

GCSE An Inspector Calls

J B Priestley



GraspIT

Characterisation

- Why could you say Mr Birling is a metaphor for '**new money**'? Think of three things he says or does.
- Why could you say Gerald is a metaphor for 'the **establishment**? Think of three things he says or does.
- Is The Inspector a metaphor for socialism, a conscience or the author himself? Think of a reason why each could be true.
- Why it is true to say that the younger generation represent a new way of thinking. Think of three things they say or do.
- Why is it important that the character of Edna allows The Inspector to enter the Birling's house?

Stage Directions, Structure and Props

- Why use the **photograph** as one of the few props in the play?
- Why use the **telephone** as one of the few props in the play?
- In what way could you say that the structure of this play is cyclical?
- Why is the structure of this play so simple? What does this reflect?

Find a Quote that Shows...

- Mrs Birling represents a dying breed of ignorant and **elitist upper classes**.
- Mr Birling is insecure in the world of new money and keen to distance himself from those beneath him.
- Gerald is too entrenched in the establishment to change – even though he does feel guilt and remorse.
- Sheila and Eric offer hope for the future of humanity.
- The Inspector is the playwright himself directing the characters from within the play.

Themes

- Give an example of a moment in the play where you see the following themes:
 - Responsibility
 - Class
 - Gender and Women
 - Age
 - Rights of Workers
 - Poverty and Wealth
 - Individual vs State
 - Honesty and Truth
 - Prejudice
- Can you also recall a quote for each moment?

Dramatic Irony

- Give two examples of **dramatic irony** in the play.
- How is dramatic irony used in the presentation of Mr and Mrs Birling? What is the effect on the audience?
- Why does Priestley want the audience to feel like they know more than the characters?