

## An Inspector Calls - Questions

Write about the character of Sheila and the way she is presented in An Inspector Calls.

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

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

Birling: ( *raising his glass*) So here's wishing the pair of you – the very best that life can bring. Gerald and Sheila.

Mrs Birling: ( *raising her glass, smiling*) Yes, Gerald. Yes, Sheila darling. Our congratulations and very best wishes!

Gerald: Thank you.

Mrs Birling: Eric!

Eric: ( *rather noisily*) All the best! She's got a nasty temper sometimes – but she's not bad really. Good old Sheila!

Sheila: Chump! I can't drink to this, can I? When do I drink?

Gerald: You can drink to me.

Sheila: ( *quiet and serious now*) All right then. I drink to you, Gerald.

*//for a moment they look at each other//*

Gerald: ( *quietly*) Thank you. And I drink to you – and hope I can make you as happy as you deserve to be.

Sheila: ( *trying to be light and easy*) You be careful – or I'll start weeping.

Gerald: ( *smiling*) Well, perhaps this will help to stop it. ( *he produces a ring case.*)

Sheila: ( *excited*) Oh – Gerald – you've got it – is it the one you wanted me to have?

Gerald: ( *giving the case to her*) Yes – the very one.

Sheila: ( *taking out the ring*) Oh – it's wonderful! Look – mummy – isn't it a beauty? Oh – darling -

( *she kisses Gerald hastily.*)

Eric: steady the buffs!

Sheila: ( *who has put the ring on, admiringly*) I think it's perfect. Now I really feel engaged.

Mrs Birling: So you ought, darling. It's a lovely ring. Be careful with it.

Sheila: careful! I'll never let it go out of my sight for an instant.

## An Inspector Calls - Questions

Write about the character of Mrs Birling and the way she is presented in An Inspector Calls.

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

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

Inspector: you're not even sorry now, when you know what happened to the girl?

Mrs Birling: I'm sorry she should have come to such a horrible end. But I accept no blame for it at all.

Inspector: who is to blame then?

Mrs Birling: first, the girl herself.

Sheila: (*bitterly*) for letting father and me have her chucked out of her jobs!

Mrs Birling: secondly, I blame the young man who was the father of the child she was going to have. If, as she said, he didn't belong to her class, and was some drunken young idler, then that's all the more reason why he shouldn't escape. He should be made an example of. If the girl's death is due to anybody, then it's due to him.

Inspector: and if her story is true – that he was stealing money-

Mrs Birling: (*rather agitated now*) there's no point in assuming that-

Inspector: but suppose we do, what then?

Mrs Birling: then he'd be entirely responsible – because the girl wouldn't have come to us, and have been refused assistance, if it hadn't been for him-

Inspector: so he's the chief culprit anyhow.

Mrs Birling: certainly. And he ought to be dealt with very severely-

## An Inspector Calls - Questions

Write about the character of Mr Birling and the way he is presented in An Inspector Calls.

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

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

Birling: Just let me finish, Eric. You've a lot to learn yet. And I'm taking as a hard headed, practical man of business. And I say there isn't a chance of war. The world's developing so fast that it'll make war impossible. Look at the progress we're making. In a year or two we'll have aeroplanes that will be able to go anywhere. And look at the way the auto-mobile's making headway – bigger and faster all the time. And then ships. Why, a friend of mine went over this new liner last week – the titanic – she sails next week – forty-six thousand eight hundred tons – New York in five days – and every luxury – and unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable. That's what you've got to keep your eye on, facts like that, progress like that – and not a few German officers taking nonsense and a few scaremongers here making a fuss about nothing. Now you three young people, just listen to this – and remember what I'm telling you now. In twenty or thirty year's time – let's say, in 1940 – you may be giving a little party like this – your son or daughter might be getting engaged – and I tell you, by that time you'll be living in a world that'll have forgotten all these capital versus labour agitations and all these silly little war scares. There'll be peace and prosperity and rapid progress everywhere – except of course in Russia, which will always be behindhand naturally.

