

An Inspector Calls by JB Priestley (1945)		LITERATURE PAPER 2		30 marks + 4 marks for SPaG	
Structure		Themes		Key Terms	
1	The <b>'well-made play'</b> : tight plot; action based on previous events; suspense through series of complications; a climax where truths/secrets are uncovered.	1	Time - The relationship between the past, present and future.	1	<b>Tragedy</b> - in this play, an unseen character dies as a result of the flaws and errors of the characters on the stage.
		2	Secrets and Lies		
		3	Appearance and reality	2	<b>Hubris</b> - an elevated sense of pride that leads to tragedy.
2	The <b>'whodunit'</b> : murder/mystery to be solved; an expert detective investigating and/or interrogating; clues; a climax where the murderer is revealed and accepts guilt.	4	Responsibility - <b>'You'll be able to divide the responsibility between you when I've gone'</b> (Act 3)	3	<b>Anagnorisis</b> - character(s) recognition of their flaws/errors, a feature of <b>Greek Tragedy (GT)</b> .
		5	Rich and poor	4	<b>Catharsis</b> - a rush of emotions as the results of a tragedy are played out: 'broken' characters are pitied. Feature of <b>GT</b> .
		6	Employers and employees	5	<b>Denouement</b> - resolution of the plot. Feature of <b>GT</b> .
		7	Blame and shame	6	<b>Peripeteia</b> - a reversal of fortunes, just as an escape seemed possible. Feature of <b>GT</b> .
3	<b>'Greek tragedy' (GT)</b> : 3 act format; follows <b>'unities'</b> - of time (action unfolds in real-time), of place (one place for all action), of action (one plot)	8	Guilt and innocence	7	<b>Subvert</b> - A challenge to, or overturning of, authority.
4	<b>Act</b> - The major divisions in the play. AIC is in 3 acts.	9	Control	8	<b>Linear structure</b> - the play follows a chain of events.
<b>Plot</b>		10	Young and old	9	<b>Circular structure</b> - Priestley uses the appearance of the engagement ring at the beginning and end of the play, to symbolise the change in Sheila, as opposed to the steadfast attitude of Gerald.
1	Act 1 - <b>Exposition</b> : The Birlings, their lifestyle and attitudes introduced. We see that pride/self-satisfaction is Mr Birling's <b>fatal flaw</b> . The Inspector interrupts Gerald & Sheila's engagement party to investigate the death of Eva Smith. Mr B & Sheila interrogated; Sheila accepts responsibility following encounter in the dept. store & urges others to do the same. Ends on a <b>cliffhanger</b> , as the audience anticipates the interrogation of Gerald.	<b>Context</b>		10	<b>Exposition</b> - the introduction to the Birlings and their lifestyle.
		1	J. B. Priestley - A writer with a <b>social conscience</b> . AIC is one of his 'time' plays (see themes). A popular figure and keen supporter of social reform. Declined a knighthood and peerage, but accepted the Order of Merit.	11	<b>Cliffhanger</b> - The audience is left in anticipation.
2	Act 2 - Development: Gerald is interrogated & confesses to affair with 'Daisy Renton'; Gerald departs; Mrs Birling is interrogated.	2	<b>The play was written in 1945</b> . It was aimed at a post-war audience, asking them to imagine life in the Edwardian era and recognise the follies of pre-war attitudes. The horrors and loss of two world wars reignited the drive for greater equality. With the end of each war came change: WW1 changes to voting rights, WW2 welfare reforms.	12	<b>Catastrophe</b> - The sense of horror engulfing the characters.
3	Act 3 - Eric interrogated; confesses to forcing himself on her & stealing from the company to support her; confirms Eva's story that she refused marriage & financial support. Inspector delivers his <b>prophetic</b> message about the future, then departs. Characters react to his departure, showing how the young change while the elder Birlings remain concerned with the <b>'public scandal'</b> that will ensue. Gerald returns: no new inspector in Brumley, confirmed by Birling who contacts the chief constable; G calls the infirmary, no death - the older Bs & G talk of hoax. Mr B is triumphant, S & E won't be consoled. The phone rings <b>'A girl has just died [...] inspector is on his way here...'</b>	3	<b>The play is set in 1912, amidst a time of significant political change. Liberal reforms between 1906 and 1914</b> meant attitudes had begun to change, but the upper-middle and upper classes were resistant. Reforms included: minimum wage (some industries), National Insurance, Pensions, Labour Exchanges. Ironically, it is possible that a character like Birling would have benefitted from the political changes (to voting) that were fought for during the 1800s, yet resisted those of the early 1900s.	13	<b>Climax</b> - In this case, where the catastrophe can be felt.
