

“Do Now” Work

How does Priestley explore responsibility in 'An Inspector Calls'?

Be able to refine and reflect on your work by making improvements to your Milestone Assessment.

1. What is social responsibility?
2. What is personal responsibility?

In Silence Please



How does Priestley explore responsibility in 'An Inspector Calls'?
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1. What is social responsibility?

Social responsibility is the idea that we should help those people in society who are less fortunate than us.

2. What is personal responsibility?

Personal responsibility is accepting the consequences of your own actions.

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Section A: Modern prose or drama

Answer one question from this section on your chosen text.

JB Priestley: *An Inspector Calls*

EITHER

0 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]

OR

Question 2

0 2

How does Priestley explore responsibility in *An Inspector Calls*?

Write about:

- the ideas about responsibility in *An Inspector Calls*
- how Priestley presents these ideas by the ways he writes.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

How does Priestley explore responsibility in 'An Inspector Calls'?
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The Birlings and Gerald Croft all abuse their power as members of the middle-class, causing the working class Eva Smith to suffer. All of the Birlings and Gerald are irresponsible.

Arthur Birling: thinks his responsibility is to make as much profit as he can, so he uses his power as an employer to make an example of Eva (page 15)

Eric Birling: uses his power as a man to use her at the end of a drunken night ("an animal, a thing")

Gerald Croft: uses his power as a man to make her his mistress and disregards his responsibility to Sheila

Sheila Birling: uses her power as a wealthy customer to get Eva sacked

Sybil Birling: uses her power as the chair of the committee to deny Eva help as she doesn't believe Eva deserves help

The men all **use** Eva in some way - 1912 was a patriarchal society.

However, the women don't use her - they instead use their power to be spiteful and vindictive. Women couldn't use their power in the same way as men.

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Social responsibility:

Priestley uses the play as a vehicle for his belief that we should help those who are less fortunate than us. This is a key principle of socialism. He believes capitalism focuses too much on individual gain.

Arthur and Sybil do not believe in social responsibility:

Arthur: "It's my duty to keep labour costs down" - he feels that his responsibility is to his own family and his own profit, not his workers.

Arthur: "If you don't come down sharply on some of these people, they'd soon be asking for the earth" - he believes the poor are greedy, and he needs to be careful, not caring, around them. The adverb "sharply" implies they need to be treated harshly, and the noun phrase "these people" implies he sees all of his workers as the same, not individuals who might need help.

Sybil: At her charity, she says they only help "deserving cases" which implies the organisation is judgemental rather than compassionate.

Sybil: "a girl of that sort" and she gave herself "ridiculous airs" suggests that she thinks working class girls are below her and should know their place.

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Personal responsibility:

Priestley wants the characters to accept responsibility for their own actions. As well as wanting the Birlings to understand that they should behave differently towards others, he also uses the inspector to try to make them admit their own guilt.

Inspector Goole: "This girl killed herself - and died a horrible death. But each of you helped to kill her. Remember that. Never forget it." The emotive language emphasises the effect of each characters' behaviour, and the two short imperative sentences focus on the necessity of accepting guilt.

Arthur refuses to accept personal responsibility: "There's every excuse for what both your mother and I did - it turned out unfortunately, that's all." Including Sybil here shows his reluctance to accept any individual guilt. In addition, the exaggerated noun phrase "every excuse" shows that he is justifying his actions. The callous understatement "unfortunately" and the dismissive phrase "that's all" suggests Arthur has no genuine sympathy for Eva's death.

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Inspector Goole

Inspector Goole promotes the idea of social responsibility in the play by focusing on the most vulnerable in society. Eva Smith doesn't appear on stage (the play is not in flashbacks, for example), so Inspector Goole gives her and the working class a voice:

- "She needed not only money, but advice, sympathy, friendliness."
- "She was alone, friendless, almost penniless, desperate."
- "no work, no money coming in [...] no relatives to help her, few friends, lonely, half starved, she was feeling desperate."

Inspector Goole is a mouthpiece for Priestley's socialist views:

- "We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other."

The inclusive pronoun "we" emphasises the socialist views of joint responsibility.

