

**AN
INSPECTOR
CALLS**

**MADE SUPER
SUPER EASY**

EVELYN SAMUEL

An Inspector Calls
Made Super Super Easy
First Edition Published by Evelyn Samuel
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DEDICATED TO

*My late brother Thiru Govender
who will forever be in my heart*

REVIEWS

★★★★★ **Excellent book**

Reviewed 17 January 2021

Very clear and well written book. Gives an excellent analysis of themes and characters. Invaluable for study and gaining a clearer understanding of the text. Very highly recommended. This has been highly helpful to my son with his GCSE studies. Would rate higher if I could!

★★★★★ **Informative**

Reviewed 20 February 2022

This book has helped me achieve grade 9 in my English lit gcse mocks. This book provides the best information about An Inspector Calls and will help you gain the grade you want.

★★★★★ **If you want to get a better level get this book**

Reviewed 8 October 2020

This book is amazing. I brought it for my son and now I am seeing great improvements in his work. My son is now addicted to this, and it has helped him so much. My son went from a level 6 to a level 9 student. I thank the author of this book; thank you for making our lives easier for us.

★★★★★ **Fantastic resource!**

Reviewed 25 August 2021

Easy to follow guide. The kids absolutely love it! Definitely recommending to my friends and family.

★★★★★ **Excellent**

Reviewed 4 November 2020

This book is extremely helpful and covers all the information you need to help you secure the best grades in your GCSE exam. It has helped me improve my grades drastically.

★★★★★ **buy the book**

Reviewed 17 April 2021

This book goes into detail and gives you essay questions to help me improve with this book. I recommend this book because it helped me change my grades to a level 8

★★★★★ **Very helpful**

Reviewed 6 November 2021

Very helpful guide that contains a ton of information.

★★★★★ **Very good**

Reviewed 25 October 2021

Excellent explanation easy to understand

★★★★★ **Want a Grade 9 in English literature?**

Reviewed 6 October 2020

I purchased this for my son in Y11, and he had told me that the book goes into a significant amount of depth and helped him boost his grade up by 2 grades. The level of explanation, detail and alternative viewpoints on how you can interpret different quotes, settings, characters etc. I definitely recommend this book for all GCSE students. My son said that it is better than all other revision guides.

★★★★★ **Want a Grade 9 in English literature?**

Reviewed 24 July 2021

Good book with full description and explanation with a great guide that helps with exam questions and you should get it.

PREFACE

To all students reading my study guide **An Inspector Calls made super super easy**. I do hope that my wealth of information will assist you to achieve the highest possible grades. I have formulated a unique structure where detailed explanations are next to the text to make it super super easy for you to connect and understand the book, and to revise without the need to resort to more than one book.

Each ACT is defined by a Summary followed by in-depth explanations which is highlighted with relevant important quotes. It identifies connotated meaning, imagery, symbolism, and linguistic devices. The context identifies the rationale behind the play, so that although Priestley wrote the play as a moralistic philosophical fictional detective story, the play essentially revolves around the social attitudes prevalent in society and directed towards the lower working class and the disposed prior to the First World War.

A detailed explanation of each main character in the book is provided so that the fabric of their relationships can be better understood. The social themes authenticate the human interactions portrayed in the book - the gulf between rich and poor. Typical exam questions are included to give some idea of the scope sought by the Exam Boards. Further details can be found in the Specification published by the Exam Boards on their websites. Answers to questions can be easily found in my text.

Finally, sample essays are provided to give you some idea of the standard expected by the Exam Boards.

Good Luck with your studies and your exam results.

FOREWARD

What a super super easy way to study and understand Priestley's '*An Inspector Calls*'. No need to match text with explanation when both are next to each other.

I really enjoyed looking left at the text and right at the explanation. The structure and content of this fantastic book is a solid base to get to grip with this philosophical moralistic emotional fictional detective story where Inspector Goole subtly skilfully manipulates the suspects by his guile into revealing their guilt – the attitude engrained within society by the upper class at the time, where lower class workers like Eva Smith are disadvantaged and ultimately used and abused when they refuse to accept their status in society.

