**‘An Inspector Calls’**

Key Moments

Name ……………………………………

**Questions**

1. How does Priestley present the Birlings as selfish in the play An Inspector Calls?

Write about:

* How Priestley presents ideas about the Birlings and selfishness
* How Priestley presents these ideas by the ways he writes.

**30 marks**

**AO4: 4 marks**

**(Act 1)**

1. How does Priestley present class in the play an Inspector Calls?

Write about:

• How Priestley presents ideas about class

• How Priestley presents these ideas by the way he writes.

**30 marks**

**AO4: 4 marks**

**(Act 1)**

1. How and why does Sheila change in An Inspector Calls?

Write about:

• How Sheila responds to her family and to the Inspector

• How Priestley presents Sheila by the ways he writes.

**30 marks**

**AO4: 4 marks**

**(Act 1)**

1. How does Priestley present women in the play An Inspector Calls?

Write about:

* the different ways women are presented in the play
* how Priestley presents women by the ways he writes

**30 marks**

**AO4: 4 marks**

**(Act 2)**

1. How does Priestley present responsibility in the play An Inspector Calls?

Write about:

* How Priestley presents ideas about responsibility
* How Priestley presents these ideas by the ways he writes.

**30 marks**

**AO4: 4 marks**

**(Act 2)**

1. How does Priestley present the character of the Inspector in the play An Inspector Calls?

Write about:

* what the Inspector says and does
* how Priestley presents the Inspector by the ways he writes

**30 marks**

**AO4: 4 marks**

**(Act 3)**

1. How does Priestley show the different attitudes between the older and younger generations?

Write about:

* the different attitudes of the older and younger generations
* how Priestley shows the different attitudes by the ways he writes

**30 marks**

**AO4: 4 marks**

**(Act 3)**

**Key Moments**

1. **Priestley presents Mr Birling as the embodiment of capitalism.**

**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 front door bell.* BIRLING *stops to listen.*

**ERIC** Somebody at the front door.

1. **Priestley presents the lack of rights for lower class workers.**

**BIRLING** Oh- just before you came- I’d been giving these young men a little good advice. Now- about this girl, Eva Smith. I remember her quite well now. She was a lively good-looking girl- country-bred, I fancy- and she’d been working in one of our machine shops for over a year. A good worker too. In fact, the foreman there told me he was ready to promote her into what we call a leading operator- head of a small group of girls. But after they came back from their holidays that August, they were all rather restless, and they suddenly decided to ask for more money. They were averaging about twenty- two and six, which was neither more nor less than is paid generally in our industry. They wanted the rates raised so that they could average about twenty-five shillings a week. I refused, of course.

**INSPECTOR** Why?

**BIRLING** *(Surprised)* Did you say ‘why?’?

**INSPECTOR** Yes. Why did you refuse?

**BIRLING** Well, Inspector, I don’t see that it’s any concern of yours how I choose to run my business. Is it now?

**INSPECTOR** It might be, you know.

**BIRLING** I don’t like that tone.

**INSPECTOR** I’m sorry. But you asked me a question.

**BIRLING** And you asked me a question before that, a quite unnecessary question too.

**INSPECTOR** It’s my duty to ask questions

**BIRLING** Well, it’s my duty to keep labour costs down, and if I’d agreed to this demand for a new rate wed 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 ring-leaders, 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.

1. **Priestley presents the limited expectations for women at the time.**

**SHEILA** Yes, go on, Mummy. You must drink our health.

**MRS B.** (*Smiling)* very well, then. Just a little, thank you. (*To EDNA, who is about to go, with tray.)* All right, Edna. I’ll ring from the drawing- room when we want a coffee. Probably in about half an hour.

**EDNA** (*Going)* Yes, Ma’am

*EDNA goes out. They now have all the glasses filled. BIRLING beams at them and clearly relaxes.*

**BIRLING** Well, well- this is very nice. Good dinner too, Sybil. Tell cook from me.

**GERALD** *(Politely)* absolutely first-class.

**MRS B.**  *(Reproachfully)* Arthur, you’re not supposed to say such things-

**BIRLING** Oh- come, come- I’m treating Gerald like one of the family. And I’m sure he won’t object.

**SHEILA** *(With mock aggressiveness)* Go on, Gerald- just you object!

**GERALD** (*Smiling)* wouldn’t dream of it. In fact, I insist upon being one of the family now. I’ve been trying long enough, haven’t I? *(As she does not reply, with more insistence.)* Haven’t I? You know I have.

**MRS B.**  *(Smiling)* of course she does.

**SHEILA** *(Half serious, half playful)* Yes- except for all last summer, when you never came near me, and I wondered what had happened to you.

**GERALD** And I’ve told you- I was awfully busy at the works all that time.

**SHEILA** *(Same tone as before)* Yes, that’s what *you* say.

**MRS B.** Now, Sheila, don’t tease him. When you’re married you’ll realise that men with important work to do sometimes have to spend nearly all their time and energy on their business. You’ll have to get used to that, just as I had.