## An Inspector Calls - Questions

Write about the character of Gerald and the way he is presented in An Inspector Calls.

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

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

Gerald: is there anything else you want to know – that you ought to know?

Inspector: yes. When did this affair end?

Gerald: I can tell you exactly. In the first week of September. I had to go away for several weeks then – on business – and by that time Daisy knew it was coming to an end. So I broke it off definitely before I went.

Inspector: how did she take it?

Gerald: better than I'd hoped. She was – very gallant – about it.

Sheila: ( *with irony*) that was nice for you.

Gerald: No, it wasn't. (he *waits a moment, then in a low, troubled tone.*) she told me she'd been happier than she'd ever been before – but that she knew it couldn't last – hadn't expected it to last. She didn't blame me at all. I wish to God she had now. Perhaps I'd feel better about it.

Inspector: she had to move out of those rooms?

Gerald: Yes, we'd agreed about that. She'd saved a little money during the summer – she'd lived very economically on what I'd allowed her – and didn't want to take more from me, but I insisted on a parting gift of enough money – though it wasn't so very much – to see her through to the end of the year.

## An Inspector Calls - Questions

Write about the character of Eric and the way he is presented in An Inspector Calls.

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

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

Birling: (*angrily to Eric*) You're the one I blame for this.

Eric: I'll bet I am.

Birling: (*angrily*) Yes, and you don't realize yet all you've done. Most of this is bound to come out. There'll be a public scandal.

Eric: Well, I don't care now.

Birling: You! You don't seem to care about anything. But I care. I was almost certain for a knighthood in the next Honours List-

*// Eric laughs rather hysterically, pointing at him.//*

Eric: (*laughing*) Oh – for God's sake! What does it matter now whether they give you a knighthood or not?

Birling: (*sternly*) It doesn't matter to you. Apparently nothing matters to you. But it may interest you to know that until every penny of that money you stole is repaid, you'll work for nothing. And there's going to be no more of this drinking round the town – and picking up women in the palace bar-

Mrs Birling: (*coming to life*) I should think not. Eric, I'm absolutely ashamed of you.

Eric: Well, I don't blame you. But don't forget I'm ashamed of you as well – yes both of you.

Birling: (*angrily*) Drop that. There's every excuse for what both your mother and I did – it turned out unfortunately, that's all--

## An Inspector Calls - Questions

Write about the character of Inspector Goole and the way he is presented in An Inspector Calls.

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

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

Inspector: You helped – but you didn't start it. (*rather savagely, to Birling.*) You started it. She wanted twenty-five shillings a week instead of twenty-two and sixpence. You made her pay a heavy price for that. And now she'll make you pay a heavier price still.

Birling: (*unhappily*) Look, Inspector – I'd give thousands – yes, thousands-

Inspector: You're offering the money at the wrong time. Mr Birling. (*He makes a move as if concluding the session, possibly shutting up notebook, etc. Then surveys them sardonically.*) No, I don't think any of you will forget. Nor that young man, Croft, though he at least had some affection for her and made her happy for a time. Well, Eva Smith's gone. You can't do her any more harm. And you can't do her any good now, either. You can't even say "I'm sorry, Eva Smith."

Sheila: (*who is crying quietly*) That's the worst of it.

Inspector: But just remember this. One Eva Smith has gone – but there are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths still left with us, with their lives, their hopes and fears, their suffering and chance of happiness, all intertwined with our lives, and what we think and say and do. We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other. And I tell you that the time will soon come when, if men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire and bloody and anguish. Good night.

*// He walks straight out, leaving them staring, subdued and wondering. Sheila is still quietly crying. Mrs Birling has collapsed into a chair. Eric is brooding desperately. Birling, the only active one, hears the front door slam, moves hesitatingly towards the door, stops, looks gloomily at the other three, then pours himself out a drink, which he hastily swallows.//*

## An Inspector Calls - Questions

Write about how J.B. Priestley creates dramatic tension at different points in the play. You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this question.

