

# AN INSPECTOR CALLS REVISION SHEET FOR CHARACTERS, THEMES AND CONTEXT

Mr Birling	Mrs Birling	Gerald	Eric	Sheila	Inspector
<b>Arrogant, selfish, self-important, shallow, hypocritical, ignorant, controlling, traditional, sycophantic.</b>	<b>Alloof, cold, self-important, stubborn, dogmatic, unsympathetic, haughty, prejudiced.</b>	<b>Polite, tactful, traditional, dishonest, self-assured, deceptive, dogmatic, unchanging.</b>	<b>Start: Awkward, irresponsible, nervous Later: repentant, moral, honest.</b>	<b>Start: Spoilt, selfish, curious, pretty. Later: repentant, moral, emotional.</b>	<b>Serious, moral, aggressive, mysterious, purposeful, authoritative, blunt, controlling.</b>
<i>Arthur Birling is a heavy looking, rather portentous man but rather provincial in his speech</i>	<i>His wife is about fifty, a rather cold woman and her husband's social superior.</i>	<i>...attractive chap...very much the easy well-bred man about town.</i>	<i>Eric downstage...Not quite at ease, half shy, half assertive.</i>	<i>A pretty girl in her early twenties, very pleased with life and rather excited</i>	<i>He creates at once an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness...He speaks carefully, weightily.</i>
Some people say that war's inevitable. And to that I say – fiddlesticks!	(reproachfully) Arthur, you're not supposed to say such things-	(laughs) You seem to be a nice well-behaved family.	<i>Eric suddenly guffaws. His parents look at him.</i>	'Yes, go on, mummy...I'm sorry, daddy.' 'I think it's perfect. Now I really feel engaged.'	"Croft...at least had some affection for her and made her happy for a time"
I'm still on the bench – so I know the Brumley police offices pretty well – and I thought I'd never seen you before.	When you're married you'll realise men with important work to do have to spend nearly all their time and energy on their business.	I hate those hard-eyed dough-faced women. But then I noticed a girl who looked quite different. She was very pretty.	I don't know – really. Suddenly I felt I just had to laugh.	'I was absolutely furious I was very rude to both of them.'	"Don't stammer and yammer at me again, man. I'm losing all patience"
I gather there's a good chance of a knighthood – so long as we behave ourselves, don't get into the police court or start a scandal	Mrs Birling. Enters, briskly and self-confidently, quite out of key with the little scene that has just passed.	And I've told you – I was awfully busy at the works all that time. (surprised) Well, I never said I hadn't. I don't see why	<i>Eric goes for a whisky. His whole manner of handling the drink shows his familiarity with quick heavy drinking.</i>	'I told him that if they didn't get rid of that girl, I'd never go near the place again.'	"I warn you, you're making it worse for yourself"
'Clothes mean something quite different to a woman...not only something to make 'em look prettier, but a token of their self-respect.	Please don't contradict me like that...I don't suppose for a moment we can understand why the girl committed suicide. Girls of that class--	Unless Eric's been up to something. (nodding confidentially to Birling.) and that would be awkward, wouldn't it?	Yes, you've piled it on a bit tonight, father.	'(half serious, half playful) Yes – except for all last summer when you never came near me'	"She told me nothing. I never spoke to her" "Each of you helped kill her. Remember that."
If you don't come down sharply on these people, they'd soon be asking for the earth.	You know... that my husband was lord mayor only two years ago and that he's still a magistrate--	I have gathered that he does drink pretty hard.	I'm ashamed of you as well – yes both of you.	You not only knew her but you knew her very well. Otherwise, you wouldn't look so guilty	"I'm waiting...to do my duty...I want to get on..." "I haven't much time"
Look, Inspector – I'd give thousands – yes, thousands-	(with dignity) Yes. We've done a great deal of useful work in helping deserving cases.	Don't look like that Sheila.	Well, I don't think it's very funny.	'He never seemed like an ordinary police inspector'	"One person and one line of enquiry at a time"
Unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable.	Birling and Mrs Birling exchange bewildered and rather frightened glances.	Now listen, darling—	I hate these fat old tarts round the town	When did you [Gerald] first get to know her [Eva]?	"Let's leave offence out of it, shall we?"