I can definitely recommend this study guide to all students, and hope they gain as much insight, as I did, into Priestley's '*An Inspector Calls*'.

Teacher of English

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PRIESTLEY

- J. B. Priestley wrote *An Inspector Calls* after the Second World War. In it, he tries to convey his controversial, politically charged message of social responsibility through the characters. His main aim was to pioneer a new morality in politics, due to his discontent with the rising social inequality in Britain.

THE PLAY

- The main underlying theme of the play is one of responsibility – “We are members of one body, we are responsible for each other.”
- *An Inspector Calls* is a controversial play that was intended to convey Priestley’s left-wing political ideology. He was a socialist, and he saw the capitalists as avaricious economic cannibals who lacked social responsibility. Because of this view, he wanted a better life for the proletariat workers like Eva Smith.
- The play was set in 1912 but was written in 1946. He uses dramatic irony to show the audience the vast differences between these eras and to clearly outline the dangers of capitalism. He vied for social mobility, embedding his views on socialism by building a strong socially responsible society.

CONTEXT

- In 1912, there were distinct differences between the rich, capitalist classes and the poor, socialist classes. In 1945, people were recovering from the war, and the class distinctions were markedly reduced.
- In 1912, women were subservient to men, and they had no rights. Women from the upper-class households got married to men from their own social class, whereas the women from poor, social backgrounds were seen as cheap labour. Eva Smith reflected this in the play. However, the role of women changed in 1946. They had to work and rebuild society, because the two world wars caused drastic fragmentation within the society.
- In 1912, the capitalist class did not change the status quo like the Birlings of the play. In 1946, however, there was a great move for social change.

CHARACTERS

INSPECTOR GOOLE	The man claiming to be a Police Inspector
ARTHUR BIRLING	The Business Man
SYBIL BIRLING	His Wife
SHEILA BIRLING	His Daughter
GERALD CROFT	Sheila's Fiancé
ERIC BIRLING	His Son
EDNA	The Maid
EVA SMITH	The worker sacked by Arthur for inciting worker's rights
alias Daisy Renton	sacked from next work place due to Sheila's jealousy
..alias Mrs Birling (Eric's wife)	denied support as a single parent by Sybil
	used and rejected as a mistress by both Gerald and Eric
	[does NOT appear in Play, just talked about]

SYNOPSIS

The mysterious **INSPECTOR GOOLE** arrives unannounced at the Birling's household while the family is celebrating the engagement of **SHEILA BIRLING** and **GERALD CROFT**. The **INSPECTOR** subtly but with firmness interrogates each member of the family about **EVA SMITH**, alias **DIASY RENTON**, who according to the **INSPECTOR** had committed suicide by swallowing disinfectant a few hours earlier.

By making use of **EVA'S** diary and her photo, the **INSPECTOR** is able to expose the guilt and remorse of those present. The **INSPECTOR** discovers that **EVA** was dismissed by **ARTHUR BIRLING** for inciting worker's rights; denied financial aid by **SYBIL BIRLING** because she aspired to elevate beyond her social class; made pregnant by **ERIC BIRLING** when drunk; falsely accused by **SHEILA BIRLING** contributing to her dismissal; and abandoned as a mistress by **GERALD CROFT**, the wealthy playboy.

Consequently, arguments ensue, with recriminations dividing into socialist and capitalist themes: **ERIC** and **SHEILA** empathising with **EVA'S** treatment and demise; **ARTHUR**, **SYBIL** and **GERALD** rejecting any wrongdoing. However, the **INSPECTOR** reminds everybody at the dinner party that all people are intertwined in one society. As he departs, he warns that, "*If men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught in fire and blood and anguish*", an allusion to tumult in society.

The mystery deepens when **ARTHUR** phones the police station only to discover that there is no **INSPECTOR GOOLE** on their staff. **GERALD** phones the Infirmary to discover that no girl had died by suicide that day. Relief turns to despondency when the phone suddenly rings; it is the police informing **ARTHUR BIRLING** that a police inspector is on the way to question everyone about the death of a girl who had just committed suicide by swallowing disinfectant.