Inspector Goole also shows that Eva was not an isolated case:

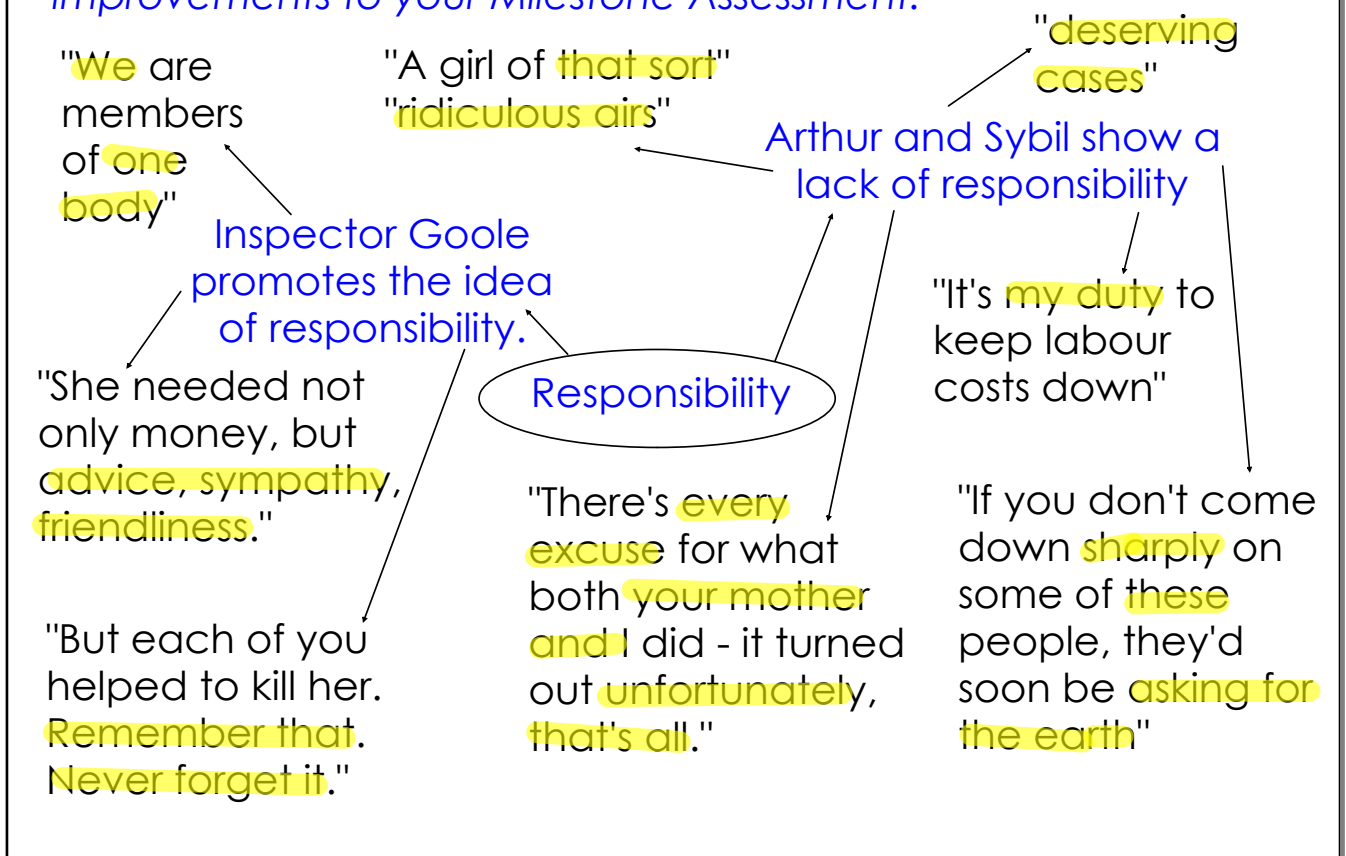
- "Millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths."
- "There are a lot of young women living that sort of existence in every city..."

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Draw the mindmap on the next slide, and annotate each quotation in detail:

1. What **techniques** has Priestley used?
2. What is the **effect** of the techniques?
3. How do the quotations **relate** to Priestley's beliefs or message?

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Did you write an introduction?

Priestley uses the character of Inspector Goole to promote the socialist idea that we need to take responsibility for both our own actions and our attitudes towards others. He contrasts this with the selfish, uncaring, prejudiced Mr and Mrs Birling who don't understand the need to take responsibility for their actions.

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In green pen, choose one quotation that you've annotated and write a PETER paragraph.

Success criteria:

- A point linked to the question (AO1)
- Evidence to support the point (AO1)
- A technical term (AO2)
- A word or phrase explored in detail (AO2)
- Reference to the play's context (AO3)

What is your EBI? Can you meet your target in this paragraph?

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WAGOLL:

Arthur refuses to accept personal responsibility: "There's every excuse for what both your mother and I did - it turned out unfortunately, that's all." Including Sybil here shows his reluctance to accept any individual guilt. In addition, the exaggerated noun phrase "every excuse" shows that he is justifying his actions to avoid accepting responsibility. The callous understatement "unfortunately" and the dismissive phrase "that's all" suggests Arthur has no genuine sympathy for Eva's death, and therefore, he doesn't accept any responsibility for his actions.