A man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own	I'm very sorry. But I think she had only herself to blame.	For god's sake – don't say anything to the inspector.	(miserably) Could I have a drink first?	"But these girls aren't cheap labour - they're people."	"We often do on the young ones. They're more impressionable"
If we were all responsible for everything that happened to everybody we'd had anything to do with, it would be very awkward'	She'd impertinently made use of our name, though she pretended afterwards it just happened to be the first she thought of.	I think Miss Birling ought to be excused any more of this questioning...She's had a long exciting and tiring day.	(bursting out) Well, I think it's a dam' shame.	(rather distressed) Sorry! It's just that I can't help thinking about this girl	"if men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish"
'[to Eric] Look – you just keep out of this. You hadn't even started in the works when this happened.'	I wasn't satisfied with the girl's claim – she seemed to me not a good case – and so I used my influence to have it refused... I did my duty.	Getting a bit heavy-handed, aren't you, inspector?	He could have kept her on instead of throwing her out.	'She looks at it closely, recognizes it with a little cry, gives a half-stifled sob, and then runs out.'	"We are responsible for each other"
We were paying the usual rates and if they didn't like those rates, they could go and work somewhere else.	No you haven't. Simply because I've done nothing wrong – and you know it.	If you must have it. I met her first, sometime in march last year.	Why shouldn't they try for higher wages? I'd have let her stay.	'I'll never, never do it again...I'm desperately sorry'	"You can't do her any good now...you can't even say 'I'm sorry'"
It's my duty to keep labour costs down.	I'll tell you what I told her. Go and look for the father of the child. It's his responsibility.	(startled) What? (pulling himself together) D'you mind if I give myself a drink, Sheila?	I didn't even remember – that's the hellish thing. Oh – my God! - how stupid it all is!	'We really must stop these silly pretences. This isn't the time to pretend that Eric isn't used to drink.	CONTEXT A03
I have an idea that your mother – Lady Croft – while she doesn't object to my girl – feels you might have done better for yourself socially .	She was giving herself ridiculous airs. She was claiming elaborate fine feelings that were simply absurd in a girl in her position.	I'm sorry, Sheila. But it was all over and done with, last summer...I don't come into this suicide business.	No. she didn't want me to marry her. Said I didn't love her – and all that. In a way, she treated me – as if I were a kid.	'He's giving us the rope- so that we'll hang ourselves.'	The author gives a voice to the poor who are normally marginalised in society.
'Nothing to do with you, Sheila. Run along'	I'm sorry she should have come to such a horrible end. But I accept no blame for it at all.	I did for a time. Nearly any man would have done.	(bitterly) You haven't made it any easier for me, have you, mother?	'That's probably about the best thing you've said tonight. At least it's honest'.	The text echoes Priestley's belief everyone has a duty and responsibility to each other.
Perhaps we may look forward to the time when Crofts and Birlings are no longer competing but are working together.	Oh – she had some fancy reason. As if a girl of that sort would ever refuse money!	<i>She looks at him almost in triumph. He looks crushed.</i>	Because you're not the kind of father a chap could go to when he's in trouble – that's why.	'I rather respect you more than I've ever done before.'	The sinking of the Titanic in 1912 acts as a metaphor for the collapse of The Birling family during the play.
(angrily, to Inspector) Look here, I'm not going to have this, Inspector. You'll apologise at once.'	I blame the young man who was the father of the child she was going to have...he ought to be dealt with very severely	You've been through it – and now you want to see somebody else put through it.	I was in that state when a chap easily turns nasty – and I threatened to make a row.	'Don't interfere, please, father.'	It was published at a time when people were optimistic for a fairer society.
