

“Do Now” Work

What is the effect of the ending of 'An Inspector Calls'?
Be able to explain the effect of the ending by referring to Priestley's message.

Task:

- Read the past exam questions for 'An Inspector Calls'.
- Highlight any questions that you don't feel like you could answer: This is what you need to revise.

In Silence Please



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Task:

- What happens at the end of the play?
- Why do you think this happens?
- Who do you think the inspector could be now?

In Silence Please



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Task:

- What happens at the end of the play?
- After the inspector leaves, Gerald returns. The family find out Inspector Goole was not a real police inspector. The family then find out that nobody has died at the infirmary. Finally, the phone rings, and Mr Birling is told a girl has just died from drinking disinfectant, and a police inspector is on his way to the Birlings' house.
- Why do you think this happens?
- The play seems to be starting again because Mr Birling, Mrs Birling and Gerald haven't learnt anything.
- Who do you think the inspector could be now?
- The inspector could be a ghost, a God-like figure, the Birlings' conscience, a time traveller, a socialist, a teacher...

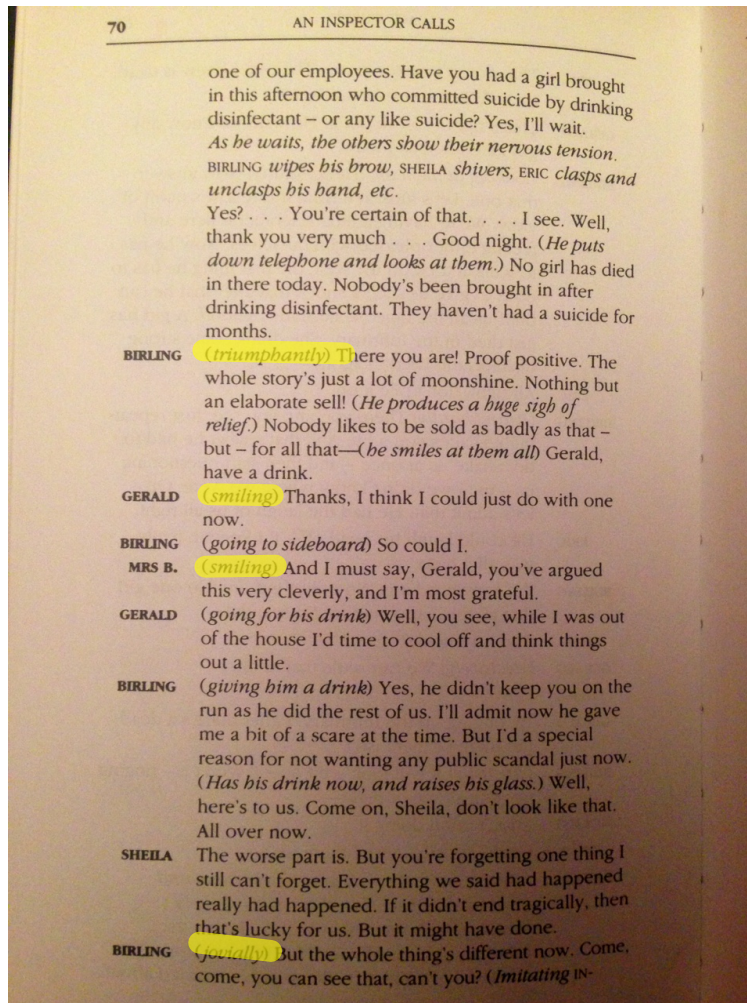
What is the effect of the ending of 'An Inspector Calls'?
Be able to explain the effect of the ending by referring to Priestley's message.



Remind yourself of the ending of the play from 'The telephone rings sharply.....' to '.....the curtain falls'.

How do you respond to this as an ending to *An Inspector Calls* and how does Priestley make you respond as you do by the ways he writes?

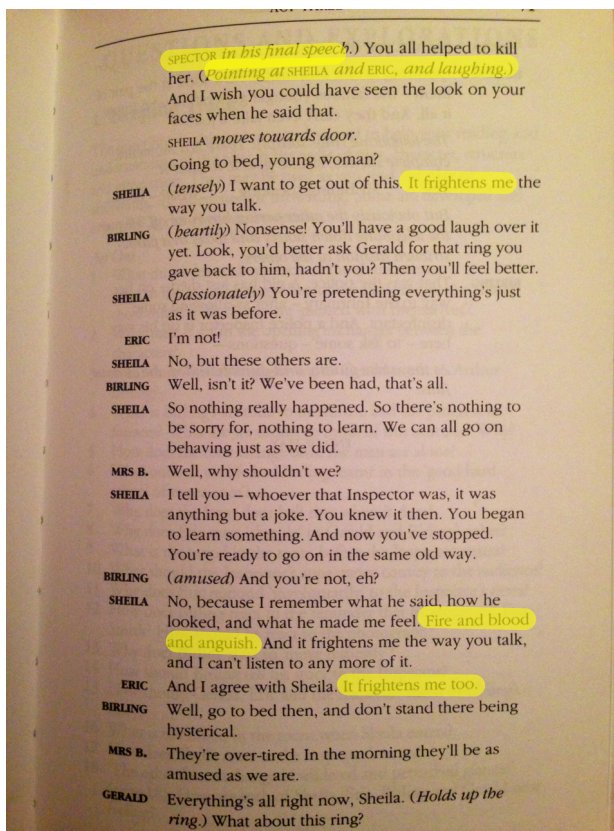
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The stage directions show that Birling, Mrs Birling and Gerald are happy.