In the play, Priestley is educating the reader on how the rich, capitalist class was out of touch with the sufferings of the poor socialist class.

SETTING

The play takes in the Birlings' **dining room** one evening in spring, 1912, the same year as the Titanic sailed on its ill-fated maiden voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. Priestley is meticulous as to the layout required to make the setting as realistic as possible: lighting, period furniture, period costumes, period etiquette and social standing. By not changing the set in each Act, Priestley creates a claustrophobic atmosphere, almost like being locked up in a police's interview room. The focus is always on the characters not the set.

In the Play, other locations talked about by the characters, which are essential to creating the intense and unremitting line of questioning pursued by the Inspector, are:

- **Brumley factory** owned by Arthur, where Eva Smith worked, and was then dismissed
- **Milwards' clothing shop**, where Eva Smith worked, and was then dismissed
- **The Palace Variety Theatre bar**, where Eva Smith met Alderman Meggarty, and was then rescued by Gerald to become his mistress, only to be rejected by him a few months later in September. In November, a drunken Eric picked up Eva Smith who became his mistress, but she left when she found out that Eric was giving her money stolen from the Arthur's factory.
- **The Brumley Women's Charity Organisation**, where Eva Smith was refused aid for her plight by Sybil, a prominent member.
- **The Hospital-Mortuary**, where according to Inspector Goole, Eva Smith died, but when Gerald phones the infirmary, is told there are no suicides, so consequently, Birling's and Gerald are sure it is a hoax perpetrated on them by the Inspector.
- **The Police Station**, where incoming calls were received by Arthur, and made by Gerald to establish the credentials of the Inspector and confirm any cases of suicides. A final call to Arthur, confirms that a girl had committed suicide, and an inspector was on the way to interview the Birlings.

FORM

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An Inspector Calls is written in a dramatic style with moral overtones, but in a traditional form first used in France in the mid-19th century by Eugene Scribe. The plays are written in three acts in a naturalistic, realistic, or true to life, and usually features:

- **An Exposition** that informs the audience about characters, setting, context, themes and maybe intrigues to be revealed at some point later in the play.
- **Exits and Entrances** that are carefully timed to increase suspense and tension such as the Inspector's arrival in Act 1, where in a business like and serious manner starts his interrogation each character one at a time.
- **Past Actions** that precede the play such as the life and death of Eva Smith as revealed by Inspector Goole.
- **Revelations** that increase suspense and tension such as the use by the Inspector of Eva Smith's photo, shown individually to each character to unsettle them.
- **Cliff-hangers** at the end of Acts to increase suspense and tension such as Gerald's revelation to Sheila at the end of Act 1 that he did have an affair with Eva Smith.
- **One Plot** with no subplots such as the life and death of Eva Smith.
- **Obligatory Scene** where the main character Inspector Goole confronts the Birling's and guest Gerald Croft and succeeds in getting each of them to admit their part in the demise of Eva Smith.
- **The Denouement** that brings together all the elements necessary to make sense of the drama, but often a further surprise awaits, as Birling's and Gerald moods swing between elation that the event was a hoax, and fear of social disgrace when the play ends with the phone call from the police informing Arthur that a girl had just died on the way to the infirmary after swallowing some disinfectant, and a police inspector is on his way to ask some questions.

The characters are filtered into those such Arthur and Sybil who are detached from moral responsibility to those of the lower class in society; those such Sheila and Eric who feel remorse; and those such as Gerald who exhibit an indifference to Eva Smith's demise.

STRUCTURE

An Inspector Calls conforms to the Aristotle tradition that plays are structured according to the 'Three Unities':

- **unity of action** - one main plot that moves rapidly and smoothly (Eva Smith's demise)
- **unity of time** - the action takes place over a short period in real time (during dinner)
- **unity of place** - the action takes place in a single location (the dining room).

