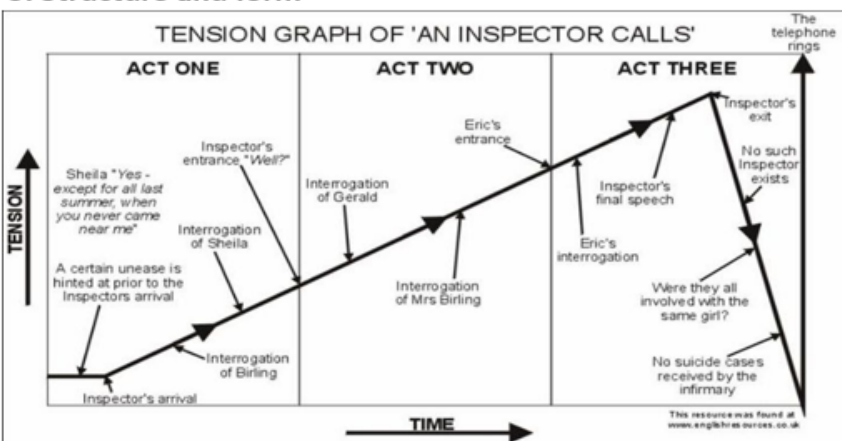


1. Plot

Act 1	The <u>Birlings</u> (and Gerald) are all gathered to celebrate the engagement of Sheila and Gerald. Mr Birling gives a speech about how the talk of war is 'fiddlesticks.' A police inspector (Goole) arrives and reveals that a girl (Eva Smith) has committed suicide . The Inspector implies that each of them may have known her and have something to do with her death . The Inspector forces Mr Birling to admit that he fired Eva Smith after a dispute over pay at the factory. He also makes Sheila confess that she got Eva Smith fired after she thought Eva had laughed at her in a shop. Act 1 finishes with Sheila challenging Gerald over the affair that Gerald had with Eva Smith once she had changed her name to Daisy Renton.
Act 2	The affair between Gerald and Daisy Renton (Eva Smith) is revealed to the rest of the family. Gerald leaves . We then find out that Mrs Birling denied funding to Eva Smith when she arrived at the charitable organisation that Mrs Birling chairs. Mrs Birling refused her money as she used the name of Birling which she considered rude. Mrs Birling feels no remorse at her treatment of Eva Smith and lays blame for the situation with the father of Eva's unborn child. The act ends with Sheila warning her mother about what she is saying and Mrs Birling's sudden realisation that Eric may be the father of the child .
Act 3	Eric arrives and reveals that he was the father of the child . It is hinted that he sexually assaulted her. The Inspector gives a speech which highlights that all of the family were in some way responsible for the girl's death. He leaves. Gerald returns . Gerald and the <u>Birlings</u> figure out that the Inspector wasn't real . The older <u>Birlings</u> and Gerald start to celebrate at this news whereas the younger generation still feel responsible . The play ends with Mr Birling answering the phone to find out a girl has committed suicide and a policeman is coming to ask questions.

3. Structure and form



Well-made play	Morality Play	Crime Thriller or Whodunit
The well-made play was a typical form of play that most audiences would be familiar with. It typically took place over 3 Acts and involved neat plot in which the protagonist faced a series of problems that reached a climax and were eventually over come in a tidy resolution. Priestley, generally follows this form but subverts the ending leaving his characters in chaos and confusion as the phone rings again.	Morality plays were performed in Medieval times They intended to teach the audience to choose a moral life over an immoral life. In An Inspector Calls, Priestley uses this idea by presenting Eva as the character of Everyman and the Birlings as representations of the Seven Deadly Sins . He wants his audience in 1946 to see the moral obligations we have to those less fortunate than us and take social responsibility.	A crime thriller is a genre that tells a gripping tale based around a crime. Lead by a detective or amateur sleuth, the audience is given a series of clues about the crime before a climatic revelation of the culprit. Priestley, follows this pattern as the inspector leads us through a series of character confessions about Eva, but leaves the audience to decide Whodunit and who is to blame.

2. The characters

Arthur Birling: A wealthy businessman	He is slightly lower in social class than his wife. A prosperous, pompous patriarch , he sacks Eva for being too outspoken and refuses to take any responsibility for his actions. He views his children's attitude as hysterical and silly.
Sybil Birling: Arthur Birling's wife.	She is very concerned with social appearances and position. Chair of a prominent women's charity she is cold and haughty and refused Eva charity when she is most desperate. She is prejudiced against the working class.
Sheila Birling: the Birling's daughter.	Sheila starts the play as quite an immature character who is vain and jealous . She uses her power to have Eva sacked from <u>Milwards</u> in a fit of temper. Eventually, she accepts responsibility for her role in Eva's death.
Eric Birling: the Birling's son	The Birling's son . Eric is the youngest in the play and lives an idle life of parties and socialising. Described as 'half-shy, half-assertive.' He forces himself upon Eva and she becomes pregnant. He can be volatile and aggressive, but does redeem himself partially by the end.
Gerald Croft: Sheila's fiancé	He comes from a socially superior family. He is confident and sophisticated . He seduces Eva and keeps her as his mistress. He seems upset by her death, but proves the Inspector did not exist and suggests that they can forget all about it.
Eva Smith: a dramatic device	Eva is a working class woman who the Inspector claims to have committed suicide. She represents the exploited, female working class woman and the narrative centres around how each of the <u>Birlings</u> were involved in her demise.
Inspector Goole: a police inspector	Seemingly omniscient , he questions the Birlings ruthlessly about their involvement with Eva and exposes their lies and hypocrisy . He represents Priestley's socialist political views.
Edna	The maid of the Birlings and a symbol of their upper-middle class status.

