- Priestley setting up contrast later in play Socialism was

Stage directions at start - lighting

*until the Inspector arrives, then it will be brighter and harder'*

- The mood will change from calm to tense on the Inspector's arrival
- Brighter, harder light = metaphorical for how Inspector will expose the family's flaws by shining truth
- Priestley using lighting to set

**→ Look Obvious:**

He is large and strong, so on stage he would appear in control and authoritative. He would command the audience's attention.

The inspector creates **'an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness...and has a disconcerting habit of looking hard at the person he addresses'** (stage directions p. 11)

**→ Look outside the text:**

as per the stage directions at the start, the lighting on stage would become 'brighter and harder' on his arrival, suggesting that the celebratory mood is abruptly over. He will be scrutinising the family and they can no longer hide their flaws. Symbolic – the secrets/deceit hidden by superficial comforts of the upper classes will be exposed under the cold, hard light of truth.

**→ Look Deeper:**

Priestley undermines Birling's character by making him seem complacent and foolish. The repetition creates an obstinate, stubborn tone and the dismissive 'fiddlesticks' emphasises his flippancy.

**→ Look Obvious:**

Mr Birling is certain that there will not be a war. This is dramatic irony because the audience in 1945 know that WWI broke out two years later in 1914. political ideology .

***'I say – fiddlesticks!  
The Germans don't  
want war. Nobody  
wants war'.***

Mr Birling, Act 1

**→ Look outside the text:**

Birling's dismissal of the 'half-civilised folks in the Balkans' adds to the irony as the assassination of Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo was the catalyst to the outbreak of war. Birling represents the blinkered upper classes before WW1 who, as a result of their own good fortune, complacently assumed that the future holds 'peace and prosperity'.

**→ Look Deeper:**

Priestley undermines Birling's character by making him seem complacent and foolish. The repetition creates an obstinate, stubborn tone and the dismissive 'fiddlesticks' emphasises his flippancy.

→ **Look Obvious:** Mr Birling thinks that people who believe you have a duty to look after others (ie. socialists) are mad ('cranks'). Priestley reveals how he lacks social responsibility and has a purely capitalist viewpoint. ore

*'The way some of these cranks talk...you'd think everybody has to look after everybody else...community and all that nonsense'. Mr Birling, Act 1*

→ **Look outside the text:**

Priestley influenced by the political landscape of 1912, when the welfare state did not exist and the labour party, representing the interests of the poor, was not well established. May have been influenced by the Coal Strike in 1912, when coal miners demanded minimum wage.'

→ **Look Deeper:** Priestley uses derogatory language 'cranks' create a contemptuous tone. He derides 'community' as being 'nonsense'. 'Nonsense', with its connotations of childishness and lack of logic, suggests Birling sees no value in 'looking after everybody else' because it doesn't make financial sense. His notions of how to act are governed purely on economic, rather than moral, reasoning. up later dramatic tension

**→ Look Obvious:**

Sheila is overjoyed to be marrying Gerald. She thinks the ring is attractive and wants to show her gratitude. Material possessions and the appearance of the ring is important to her, as it's a way for her to show her social status as a woman. She calls her mother 'Mummy', creating a naïve tone; she seems sheltered from the harsh realities of adult life.

***'Oh – it's wonderful!  
Look – Mummy,  
isn't it a  
beauty?'***(Sheila, Act 1,  
p. 5)

**→ Look outside the text:**

Sheila's fixation on material symbols of status is here conforming to gender norms of Edwardian Britain, where upper class women achieved status in society through marriage, rather than through pursuing a career. Women were not allowed to vote during this time and were discouraged from taking an active part in political life. Sheila, at the start of the play, represents a typical Edwardian upper class woman, whose sole focus was on her family and husband.

**→ Look Deeper:**

Priestley's use of hyphens creates pause and a breathless, excitable tone, as if Sheila is gasping in joy. This emphasises her giddy and almost child-like display of emotion. Her attitude to marriage is unequivocally positive at this point in the play, and Priestley is setting up a contrast here to her more reserved and solemn comments at the end of the play (p. 72). Priestley is also setting up a contrast between her own materialism and good fortune with Eva Smith's poverty.

**→ Look Obvious:**

Eva Smith was desperate at the end of her life and felt no hope for the future. Priestley gives specific detail about her painful death to create sympathy for Eva Smith.

p.19: *'she'd swallowed a lot of strong disinfectant. Burnt her insides out, of course.'* (Act 1, the Inspector)

**→ Look outside the text:**

In Edwardian England, there was considerable shame attached to childbirth outside of marriage. Unmarried mothers were often derided for being promiscuous. Abortion was illegal, but benefits for single mothers did not yet exist, so unmarried pregnant women faced desperate futures, depending on the kindness of strangers, or charities like Mrs Birling's.

**→ Look Deeper:**

'Disinfectant' is a toxic chemical used to kill bacteria; Eva Smith has been dehumanised at the hands of her employers and lovers. On a psychological level, her method of suicide could represent the need to eradicate the deep sense of shame and defilement she felt at the hands of her oppressors. Priestley's abrupt placement of the verb 'Burnt' at the start of the sentence adds to the shocking impact of the painful imagery.