The characters are questioned individually in a particular order, so the plot is revealed.

LANGUAGE

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Priestley uses realistic language appropriate to each character. The Inspector uses direct, uncompromising language. His direct style irritates Arthur and Sybil who find it offensive, confrontational, and disrespectful whereas Sheila, Eric, and Gerald find it intimidating and intrusive.

There are on occasions, odd words, and expressions peculiar to the era. Sheila remarks to Eric that he is "squiffy". In other words, a euphemism for inebriated or drunk.

LANGUAGE DEVICE: Speech

The dialogue defines the type of character and their personality. Arthur is a self-made business man aspiring to become a member of the wealthy upper class but retains his nonsense blunt self-opinionated rugged provincial speech. In contrast, his wife Sybil, son Eric, and daughter Sheila, are more refined in their speech being better educated. Gerald belongs to the upper class, so exhibits a more refined form of speech. His parents are Sir George Croft and Lady Croft. The Inspector uses assertive policemen speak.

LANGUAGE DEVICE: Rhetoric

Priestley uses rhetoric to persuade and convince others. Inspector Goole is determined to persuade the Birlings and Gerald of their guilt,

"This girl killed herself. But each of you helped to kill her. Remember that. Never forget it"

LANGUAGE DEVICE: Euphemism

The Inspector does not use euphemisms, so there is no vagueness to soften his stark questioning or statements. In contrast, Eric uses vague terms when referring to sexual matters, "And that's when it happened". Gerald uses the euphemism "keeping a girl" instead of the use of a 'working class call girl', so as to hide, the embarrassment of keeping a girl of lower social status than himself.

LANGUAGE DEVICE: Imagery

Priestley uses natural speech as spoken by the Edwardians in 1912, so there are few metaphors or similes in the play. However, in the Inspector's final speech to the Birlings and Gerald, emphasizing the consequences of not taking moral responsibility, he says.

"fire and blood and anguish"

LANGUAGE DEVICE: Irony

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Priestley uses irony to expose the double standards practised by the Birling and Gerald in the form of guilt. Secrets or lies. Gerald's deceit in not revealing his affair with Eva Smith alias Daisy Renton, or the dramatic irony when Sybil denies Eva support for her unborn child, not realising that Eric is the father, and had it been born, her grandchild.

The underling irony is that the Birlings and Gerald cannot envision that their way of life and duplicities will change. Within two years, the First World War caused a dramatic change in society, and by 1945, after the Second World War, when the play was first published, class divisions less prevalent.

LANGUAGE DEVICE: Irony

Priestley symbolism is wealth. Eva Smith is made penniless because wealthy people like Arthur and jealous people like Sheila have denied her work. Her only recourse to ask the Brumley Women's Charity Organisation for financial support, which was denied by Sybil, a prominent member of the board. Both Gerald and Eric showed no moral obligation. Gerald abandoned Eva because of class difference, and Eva abandoned Eric because he stole money from Arthur's factory to keep them.

PRODUCTION

The play was first produced in London on 1st October 1946 at the New Theatre.

All three acts, which are continuous, take place in the dining-room of the Birling's house in Brumley, an industrial city in the North Midlands.

It is an evening in spring, 1912.

The dining room of a fairly large suburban house, belonging to a prosperous manufacturer. It has good solid furniture of the period. The general effect is substantial and heavily comfortable, but not cosy and homelike. (If a realistic set is used, then it should be swung back, as it was in the production at the *New Theatre*. By doing this, you can have the dining-table centre downstage during Act One, when it is needed there, and then, swinging back, can reveal the fireplace for Act Two, and then for Act Three can show a small table with a telephone on it, downstage of fireplace. By this time the dining-table and its chairs have moved well upstage. Producers who wish to avoid this tricky business, which involves two re-settings of the scene and some very accurate adjustments of the extra flats necessary would be well advised to dispense of an ordinary realistic set, if only because the dining table becomes a nuisance. The lighting should be pink and intimate until the Inspector arrives, and then it should be brighter and harder.)