		4	Social Class - Birling is one of a so-called <b>nouveau riche</b> , furthered by his marriage to Mrs Birling, his <b>'social superior'</b> . They are still looked down upon, however, by Lady Croft who is <b>'from and old country family - landed people and so-forth'</b> (Act One). This tells us that her family are part of the old <b>Aristocracy</b> , or ruling class of Gt. Britain. Birling is keen to impress his social status, even though they are of a lower status than the Crofts, hence several references his status as <b>alderman</b> .	14	<b>Dramatic Irony</b> - where the audience have more knowledge than the characters on the stage.
<b>Characters</b>				15	<b>Capitalist society</b> - where individuals run their own businesses in a way that maximises profit.
1	Mr Birling - the <b>protagonist</b> . A self-made, successful businessman and social climber, Birling married well and is aiming for a knighthood. He is a proud man, which Priestley highlights as his <b>fatal flaw (hubris)</b> .			16	<b>Socialist society</b> - where businesses are run as co-operatives and profits are shared among the people involved.
2	Mrs Birling - Priestley states in the stage directions that she is <b>'her husband's social superior'</b> . She infantilises her children: of Eric <b>'he's only a boy'</b> (Act 2); is notably concerned with social etiquette <b>'Arthur, you're not supposed to say such things'</b> (Act 1) and is chiefly concerned with ensuring that her family do not 'lose face'.			17	<b>Democratic society</b> - where all members of society have a say in the way it is run.
3	Sheila Birling - Sheila is the first character to admit responsibility and show remorse. Because of this, she quickly becomes a <b>sympathetic character</b> despite her obvious poor behaviour			<b>Language</b>	
				1	<b>Stage directions</b> - used to make Priestley's intentions clear.
				2	Mr Birling - straightforward structure and vocab' to reflect his humble start. Self-important: personal pronouns 'I', 'me', 'we'.
				3	Mrs Birling - speaks with a dismissive tone, reflecting her sense of superiority and propriety.
				4	Sheila and Eric - examples of slang & colloquialism to reflect younger generation, Sheila says 'squiffy', 'ass', 'chump' (Act 1)
				5	Gerald - occasional slang, but measured dialogue: experienced
				6	Inspector - emphatic (triadic), no hesitation, deliberate.
				7	Realistic language - little use of figurative lang, mainly cliché when present: sense of realism.
<b>STUDENT NOTES</b>					

	towards Eva in the past. Priestley uses her as a <b>foil</b> to Eva : they are both young women who, by virtue of class and circumstance, have led very different lives.	<b>STUDENT NOTES</b>
4	Eric Birling - Eric is the other character to admit responsibility, but is not a sympathetic character initially. He ' <b>drink[s] far too much</b> ' (Act 2); steals from the business and forces himself upon Eva. He is also a <b>frustrated character</b> : his parents treat him like a child; Mr B is obviously doesn't see him as a worthy heir.	
5	Gerald Croft - ' <b>very much the easy well-bred young man-about-town</b> ' (Act 1, stage directions). Engaged to Sheila, but older (around 30) and, in contrast to Eric, proven in business. Gerald becomes less sympathetic as the play progresses: like the older Birlings, his character will not learn from his mistakes.	
6	Inspector Goole - The <b>antagonist</b> . Disrupts the engagement party to question the Birling family about their parts in the lead up to the death of a young woman. It becomes clear that he already knows much of the private affairs of the Birlings and Gerald Croft. He is <b>no ordinary policeman</b> : he interviews them together; delivers his own verdict and social message.	
7	Edna - A parlour maid, she plays a <b>minor role</b> . However, she answers the door to the inspector and announces him which establishes him as a 'living' character, rather than a ghost, as some readings suggest. She also <b>represents the ordinary people</b> , whose lives are bound to everyone else's.	
8	Eva Smith - never seen in the play, so not a character as such. She is the <b>everywoman</b> figure. She is a deliberate moral contrast to Sheila: a country orphan; a good worker; principled and gracious.	