

An Inspector Calls – MOCK EXAM QUESTIONS

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this question.

You should use the extract on the opposite page and your knowledge of the whole play to answer this question.

Write about Mr Birling and how he is presented at different parts of the play.

In your response you should:

- refer to the extract and the play as a whole
- show your understanding of characters and events in the play

5 of this question's marks are allocated for accuracy in spelling, punctuation and the use of vocabulary and sentence structures.

Birling: Well it's my duty to keep labour costs down. And if I'd agreed to this demand for a new rate we'd have added about twelve per cent to our labour costs. Does that satisfy you? So I refused. Said I couldn't consider it. We were paying the usual rates and if they didn't like those rates, they could go and work somewhere else. It's a free country, I told them.

Eric: It isn't if you can't go and work somewhere else.

Inspector: Quite so.

Birling: (*to Eric*) Look – just you keep out of this. You hadn't even started in the works when this happened. So they went on strike. That didn't last long, of course.

Gerald: Not if it was just after the holidays. They'd be all broke – if I know them.

Birling: Right, Gerald. They mostly were. And so was the strike, after a week or two. Pitiful affair. Well, we let them all come back – at the old rates – except the four or five ringleaders, who'd started the trouble. I went down myself and told them to clear out. And this girl. Eva Smith, was one of them, she'd had a lot to say – far too much – so she had to go.

Gerald: You couldn't have done anything else.

Eric: He could. He could have kept her on instead of throwing her out. I call it tough luck.

Birling: Rubbish! If you don't come down sharply on some of these people, they'd soon be asking for the earth.

Gerald: I should say so!

Inspector: They might. But after all it's better to ask for the earth than to take it.

Birling: (*staring at the inspector*) What did you say your name was, inspector?

Inspector: Goole. G double O-L-E.

Birling: How do you get on with our chief constable, colonel Roberts?

Inspector: I don't see much of him.

Birling: 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.

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this question.

You should use the extract below and your knowledge of the whole play to answer this question.

Write about how Priestley explores social class at different points in the play.

In your response you should:

- refer to the extract and the play as a whole
- show your understanding of characters and events in the play [40]

5 of this question's marks are allocated for accuracy in spelling, punctuation and the use of vocabulary and sentence structures.

Birling: Thanks. (*Confidentially*) By the way, there's something I'd like to mention – in strict confidence – while we're by ourselves. 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.

(*Gerald, rather embarrassed, begins to murmur some dissent, but Birling checks him.*)

Mr Birling: No, Gerald, that's all right. Don't blame her. She comes from an old country family – landed people and so forth – and so it's only natural. But what I wanted to say is – there's a fair chance that I might find my way into the next honours list. Just a knighthood, of course.

Gerald: Oh – I say – congratulations!

Birling: Thanks, but it's a bit too early for that. So don't say anything. But I've had a hint or two. You see, I was Lord Mayor here two years ago when royalty visited us. And I've always been regarded as a sound useful party man. So – well – I gather there's a very good chance of a knighthood – so long as we behave ourselves, don't get into the police court or start a scandal – eh? (*Laughs complacently.*)

Gerald: (*laughs*) You seem to be a nice well-behaved family –

Birling: We think we are –

Gerald: So if that's the only obstacle, sir, I think you might as well accept my congratulations now.

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this question.

You should use the extract below and your knowledge of the whole play to answer this question.

Write about Eric Birling and how he is presented at different points in the play.

In your response you should:

- refer to the extract and the play as a whole
- show your understanding of characters and events in the play [40]

5 of this question's marks are allocated for accuracy in spelling, punctuation and the use of vocabulary and sentence structures.

Inspector: Where did you meet her?

Eric: In the palace bar. I'd been there an hour or so with two or three chaps. I was a bit squiffy. **Inspector:** What happened then?

Eric: I began talking to her, and stood her a few drinks. I was rather far gone by the time we had to go.

Inspector: Was she drunk too?

Eric: She told me afterwards that she was a bit, chiefly because she'd not had much to eat that day.

Inspector: Why had she gone there-?