→ **Look Obvious:** Gerald thinks they were bound to have an affair because she was physically attractive and a good person, so he could not be expected to resist her. Also, he clearly seems to like the fact that she was entirely dependent on him.

Gerald p.37: *'I suppose it was inevitable. She was young and pretty and warm-hearted...I became at once the most important person in her life'*

→ **Look outside the text**→ Priestley is influenced by the gender inequality in Edwardian England which meant women had to rely on their looks and physical attributes for survival in a world where men held most power. Women were denied the right to vote at this time and whilst working class women could work, work was deemed inappropriate for middle and upper class women, who instead had to derive their status via their husbands' successes.

→ **Look Deeper:** 'inevitable' carries connotations of having no choice and being without agency. Essentially, Priestley selects this adjective to emphasise how Gerald evades full responsibility, attributing the affair to circumstances outside himself rather than a result of his own free choice. Gerald's focus on her physical attributes ('young and pretty') hint that the primary attraction lay in superficial features. Although he says she was warm-hearted, there is no mention of her intellect or other character traits. Moreover, Gerald's mention of how he was the 'most important person' in her life sheds a disturbing light on the power dynamic of the relationship; he clearly derived pleasure from being in a position of power over her (this may also be seen as a paradigm of gender relations in Edwardian England – and, as some may argue, also has strong traces today).

→ Look Obvious:

The Inspector's is giving the key message of the play, that everyone has a duty to care for everyone else in society. He believes that we are not just responsible for ourselves and our families, but to everyone else as well, because we depend on each other, just like a 'body'. The poor depend on the rich for jobs and pay, but the rich also depend on the poor to do the hard jobs. The Inspector is trying to prompt the Birling family to change and become more socially responsible.

p.56: ***'We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other.'***

Inspector's final climactic speech, Act 3

→ Look outside the text:

Priestley is using the Inspector as a **mouthpiece** for his own socialist ideology, which also reflects the changes in British politics in 1945 following WW2, when a Labour government was voted in under Clement Atlee. The Inspector's proposal of a society where each member takes responsibility for others expresses the Labour government's goals of setting up a Welfare State, where benefits would be available for the most vulnerable and wealth could be spread more equally. They also proposed a new NHS (national health service) to provide free healthcare. The Inspector's speech expresses socialist ideals which people hoped could lead to a fairer post-war Britain. Audiences today may still find his message pertinent, given the widening wealth gap, squeeze in NHS funding, rise in dependency on food banks.

→ Look Deeper:

Priestley uses the metaphor of 'one body' to reflect the way in which everyone in society depends on each other. Just as in a 'body' all the parts must work together in harmony for the whole body to be healthy, the same is true of a society, where the fortunate must support the underprivileged. This metaphor, an **allusion** to the Biblical passages in Romans and Corinthians ('one body in Christ'). This is in contrast to Birling's individualistic (self-centered) outlook at the start: 'it's my duty to keep labour costs down' (p. 15). Birling thinks of 'duty' as purely fiscal (financial) – a need to make himself more profit- whereas the inspector is proposing the importance of social duty – to make society fairer for everyone. Priestley uses the collective pronoun ('we') in a powerful triple, to emphasise the idea of working together.

→ Look Obvious:

***'I wasn't satisfied  
with the girl's  
claim...I used my  
influence to have it  
refused...I consider I  
did my duty.'*** p. 44  
Mrs Birling Act 2

→ Look Deeper:

→ Look outside the text:

→ Look Obvious:

p.19: ***But these girls aren't cheap labour – they're people' Act 1, Sheila***

→ Look outside the text:

→ Look Deeper:

→ Look Obvious:

***'you killed her  
– and the  
child... - my  
child – your  
own grandchild  
– you killed  
them both' p. 55,  
Eric***

→ Look outside the text:

→ Look Deeper:

→ Look Obvious:

ACT 2: p.30:  
*'You mustn't  
try to build  
up a kind of  
wall between  
us and that  
girl' Sheila*

→ Look outside the text:

→ Look Deeper:

→ Look Obvious:

Last line of play:  
**'A police inspector  
is on his way here  
- to ask some -  
questions -' (Mr  
Birling)**  
*...they stare guiltily  
and dumbfounded*

→ Look outside the text:

→ Look Deeper:

## **Further Quotations:**

‘Why shouldn’t they try for higher wages?’ p. 16, Eric – contrasting attitude to his father, more sympathetic towards working class/ more conscious of social injustice  
→ represents younger generation/ fairer future

(miserably) ‘Could I have a drink first?’ p. 51 (Eric)

‘We can keep it from him’ (Gerald)

‘I think she only had herself to blame.’ p. 43 (Mrs Birling)

‘Go and look for the father of the child. It’s his responsibility.’ p. 45 (Mrs Birling)

‘I accept no blame for it at all.’ p. 47 Mrs Birling

‘As if a girl of that sort would ever refuse money!’ p. 47 (Mrs Birling)

‘She was giving herself ridiculous airs...claiming elaborate, fine feelings and scruples that were simply *absurd in a girl in her position*’ p. 46 (Mrs Birling)

ACT 3: p.66: ‘Between us we drove that girl to commit suicide’ (Sheila)