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

Sheila: Oh don't be stupid. We haven't much time. You gave yourself away as soon as he mentioned her other name.

Gerald: All right. I knew her. Let's leave it at that.

Sheila: We can't leave it at that.

Gerald: (*approaching her*) Now listen, darling--

Sheila: no, that's no use. You not only knew her but you knew her very well. Otherwise, you wouldn't look so guilty about it. When did you first get to know her?

*// he does not reply//*

Was it after she left Milwards? When she changed her name, as he said, and began to lead a different sort of life? Were you seeing her last spring and summer, during that time you hardly came near me and said you were so busy? Were you?

*// he does not reply but looks at her.//*

Yes, of course you were.

Gerald: I'm sorry, Sheila. But it was all over and done with, last summer. I hadn't set eyes on the girl for at least six months. I don't come into this suicide business.

Sheila: I thought I didn't half an hour ago.

Gerald: You don't. Neither of us does. So – for god's sake – don't say anything to the inspector.

Sheila: About you and this girl?

Gerald: Yes. We can keep it from him.

Sheila: (*laughs rather hysterically*) why – you fool – he knows. Of course he knows. And I hate to think how much he knows that we don't know yet. You'll see. You'll see.

*// she looks at him almost in triumph. He looks crushed. The doors slowly opens and the inspector appears, looking steadily and searchingly at them.//*

Inspector: Well?

## An Inspector Calls - Questions

How does J.B Priestley show the theme of responsibility in An Inspector Calls? You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this question.

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

Birling: (*somewhat impatiently*) Look – there's nothing mysterious – or scandalous – about this business – at least not so far as I'm concerned. It's perfectly straightforward case, and as it happened more than eighteen months ago – nearly two years ago – obviously it has nothing whatever to do with the wretched girl's suicide. Eh, inspector?

Inspector: No, sir. I can't agree with you there.

Birling: Why not?

Inspector: Because what happened to her then may have determined what happened to her afterwards, and what happened to her afterwards may have driven her to suicide. A chain of events.

Birling: Oh well – put like that, there's something in what you say. Still, I can't accept any responsibility. If we were all responsible for everything that happened to everybody we'd had anything to do with, it would be very awkward, wouldn't it?

Inspector: Very awkward.

Birling: We'd all be in an impossible position, wouldn't we?

Eric: By jove, yes. And as you were saying, dad, a man has to look after himself-

Birling: Yes, well, we needn't go into all that.

## An Inspector Calls - Questions

How does J.B. Priestley present the theme of community in An Inspector Calls? You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this question.

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

Birling: (*taking it in the same manner*) Yes, you don't know what some of these boys get up to nowadays. More money to spend and time to spare than I had when I was Eric's age. They worked us hard in those days and kept us short of cash. Thought even then – we broke out and had a bit of fun sometimes.

Gerald: I'll bet you did.

Birling: (*solemnly*) But this is the point. I don't want to lecture you two young fellows again. But what so many of you don't seem to understand now, when things are so much easier, is that a man has to make his own way – has to look after himself – and his family too, of course, when he has one – and so long as he does that he won't come to much harm. But the way some of these cranks talk and write now, you'd think everybody has to look after everybody else, as if we were all mixed up together like bees in a hive – community and all that nonsense. But take my word for it, you youngsters – and I've learnt in the good hard school of experience – that a man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own – and -

*// we hear the sharp ring of a door bell. Birling stops to listen.//*

## An Inspector Calls - Questions

As a director, how would you advise an actor to present the role of \_\_\_\_\_ in the extract below? How would you advise an actor to present \_\_\_\_\_ at different points in the play? You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this question.

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

Pick a character, find an important part in the play, and attempt this question.