4. Themes and Ideas

1. Power and Influence	2. Political Persuasion	3. Social Responsibility
<p>Power, influence and wealth are important themes in the play. The Birlings regard themselves as a highly influential family in the town of Brumley with connections to the judiciary, police force and aldermen of the town. Mr Birling hopes for a knighthood and Mrs Birling is a prominent member of a women's charity. Throughout the play, Priestley explores how they use their power and influence to exploit Eva Smith, who represents the disempowered working class. Consequently, she is sacked, fired, kept, sexually exploited and rejected by people who believe themselves to be morally superior. The Inspector shows that their wealth shouldn't provide them with immunity from the moral crimes they have committed, whilst simultaneously exposing their hypocrisy.</p>	<p>Priestley uses <i>An Inspector Calls</i> to debate the ideas of Capitalism versus Socialism. Priestley was a strong socialist and believed in social equality. When he wrote the play in 1944, Socialism was a still very popular in Great Britain and he used his fame as a writer to promote the Labour Party who were champions of the working class. However, many capitalists and Conservatives were highly suspicious of Socialism and saw it as dangerous movement that threatened their private wealth and privileged status – just like Mr Birling does. Birling and the Crofts, represent the prosperous industrialists only interested in wealth acquisition, whereas Eva represents the working class exploited by them. A practice Priestley wanted to see an end of.</p>	<p><i>An Inspector Calls</i> was first performed in the UK just after the end of World War Two, in 1946. It was a time of great change in Britain and many writers were concerned with the welfare of the poor. At that time there was no assistance for people who could not afford to look after themselves. Priestley wanted to address this issue. He also felt that if people were more considerate of one another, it would improve quality of life for all. This is why social responsibility is a key theme of the play. Priestley wanted his audience to be responsible for their own behaviour and responsible for the welfare of others. He encouraged us to live a morally good life and practise equality and compassion to others.</p>
4. Men and Women (Gender)	5. Younger versus Older Generations	6. Class Prejudice
<p><i>An Inspector Calls</i> was written after World War Two. As many British men went away to fight during the war, their positions in work had to be filled by women. This helped change existing perceptions. Men had to acknowledge the fact that women were just as capable as them. As a result of this, many women enjoyed a newfound freedom that working and earning money allowed them. Not all men saw this change in attitude as a good thing and stayed stuck in the past. Priestley explores the impact of these new gender roles through the independence of Eva Smith, Sheila's growing challenge to her father's views in contrast to the sexist attitudes of many of the central characters who objectify women or believe they should adhere to gender stereotypes.</p>	<p>Age is an important theme in the play. Priestley uses it to show how he believed that there was hope in the younger generation's ability to learn and change. The older characters' opinions and behaviours are stubbornly fixed. Mr Birling refuses to learn and Mrs Birling cannot see the obvious about herself and her children. They are both static characters who are unable to change or respond to new ways of thinking. Gerald Croft spans the generations, but ultimately conforms to the older generation's way of thinking, disproving the Inspector's existence and offering the engagement ring to Sheila at the end as if nothing has happened. Eric and Sheila however are younger - they accept their mistakes and offer the chance for a brighter future. Dynamic characters, they are willing to learn and are frightened by their parents inability to see what they have done.</p>	<p>Before World War Two, Britain was divided by class. Two such classes were the wealthy land and factory owners and the poor workers. The war helped bring these two classes closer together and rationing meant that people of all classes were eating and even dressing the same. The war effort also meant that people from all classes were mixing together. This was certainly not the case before. Priestley wanted to highlight that inequality between the classes still existed and that the upper-classes looked down upon the working-class in post-war Britain. The Birlings represent the monied upper-middle classes who live in a bubble of privilege hardly ever considering the impact their actions have on others. Their involvement with Eva Smith, forces them to examine their prejudices and question their class consciousness.</p>

5. The Writer's Craft

1. act: The division of the play into distinct parts including rising action, climax and denouement.	2. declarative sentence: A statement that simply relays a clear fact or opinion. Mr and Mrs Birling as a sign of their self-confidence.	3. denouement: the final part of a play in which the strands of the plot are drawn together and matters are explained or resolved.	4. deus ex machina: literally means the "god in the machine" – in this case the Inspector who drives the plot relentlessly to the end.	5. dialogue: the words and conversation between characters in a play.
6. dramatic irony: when the audience is aware of something in situation that the characters are not, such as the Titanic sinking.	7. dramatic device: the techniques used in a play by the writer such as lighting, stage directions etc.	8. emotive language: language used to convey the feelings of characters and elicit an emotional response from the audience.	9. foreshadowing: a clue in the text that hints at something that will happen later. Mrs Birling often misses these clues about Eric.	10. hyperbole: another term for exaggeration. The Inspector uses it to shock the listener in his final speech.
11. interrogative sentence: another term for a question. The Inspector asserts his dominance through his use of them.	12. imperative verb: a command such as <i>be quiet</i> or <i>listen</i> . They create sense of control and command over a conversation.	13. imagery: words or phrases that create powerful images. The Inspector uses graphic and religious imagery throughout the play.	14. monologue: a speech given by one character. Sheila's explanation of her involvement with Eva is a good example of this.	15. objectification: referring to a person as a thing rather than a human or individual.
16. pronouns: words such as <i>we</i> , <i>you</i> , <i>her</i> , <i>she</i> , <i>it</i> , <i>us</i> . Look at how they are used positively or negatively.	17. repetition: repeated words or phrases used for emphasis.	18. stage directions: the instructions to actors or directors about the performance.	19. symbolism: when a thing or person is used to represent a concept just like Eva is.	AO2