**SHEILA** I don’t believe I will. (*Half playful, half serious, to GERALD.)* So you be careful.

**GERALD** Oh- I will, I will.

*ERIC suddenly guffaws. His parents look at him.*

**SHEILA** *(Severely)* Now- what’s the joke?

**ERIC** I don’t know- really. Suddenly I felt I just had to laugh.

**SHEILA** You’re squiffy.

**ERIC** I’m not.

**MRS B.** What an expression, Sheila! Really the things you girls pick up these days!

**ERIC** If you think that’s the best she can do-

**SHEILA** Don’t be an ass, Eric.

**MRS B.** Now stop it, you two. Arthur, what about this famous toast of yours?

1. **Priestley presents the start of Sheila’s transformation in the play.**

**GERALD** No. I’ll just go out- walk about- for a while, if you don’t mind. I’ll come back.

**INSPECTOR** All right, Mr Croft

**SHEILA** But just in case you forget- or decide not to come back, Gerald, I think you’d better take this with you. *(She hands him the ring.)*

**GERALD I see.** Well, I was expecting this.

**SHEILA** I don’t dislike you as I did half an hour ago, Gerald. In fact, in some odd way, I rather respect you more than I’ve ever done before. I knew anyhow you were lying about those months last year when you hardly came near me. I knew there was something fishy about that time. And now at least you’ve been honest. And I believe what you told us about the way you helped her at first. Just out of pity. And it was my fault really that she was so desperate when you first met her. But this has made a difference. You and I aren’t the same people who sat down to dinner here. Wed have to start all over again, getting to know each other-

**BIRLING** Now, Sheila, I’m not defending him. But you must understand that a lot of young men-

**SHEILA** Don’t interfere, please, Father. Gerald knows what I mean, and you apparently don’t.

**GERALD** Yes, I know what you mean. But I’m coming back- if I may.

**SHEILA** All right.

**MRS B.** Well, really, I don’t know. I think we’ve just about come to an end of this wretched business-

**GERALD** I don’t think so. Excuse me.

*He goes out. They watch him go in silence. We hear the front door slam.*

**SHEILA** *(To INSPECTOR)* You know, you never showed him that photograph of her.

**INSPECTOR** No. It wasn’t necessary. And I thought it better not to.

**MRS B.** You have a photograph of this girl?

**INSPECTOR** Yes. I think you’d better look at it.

**MRS B.** I don’t see any particular reason why I should-

**INSPECTOR** Probably not. But you’d better look at it.

**MRS B.** Very well. *(He produces a photograph and she looks hard at it.)*

**INSPECTOR** *(Taking back the photograph)* you recognize her?

**MRS B.** No. Why should I?

**INSPECTOR** Of course she might have changed lately, but I can’t believe she could have changed so much.

**MRS B.** I don’t understand you, Inspector.

**INSPECTOR** You mean you don’t choose to do, Mrs Birling.

**MRS B.** *(Angrily)* I meant what I said.

**INSPECTOR** You’re not telling me the truth.

**MRS B.** I beg your pardon!

1. **Priestley presents Mrs Birling’s lack of social responsibility.**

**MRS B.** If you think you can bring any pressure to bear upon me, Inspector, you’re quite mistaken. Unlike the other three, I did nothing I’m ashamed of or that won’t bear investigation. The girl asked for assistance. We were asked to look carefully into the claims made upon us. I wasn’t satisfied with the girl’s claim- she seemed to me to be not a good case- and so I used my influence to have it refused. And in spite of what’s happened to the girl since, I consider I did my duty. So if I prefer not to discuss it any further, you have no power to make me change my mind.

**INSPECTOR** Yes I have.

**MRS B.** No you haven’t. Simply because I’ve done nothing wrong- and you know it.

**INSPECTOR** *(Very deliberately)* I think you did something terribly wrong- and that you’re going to spend the rest of your life regretting it. I wish you’d been with me tonight in the infirmary. You’d have seen-

1. **Priestley presents the Inspector as the embodiment of socialism.**

**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 blood 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.*

1. **Priestley presents hope for the future.**

**SHEILA** But that’s not what I’m talking about. I don’t care about that. The point is, you don’t seem to have learnt anything.

**BIRLING** Don’t I? Well, you’re quite wrong there. I’ve learnt plenty tonight. And you don’t want me to tell you what I’ve learnt, I hope. When I look back on tonight- when I think of what I was feeling when the five of us sat down to dinner at that table-

**ERIC** *(Cutting in)* yes, and do you remember what you said to Gerald and me after dinner, when you were feeling so pleased with yourself? You told us that a man has to make his own way, look after himself and mind his own business, and that we weren’t to take any notice of these cranks who tell us that everybody has to look after everybody else, as if we were all mixed up together. Do you remember? Yes- and then one of those cranks walked in- the Inspector. (*Laughs bitterly).* i didn’t notice you told him that it’s every man for himself.

**SHEILA** *(Sharply attentive)* is that when the Inspector came, just after father had said that?

**ERIC** Yes. What of it?

**MRS B.** (*With some excitement)* I know what you’re going to say. Because I’ve been wondering myself.

**SHEILA** It doesn’t much matter now, of course- but was he really a police inspector?

**BIRLING** Well, if he wasn’t, it matters a devil of a lot. Makes all the difference.

**SHEILA** No, it doesn’t.

**BIRLING** Don’t talk rubbish. Of course it does.

**SHEILA** Well, it doesn’t to me. And it oughtn’t to you, either.

**MRS B.**  Don’t be childish, Sheila.

**SHEILA** (*Flaring up)* I’m not being. If you want to know, it’s you two who are being childish- trying not to face the facts.

**BIRLING** I won’t have that sort of talk. Any more of that and you leave this room.

**ERIC** That’ll be terrible for her, wont it?

**SHEILA** I’m going anyhow in a minute or two. But don’t you see, if all that’s come out tonight is true, then it doesn’t much matter who it was who made us confess. And it *was* true, wasn’t it? You turned the girl out of one job, and I had her turned out of another. Gerald kept her- at a time when he was supposed to be too busy to see me. Eric- well, we know what Eric did. And mother hardened her heart and gave her the final push that finished her. That’s what’s important- and not whether a man is a police inspector or not