'Be quiet Sheila'	(agitated) I don't believe it. I won't believe it . . .	But how do you know it's the same girl?	Yes. I wasn't in love with her or anything – but she was pretty and a good sport.	Go on, mother. You might as well admit it.	It offers a critique of the ruling classes.
'I've got to cover this up as soon as I can'	(triumphantly) Didn't I tell you? Didn't I say I couldn't imagine a real police inspector talking like that to us?	(Sheila returns ring) Well I wasn't expecting this.	(almost threatening her) You don't understand anything. You never did.	'After all, you didn't come into this, did you, mother?'	It explores the isolating effects of capitalism.
You'd better ask Gerald for that ring you gave back to him, hadn't you?	I was the only one of you who didn't give in to him	(distressed) Sorry... I've suddenly realized.. that she's dead.	My child – your own grandchild – you killed them both – damn you, damn you-	'It frightens me the way you talk'	It is concerned with social inequality in Britain.
'We've been had, that's all.'	(smiling) And I must say, Gerald, you've argued this very cleverly, and I'm most grateful.	No. I'll just go out – walk about – for a while.	For God's sake! What does it matter now whether they give you a knighthood or not?	'Mother, I think that was cruel and vile'	It exposes the greed and selfishness of the wealthiest in society.
The famous younger generation who know it all. And they can't even take a joke.'	They're over-tired. In the morning they'll be as amused as we are.	Everything's all right now Sheila. What about this ring?	(unhappily) My God – I'm not likely to forget.	'you're beginning to pretend nothing much has happened'	It generated sympathy for the lower classes in society.
'That was the police. A girl has just died – on her way to the infirmary.'	<i>As they stare guiltily and dumbfounded, the curtain falls.</i>	There isn't any such inspector. We've been had.	You're beginning to pretend now that nothing's really happened at all.	Mother, she's just died a horrible death – don't forget.	It was set just before the start of the first world war when Britain was divided by class.
<b>WAYS TO USE THIS REVISION SHEET.</b>	<b>BRONZE:</b> For each quotation, apply a word from the grey box of adjectives to show what it reveals about the character. <b>PYT:</b> Think of your own adjectives.		<b>SILVER:</b> Link each quotation to one or more of these themes: <b>R = Responsibility. C = Class. G = Gender. A = Age.</b>	<b>Gold:</b> Write essays on all 6 characters using the quotations to help.	

# REVISING THEMES IN 'AN INSPECTOR CALLS'

CHARACTER	RESPONSIBILITY	GENDER	AGE	CLASS	WEALTH, POWER & INFLUENCE
<b>Mr Birling</b>	A man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own.  If we were all responsible for everything that happened to everybody we'd had anything to do with, it would be very awkward'	'Clothes mean something quite different to a woman...not only something to make 'em look prettier, but a token of their self-respect.  'Nothing to do with you, Sheila. Run along'  The girl had been causing trouble in the works. I was quite justified.	The famous younger generation who know it all. And they can't even take a joke.'  "Why, you hysterical young fool - get back - or I'll -"  But you youngsters just remember what I Said. We can't let these Bernard Shaws and H.G.Wellses do all the talking.	If you don't come down sharply on these people, they'd soon be asking for the earth.  I have an idea that your mother – lady croft – while she doesn't object to my girl – feels you might have done better for yourself socially -	Perhaps I ought to warn you that he's an old friend of mine, and that I see him fairly frequently. We play golf together sometimes up at the west Brumley.  And this girl. Eva Smith, was one of them, she'd had a lot to say – far too much – so she had to go.  Look, Inspector – I'd give thousands – yes, thousands-
<b>Mrs Birling</b>	I blame the young man who was the father of the child she was going to have...he ought to be dealt with very severely  I'm sorry she should have come to such a horrible end. But I accept no blame for it at all.	I think Sheila and I had better go into the drawing room and leave you men  When you're married you'll realize that men with important work to do sometimes have to spend nearly all their time and energy on their business	They're over-tired. In the morning they'll be as amused as we are.  What an expression, Sheila! Really the things you girls pick up these days!	Oh – she had some fancy reason. As if a girl of that sort would ever refuse money!  She was giving herself ridiculous airs. She was claiming elaborate fine feelings that were simply absurd in a girl in her position..	I wasn't satisfied with the girl's claim – she seemed to me not a good case – and so I used my influence to have it refused... I did my duty.  You know of course that my husband was lord mayor only two years ago and that he's still a magistrate