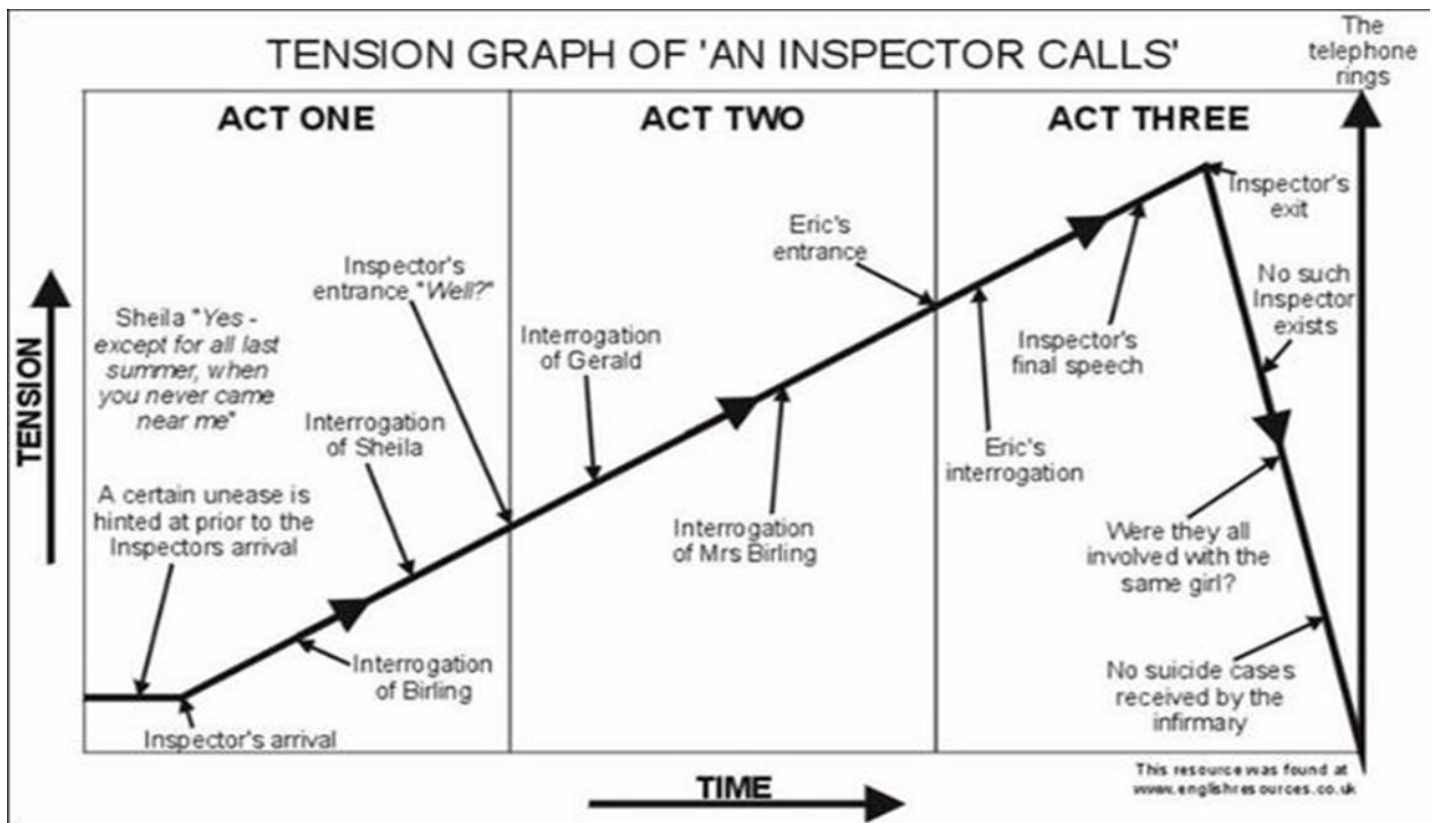
Eric: She wasn't the usual sort. But – well, I suppose she didn't know what to do. There was some woman who wanted to help her go there. I never quite understood about that.

Inspector: You went with her to her lodgings that night? **Eric:** Yes, I insisted – it seems. I'm not very clear about it, but afterwards she told me she didn't want me to go in but that – well, I was in that state when a chap easily turns nasty – and I threatened to make a row.

Inspector: So she let you in?

Eric: Yes. And that's when it happened. And I didn't even remember – that's the hellish thing. Oh – my God! - how stupid it all is!

Mrs Birling: (with a cry) Oh – Eric – how could you?



There is a lot of tension as each member of the family is found to have played a part in Eva's death. New pieces of information contribute to the story as they all start to slot into place. The audience is interested to see how each character reacts to the revelations.

- The Inspector **CONTROLS** the tension and pace of the play by insisting on "one line of enquiry at a time". Slowly, the story of Eva's fate is unravelled.
 - He is very much in control of what is going on. He is a brooding and inescapable presence (Use evidence from his description in stage directions)
 - He is mysterious and knows what is going on before it happens or before it is said (How Sheila warns her mother that he already knows so there is no point hiding anything)
- **EXITS and ENTRANCES** are crucial (For example, the Inspector arrives just as Mr Birling is revealing to Gerald about his potential knighthood)
- The **ENDING**: There is a sense of an anticlimax (or at least release of tension) as the Birlings discover that the Inspector isn't real and that the whole scenario had been a joke or prank. As Birling says, they'd "been had". The tension is accelerated then as the phone rings and the revelation that a girl has died leaves the play on a cliff hanger. This restores the tension and reveals the last twist to the plot.
- **DRAMATIC IRONY and TONE**: The audience are put at an advantage over the characters- they can see that Mr Birling's judgements are not accurate and sense his downfall. For example when he assures that there won't be a war and his excitement over the unsinkable Titanic (Both a 1945 and 2016 audience are aware that there was a war (two, in fact) and the Titanic did sink.
- **SUBTLE HINTS**: The lighting is (Act 1) described in stage directions as "pink and intimate" turning to "brighter and harder" when the Inspector arrives.
- The happy atmosphere is slightly forced – Sheila wonders where Gerald was last summer and Mrs Croft doesn't attend her son's engagement celebration meal. A sense of "why..?"