

OBHS Core Questions:

Subject: English Literature

Year and Term: Year 10 Autumn 1

Topic: An Inspector Calls



Learn these questions to build a strong foundation of knowledge for this half-term. Ask family or friends to test you regularly, or practise on your own using the 'Look, Say, Cover, Write' method.

| | Question | Answer |
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| 1. | What are stage directions? | Stage Directions are the extra information that playwrights give us to add details about how lines are delivered, how characters are behaving/reacting, how the stage should be set etc. Memorising stage directions, alongside quotations from characters, allows you to have a deeper understanding of the writer's intentions and their intended impact on the audience |
| 2. | What is Capitalism? | Capitalism is an economic and political system based on private ownership and profit-making. |
| 3. | What is Socialism? | Socialism is a political and economic system based on the belief that all people are equal and should share equally in a country's money. |
| 4. | What is the relationship like between Mr Birling and Mrs Birling (consider social status in your answer)? | Mr Birling is Mrs Birling's social inferior – at several points of the play she either corrects his attitude/answer, or scolds him for being crude or too obviously interested in money in front of others. Mrs Birling rarely shows affection towards her husband and only seems to 'team up' with him when it looks like they're going to be socially punished for their collective involvement with Eva Smith. Priestley uses the Birlings' relationship to showcase how being selfishly obsessed with money and social standing leads to cold and emotionless relationships and weak social responsibility. |
| 5. | What did Priestley want his audience to learn? | That everyone should be responsible for the consequences of their actions, and should look out for others. He felt that a more socialist society would minimise the gap between social classes and mean that there was more equality. This |

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| | | was especially important in post-war 1945 when so many things had changed in society as a result of the world wars; Priestley saw this as an opportunity to move away from the Capitalist ideals that had existed so strongly pre 1914. |
| 6. | Spell the following words correctly: Priestley Capitalist Socialist | |
| 7. | Why does Priestley swap Eric and Mrs Birling's interrogation? | Priestley breaks the chronological order of the family's interrogation to build tension and create more drama. By putting Mrs B's questioning first she is revealed as being extremely opinionated about holding the father of Eva's baby publicly responsible and blaming him. This creates more drama when it is revealed that Eric, her own son, is the father of the baby. It helps to highlight how rigid Mrs B is in her beliefs and expectations, but also how she immediately tries to backtrack when learning it's her own son, therefore showing hypocrisy and making her even more unlikeable. |
| 8. | Comment on this quotation: The lighting should be pink and intimate until the Inspector arrives, and then it should be brighter and harder' | The Birlings have a 'rose-tinted' view of life until the Inspector arrives; he represents the harsh bright reality of a socialist future. |
| 9. | Who got Eva fired from Milwards? | Sheila Birling |
| 10. | How does Gerald know Daisy Renton? | He met her at The Palace Bar, he 'rescued' her from the drunk Alderman Meggarty, and then started a relationship with her, whilst engaged to Sheila. |
| 11. | What does Mr Birling think about Socialism? | Mr Birling calls it "community and all that nonsense" indicating that he is selfish and judges other people for thinking that socialist values are worthwhile. |
| 12. | Who was the father of Eva/Daisy's baby? | Eric Birling |
| 13. | What are the Birlings celebrating in the opening moments of the play? | The engagement of Sheila Birling and Gerald Croft. |
| 14. | Why is Mr Birling so excited about Sheila's engagement? | He hopes that his business and the Croft's (more successful) business will merge, meaning more money for both families. |
| 15. | Fill in the gaps of this quotation: 'there are _____ and _____ and _____ of Eva Smiths and John Smiths still left with us' | "millions" |
| 16. | What does Eric offer to Eva, to help with the baby? | Money he stole from his father. |

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| 17. | Why does the play end with a new inspector coming to question the Birling's about a girl's suicide? | Priestley was interested in the idea of individuals taking responsibility for their own actions – the cyclical structure of the play (beginning and ending with an inspector coming to question the Birlings – perhaps indicates that they have not learned enough about their misdeeds in the first round of questions and therefore the process starts again. |
| 18. | What does Sheila say about her parents' behaviour at the end of the play? | She states that “it frightens me the way you talk” to show that she has moved away from her parents' viewpoints so much in this one evening that she can now see how narrow-minded and self-serving their ideas and standards are. |
| 19. | What does this quote suggest about Eric's relationship with his father? 'you're not the kind of father a chap could go to when he's in trouble' | This quote demonstrates that Eric and his father were not close, and that Mr Birling has never been the type of father who is closely involved with their son, or someone who offers their children support or advice. This helps to show how the older generation are stuck in their ways about parenting and not being overly emotional to others. It highlights that Sheila and Eric's upbringing has perhaps left them unprepared for the difficulties of real life. |
| 20. | What does Mr Birling say about the Titanic? | “Unsinkable. Absolutely unsinkable” |
| 21. | How is the Inspector described in the stage directions at the start of the play? | “need not be a big man but he creates at once an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness” |
| 22. | How is Mrs Birling described at the opening of the play? | “a rather cold woman and her husband's social superior” |
| 23. | How is Sheila described at the start of the play? | “very pleased with life and rather excited” |
| 24. | What does Sheila call Mrs B at the start of the play vs the end? | “Mummy” “Mother” |
| 25. | Who does Eva Smith represent? | Lower class people who are continually pushed down in society due to the selfish motivations of the Capitalist upper classes. Priestley wanted post-war Britain to recognise that the country should not return to the equality of pre-war Edwardian values. |