<b>Gerald</b>	For god's sake – don't say anything to the inspector. I'm sorry, Sheila. But it was all over and done with, last summer...I don't come into this suicide business.  There isn't any such inspector. We've been had	And I've told you – I was awfully busy at the works all that time. (surprised) Well, I never said I hadn't. I don't see why.  I think miss Birling ought to be excused any more of this questioning. She'd nothing more to tell you. She's had a long exciting and tiring day	she looked young and fresh and charming and altogether out of place down here.  Old Joe Meggarty, half-drunk and goggle-eyed, had wedged her into a corner with that obscene fat carcass of his--	I hate those hard-eyed dough-faced women. But then I noticed a girl who looked quite different. She was very pretty.  You seem to be a nice well-behaved family.	I did for a time. Nearly any man would have done.  Getting a bit heavy-handed, aren't you, inspector?
<b>Eric</b>	'you're beginning to pretend nothing much has happened'  "I don't see much nonsense about it when a girl goes and kills herself. You lot may be letting yourselves out nicely, but I can't.	Yes. I wasn't in love with her or anything – but she was pretty and a good sport.  No. she didn't want me to marry her. Said I didn't love her – and all that. In a way, she treated me – as if I were a kid.	My child – your own grandchild – you killed them both – damn you, damn you  Because you're not the kind of father a chap could go to when he's in trouble – that's why.  I hate these fat old tarts round the town	Why shouldn't they try for higher wages? I'd have let her stay.  Oh – for God's sake! What does it matter now weather they give you a knighthood or not?	I was in that state when a chap easily turns nasty – and I threatened to make a row.  she'd no money left – so I insisted on giving her enough money to keep her going – until she refused to take any more--
<b>Sheila</b>	'We really must stop these silly pretences. This isn't the time to pretend that Eric isn't used to drink.  "All right Gerald, you needn't look at me like that. At least I'm trying to tell the truth."	You not only knew her but you knew her very well. Otherwise, you wouldn't look so guilty.  Sorry! It's just that I can't help thinking about this girl – destroying herself so horribly – and I've been so happy tonight.	'Mother, I think that was cruel and vile'  Mother, she's just died a horrible death – don't forget.	"But these girls aren't cheap labour - they're people."  Yes, she was a lucky to get taken on at Milwards.	'I told him that if they didn't get rid of that girl, I'd never go near the place again.'  'I was absolutely furious I was very rude to both of them.'
<b>Inspector</b>	Each of you helped kill her. Remember that.  We are responsible for each other.  Public men, Mr Birling, have responsibilities as well as privileges.	No. She wanted to end her life. She felt she couldn't go on any longer.  She wasn't pretty when I saw her today, but she had been pretty – very pretty.	There are a lot of young women living that sort of existence in every city and big town in this country, miss Birling.  I've thought that it would do us all a bit of good if we tried to put ourselves in the place of these young women counting their pennies, in their dingy little back bedrooms.	It's better to ask for the earth than to take it.  She was still Eva Smith when Mr Birling sacked her – for wanting twenty-five shillings a week instead of twenty-two and six.	<i>He creates at once an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness...He speaks carefully, weightily.</i>  "Don't stammer and yammer at me again, man. I'm losing all patience"
<b>GCSE Exam Style Question</b>	<b>How does Priestley present the theme of responsibility?</b>	<b>How does Priestley present attitudes to women?</b>	<b>How does Priestley present conflict between young and old?</b>	<b>How does Priestley present attitudes to class?</b>	<b>How does Priestley present the importance of power, wealth and influence?</b>