**An Inspector Calls Revision**

**Lesson 1 - Act One**

**Learning Objective: What do we understand about the key events, ideas and quotes from act one of *An Inspector Calls?***

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| **Key Words** | **Glossary words** |
| **social responsibility:** the idea that we have a duty to help everyone in society.  **social class:** your status in the social order (eg. working class, middle class or upper class). | **prospective:** soon to be  **misguided:** mistaken  **complacent:** lazily, carelessness, without worrying  **landed people:** upper class people, who own land |

**What happens in Act One?**

When Act 1 opens, the Birling family has gathered together to celebrate Sheila Birling's engagement to Gerald Croft. Arthur Birling congratulates his daughter and prospective son-in-law on the match, and then he assures them that their country's future will be filled with success. Sheila, her mother Sybil, and her brother Eric talk outside the room while Arthur and Gerald drink another glass of port. Arthur tells Gerald that he expects to be knighted soon, which should appease Gerald's mother, Lady Croft. Eric returns to the room. Arthur instructs both young men on the importance of placing oneself and one's family above all others.

The maid, Edna, informs Arthur that an inspector named Goole is at the door. Arthur tells her to show him in. Inspector Goole tells Arthur that Eva Smith, a young woman from a lower social class, has committed suicide. When Arthur sees the girl's picture, he reveals he used to employ her but fired her for leading a strike. Sheila enters the room. She is shocked when she learns about the young woman's suicide. Eric and Sheila both believe Arthur should have been kinder to her, while Gerald sides with Arthur.

The inspector shifts his attention to Sheila. He shows her the picture, and Sheila leaves the room in tears. Arthur accuses the inspector of intentionally upsetting his daughter and threatens to inform the Chief Constable of his behaviour. The inspector tells Arthur that other members of the family are connected to Eva's death. Arthur leaves the room to talk with his wife. Sheila returns. She confesses she asked the manager at Milwards clothing store to fire Eva, since she believed the girl insulted her. Unlike her father, she expresses regret for her actions. The inspector then reveals that Eva changed her name to Daisy Renton, and Gerald reacts negatively to the name. As the inspector goes with Eric to find Arthur, Sheila accuses Gerald of having an affair with Eva. He confesses. The inspector returns.

**TASK 1: Read the summary of act one above, and then answer the following comprehension questions:**

1. What are the family celebrating at the start?
2. What does Birling assure the family about the future?
3. What does Birling tell Gerald in order to ‘appease his mother’?
4. What is the name of the inspector?
5. Which character sides with Arthur when they learn what happened to Eva Smith?
6. What was the name of the clothing store from which Eva was fired?
7. What did Eva change her name to after being fired for a second time?
8. What does Gerald confess to at the end of act one?

**TASK 2: In the table are six key quotes from act one, and four ideas suggested by those quotes. Match the ideas with the most suitable quotes, then have a go at explaining your own ideas for the two remaining quotes.**

**The first one is done as an example.**

**TIP: If you are working electronically, you can complete the match up by copying and pasting the arrow.**

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| **QUOTE** | **MATCH UP** | **IDEA** |
| **SHEILA:** Oh – it’s wonderful! Look – Mummy – isn’t it a beauty? |  | Shows that the inspector has some sympathy for the workers and points the finger at the greedy employers. |
| **BIRLING:** The Titanic - she sails next week…unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable. | Shows that Sheila is childish at the beginning of the play. |
| **BIRLING:** The way some of these cranks talk and write now, you’d think everybody has to look after everybody else, like bees in a hive. | Shows that ... |
| **BIRLING:** If you don’t come down sharply on these people, they’d soon be asking for the earth. | Shows that Birling is misguided. He is wrong about the future but doesn’t realise it. |
| **INSPECTOR:** After all, it’s better to ask for the earth than to take it. | Shows that ... |
| **SHEILA:** So, I’m really responsible? | Shows that Birling does agree with the idea of social responsibility; he only wants to take care of himself and his family. |

**TASK 3: Now read the extract below, in which Birling is speaking to Gerald about his engagement to Sheila.**

*Birling lights his cigar and Gerald, who had lit a cigarette, helps himself to port, then pushes the decanter to Birling.*

**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.*

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.)*

**How does Priestley present Birling’s attitude towards social class (the fact that they are upper-middle class, but Lady Croft is upper class) in this extract?**

**Remember to include the word class in your zoom, and to double zoom if you can.**

**Write an answer to this question using PEEZR. There are sentence starters at the end of the document if you need them.**

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**Sentence starters for support:**

*In this extract, Priestley presents Birling as someone who thinks that ...*

*For example, he says “...*

*This suggests that ... because ...*

*In particular, the word “...” is important here because ...*

*Here, the audience might think that ... because ...*

**Challenge: Include some of the key words in your PEEZR**

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