They are more concerned about protecting their own reputation than what they did to someone else.

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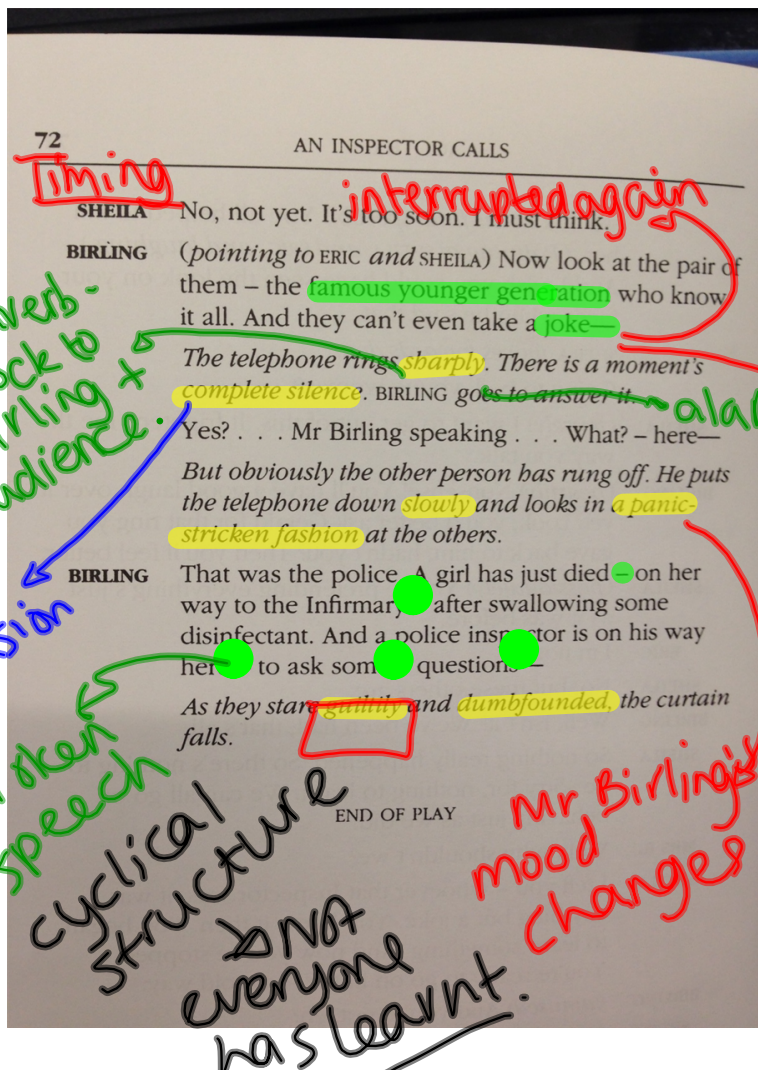


However, Sheila and Eric react differently.

They both say it "frightens" them to see Mr Birling, Mrs Birling and Gerald joking about what happened.

Sheila also repeats Inspector Goole's words: "fire and blood and anguish" to show that she has understood his message.

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The telephone rings "sharply", cutting off Mr Birling. This is similar to the "sharp ring" of the front doorbell on page 10.

Mr Birling is wrong. Birling is talking about the inspector's visit being a joke when the telephone rings.

Priestley again cuts off Mr Birling's speech to show that he is wrong.

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1. What is the mood like before the final phone call - is it the same for everyone on stage? page 70-72

2. What do the stage directions tell the audience, and what is the effect? p72

3. What is Mr Birling's speech like, and what is the effect? p72

4. How do you interpret the Inspector now?

5. What is the effect of the final phone call on the mood?

6. The play seems to be starting all over again - why might Priestley have done this?

Challenge: Complete this PETER paragraph:

The final phone call in 'An Inspector Calls' is a dramatic moment which heightens the tension in the play.

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What is the effect of the ending of 'An Inspector Calls'?
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The final phone call in 'An Inspector Calls' is a dramatic moment which heightens the tension in the play. The 'telephone rings sharply'. The adverb 'sharply' implies that the sound of the telephone ringing will shock both the audience and the Birling family. In addition, the telephone ringing is followed by a moment of 'complete silence'. This adds to the tension as the audience are left wondering what the call will be about.

The timing of the phone call is important because it cuts off Mr Birling's when he is talking about the inspector's visit being a kind of 'joke'. This is similar to the 'sharp' ring of the doorbell which cuts off Mr Birling's capitalist speech at the start of the play. The audience may know that Mr Birling is interrupted when, in J. B. Priestley's opinion, he is wrong.

