

## An Inspector Calls—Character Revision Revision Booklet

**Student name:**

**Teacher name:**

**Form tutor:**

## The characters



**AO1:** Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to:

- maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response
- use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.

**AO2:** Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

**AO3:** Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the con-

# Mr Arthur Birling

## Task One

'Fiddlesticks! The Germans don't want war. Nobody wants war.'

'The titanic- she sails next week'-'Unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable'

**What dramatic device is being employed by Priestley when he makes Mr Birling say these things? How would the audience of 1946 have reacted to these statements made in a play set in 1912? What emotions would they have gone through and why?**

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## Task Two

'A man has to mind his own business and look after himself.'

**How does Priestley use the quotations from task one to discredit capitalism? How else does Priestley criticise capitalism?**

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## Task Three

'I can't accept any responsibility. If we were all responsible for everything that happened to everybody we'd had anything to do with, it would be very awkward' **Summarise Mr Birling's response to what the family learn about Eva Smith.**

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**Task Four**

"But the way some of these cranks talk and write now, you'd think everybody has to look after everybody else, as if we were all mixed up together like bees in a hive - community and all that nonsense." *Mr Birling*

"We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other." *Inspector Goole*

**How does J. B. Priestley contrast these two characters and their views to try and influence his audience?**

# Ms. Sheila Birling

## Task One

'(Excited) Oh – Gerald – you've got it – is it the one **you** wanted me to have?' [She is talking about her engagement ring!]

'Oh-its wonderful! Look- Mummy- isn't it a beauty? Oh - darling - [She kisses Gerald hastily]'

**How does Priestley portray Sheila as dependent and childish in the opening scene, her engagement party? Why does he do this?**

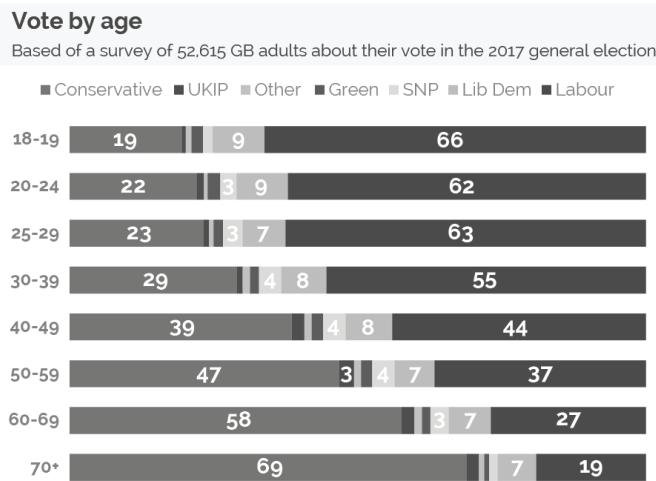
## Task Two

'But these girls aren't cheap labour – they're people.'

How does Priestley use Sheila as a mouth-piece for his own views? Discuss the quotation above, and anything from the rest of the play which is relevant.

### Task Three

'You were the wonderful fairy prince. You must have enjoyed it, Gerald.' **Summarise what happens between Sheila and Gerald.**



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## capitalist

## **socialist**

## Task Four

**Mr B:** 'You seem to have made a great impression on this child [Sheila], Inspector'.

**Inspector:** 'We often do on the young ones. They're more impressionable.'

Based on the 2017 voting data above, is the play as relevant today as it was in 1946? Does socialism still have a greater appeal to the young than it does to the old? Does this mean no progress has been made since 1946?

# Gerald Croft and Eric Birling

## Task One

**Gerald:** 'I didn't install her there so that I could make love to her. That came afterwards.'

**Eric:** 'I was in that state when a chap easily turns nasty.'

**Inspector (about Eric):** He treated her 'as if she were an animal, a thing, not a person.'

**Why have I grouped these two characters together? What is similar about them? What do they reveal about 1912 society?**

## Task Two

ERIC [unhappily]: 'My God – I'm not likely to forget ...'

GERALD: 'But how do you know it's the same girl?' and 'How do we know any girl killed herself today?' and 'it makes all the difference.'

Task one explored their similarities. Now I want you to contrast their two reactions by the end of the play. What is Priestley revealing about the generation gap in 1912 with these different reactions?

## Mrs Sybil Birling

## Task One

**Pg 2: 'Arthur you're not supposed to say such things'**

**Pg 3:** 'Sheila! What an expression! Really, the things you girls pick up these days!'

**How does Priestley present Mrs Birling as obsessed with image and being 'proper'? Why does he do this?**

## Task Two

*'But I think she had only herself to blame'*

**Summarise Mrs Birling's interactions with Eva Smith, and how Mrs Birling feels about her behaviour and decisions.**

### **Task Three**

*"I blame the young man who was the father of the child she was going to have. If, as she said, he didn't belong to her class, and was some drunken young idler, then that's all the more reason why he shouldn't escape. He should be made an example of. If the girl's death is due to anybody, then it's due to him.'*

**What dramatic device is Priestley employing when he makes Mrs Birling say this? Why does he do it?**

# Eva Smith/Daisy Renton

## Task One

**Explore the symbolism of names Priestley chooses. Eva/Eve is relevant, & the word ‘Smith’. What might the word ‘daisy’ imply?**

## Task Two

'pretty – soft brown hair and big dark eyes' 'She was young and pretty and warm-hearted' 'A pretty lively sort of girl...'

**Why does Priestley consistently use such positive adjectives to describe Eva Smith? What is he achieving by doing so?**

### **Task Three**

'There are a lot of young women living that sort of existence in every city and big town in this country.'

**What does Eva Smith symbolise? Does Priestley's decision never to show her on the stage support this symbolism/his message?**

# Inspector Goole

## Task One

'But just remember this. One Eva Smith has gone - but there are millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths still left with us, with their lives, their hopes and fears, their suffering and chance of happiness, all intertwined with our lives, with what we think and say and do. We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other. And I tell you that the time will soon come when, if men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish. Good night.'

Analyse the language in the Inspector's final speech. Link it to his role and behaviour in the rest of the play, and link it to the historical context of post-war Britain on the verge of building the welfare state.

**Comparison Essay Practice**

Use the character notes and quotations from this booklet, as well as anything else you can remember, to answer the following question.

**Who does Priestley present as being the worst behaved and best behaved character in the play? How does he present these characters? Analyse his choices as a writer, and relate it to the historical context.**

