

2025/6 Year 9 Knowledge Organiser - An Inspector Calls

Key Vocabulary	Definition	Characters	Key quotes
Socialism	A political and economic system where the means of production and property are commonly owned and controlled by the government.	Inspector Goole	<i>He 'need not be a big man', but creates an 'impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness'</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "A chain of events" • "We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other."
Capitalism	An economic system where private individuals and businesses own and control the means of production, such as land, factories, and money.	Arthur Birling	<i>A heavy-looking, rather portentous man in his middle fifties with fairly easy manners but rather provincial in his speech</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I'm talking as a hard-headed practical man of business" • "(rather impatiently) Horrid business. But I don't understand why you should come here." • "there's every excuse for what your mother and I did"
Social Class	A way to categorize people into groups based on their socioeconomic status and other factors such as wealth, work, income, education, race and ethnicity.	Sybil Birling	<i>A rather cold woman</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "As if a girl of that sort would ever refuse money!" • "I'm sorry she should have come to such a horrible end. But I accept no blame at all" • Cold / husband's social superior
Responsibility	Being accountable for something or someone, or having a duty to take care of something.	Sheila Birling	<i>A pretty girl in her early twenties, very pleased with life, and rather excited</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Yes, go on, Mummy" • "But these girls aren't cheap labour- they're people." • "No, he's giving us the rope- so that we'll hang ourselves"
Patriarchy	A social system where men have a disproportionate amount of power in society, economy, politics, and religion.	Eric Birling	<i>Not quite at ease, half shy, half assertive</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "And that's when it happened. And I don't even remember- that's the hellish thing." • "You're not the kind of father a chap could go to when he's in trouble that's why."
Guilt	A feeling of worry or unhappiness because you have done something wrong, such as causing harm to another person.	Gerald Croft	<i>An easy well-bred young man-about-town, too manly to be dandy</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "You couldn't have done anything else" (sacking Eva) • "Everything's all right now Sheila. What about this ring?" • I didn't install her there [Morgan Terrace] so that I could make love to her. / I insisted
Morality	The belief that some behaviour is right and acceptable and that other behaviour is wrong.	Eva Smith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "A girl died tonight. A pretty, lively sort of girl, who never did anybody any harm. But she died in misery and agony- hating life- • "A good sport" • "She was young and pretty and warm-hearted- and intensely grateful"

Dramatic Devices (AO2)		Context Links (AO3)	
Dramatic Irony	A literary device that occurs when the audience or reader has more information about a story than the characters	1912	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ The play is set in 1912; just before WWI and the sinking of the Titanic. ★ It was a moment of rising international tensions and industrial expansion. ★ The end of the Victorian era saw the demise of the rigid class system. ★ Labour Party, founded in 1900, gaining momentum.
Stage Directions	An instruction written into the script of a play, indicating stage actions, movements of performers, or production requirements.	1945	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ The play was first performed in 1945. ★ People were recovering from six years of warfare, danger and uncertainty. ★ Class distinctions greatly reduced as a result of two world wars. Women had a more valued place in society. ★ There was a desire for social change. ★ Following WW2, the Labour Party won a landslide victory over Winston Churchill and the Conservatives.
Setting	The time and place of an event, the surroundings of a person or place.	The Titanic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ The Titanic sailed from Southampton and sank on 15th April 1912. ★ It is referenced by Arthur Birling in the play, as he calls the ship “unsinkable”. ★ Priestley wants his audience to see the drama play out against real historical events and he has also chosen a moment in time when Birling’s comments appear particularly ironic.
Dramatic Tension	A feeling of suspense, anticipation or uncertainty created through conflict.	Key Concepts	Definition
Foreshadowing	A literary device used to give an indication or hint of what is to come later in the story.	Class Division	The play focuses on the upper class, while the only lower-class characters are Eva Smith and Edna, the maid. The Birlings are a wealthy upper-class family, while Eva is a working-class woman.
Cliff-hanger	Part of a play that is very exciting or frightening because you are left for a long time not knowing what would happen next.	Social Responsibility	Priestley explores social responsibility through: the treatment of Eva Smith, how each character does or doesn’t take responsibility for their behaviour and the Inspector’s lessons.
Monologue	A long speech given by a single person that expresses their thoughts, feelings, and perspective.	Gender Expectations	Priestley explores the theme of gender through: how Mr Birling and Gerald Croft view women, how Mrs Birling treats Eva Smith and how Eva Smith is portrayed as independent and outspoken before her death.

Structure (AO2)	Wealth, Power and Influence	The Birlings and the Crofts are representative of the wealthy upper-class. They all misuse their social influence to benefit themselves. Their actions adversely affect the vulnerable people in society.
Act 1 → Sheila and Gerald’s engagement is celebrated. → The Inspector arrives; a young girl has committed suicide. → Arthur Birling is interrogated; he threw Eva out after the strike. → Sheila Birling is interrogated; she had Eva fired from the shop for laughing. Act 2 → Gerald is interrogated; he had an affair with Daisy Renton (Eva Smith). He leaves. → Sybil Birling is interrogated; she refused to give Eva charity - blames the father of her child. Act 3 → Eric is interrogated and his involvement is revealed. He was the father of Eva’s baby. → The Inspector leaves. → Gerald returns and shares that he has met a policeman. → The family speculate that Inspector Goole was not a real Inspector. → The Telephone rings; an Inspector is coming over and a young girl has died.	Blame vs Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priestley uses Mr and Mrs Birling to highlight the belief that lower-class people deserve their misfortune, and that upper-class people are entitled to (have the right to have) fortune, wealth and easy lifestyles. • Some characters (Sheila and Eric) take responsibility for their actions, but only once it is too late. They represent the younger generation’s willingness to adapt. • Priestley uses the character of the Inspector to condemn the upper-classes’ lack of responsibility and determination to avoid it.
	Public vs Private	The Inspector, and the play at large, challenges the “privacy” of the private sphere, by revealing that actions that the family may have conceived of as private and personal really have an effect beyond themselves and their family.
	Prejudice	Priestley depicts class prejudice through Mrs Birling. She has a clear-cut code in which families like hers and the Crofts are near the top of the social pile and young women like Eva Smith are at the bottom. Mrs Birling's sense of self-importance and superiority drives her to abuse her privilege because she perceives the poor as inferior. She feels entitled to the respect of those socially inferior to her.
	Younger vs Older Generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priestley uses the different generations to show his beliefs that there was hope in the younger generation's ability to learn and change. • The older characters' opinions and behaviours are stubbornly fixed. Mr Birling refuses to learn and Mrs Birling cannot see the obvious about herself and her children. • Eric and Sheila however are younger - they accept their mistakes and offer the chance for a brighter future.
	New Money vs Old Money	The Birlings own a business and are an example of 'new money', whereas the Crofts are members of nobility and possess 'old money'.