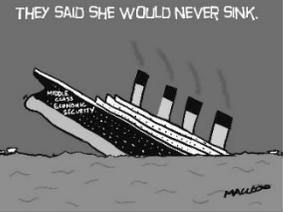
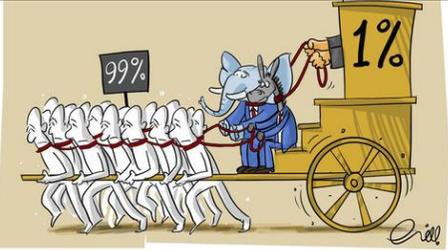


## 'An Inspector Calls' Knowledge Organiser

| <u>PLOT SUMMARY</u>   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>A<br/>C<br/>T<br/>1</b>  | 1. The Birlings are celebrating the recent engagement of daughter Sheila Birling to aristocratic Gerald Croft.   |
|   | 2. Mr Birling gives a number of pompous, capitalist speeches in which dramatic irony is used to highlight his idiocy.  |
|   | 3. Mr Birling is interrupted when Edna (the maid) announces the arrival of the Inspector.  |
|   | 4. Mr Birling attempts to intimidate the Inspector with his status and reputation but the Inspector is unaffected and interrogates Mr Birling.   |
|   | 5. The audience hear that Mr Birling fired Eva Smith when she led the strikes at his factory for a fairer pay. She refused to accept a pay rise just for her and insisted it needed to be for all so "she had to go".  |
|   | 6. The Inspector next interrogates Sheila Birling, who admits to having the girl fired from Millwards clothes shop because she was jealous of her appearance. Sheila is upset and feels guilty for her treatment of Eva Smith.   |
|   | 7. The Inspector turns his attention to Gerald Croft and when left alone, Sheila questions where her new fiancé really was last summer.  |
| <b>A<br/>C<br/>T<br/>2</b>  | 8. We hear Gerald recount how he saved Eva Smith (who went by new name of Daisy Renton) from a rather forceful Alderman Meggarty in the Palace Bar last summer. He then put her up at a friend's apartment and had an affair with her. Although Daisy fell in love with him, he admits that he did not feel the same way and the affair broke off.   |
|   | 9. Despite respecting his honesty, Sheila gives Gerald his engagement ring back and calls off the union.   |
|   | 10. The Inspector recounts that Eva/Daisy went to clear her head by the sea for a couple of months after Gerald calls off the relationship. He then turns his attention to Mrs Birling.  |
| <b>A<br/>C<br/>T<br/>3</b>  | 11. The Inspector interrogates a defensive Mrs Birling who was on the Board for the Brumley Women's Charity Organisation. She reluctantly shares how she was approached by a woman in need two weeks earlier who went by the name of 'Mrs Birling'. Mrs Birling defends her decision in turning the pregnant woman away for her "impertinence" and places all blame and responsibility on the father of the child. Sheila begs her mother to stop talking. |
|   | 12. Eric admits that he met Daisy when he was very drunk and pressured her into sleeping with her. When he found out she was pregnant, he stole money from his father's business but she refused to take the stolen money. Eric feels dreadful for his treatment of Daisy.   |
|   | 13. Eric finds out that his mother turned Daisy away and is angered that she was partially responsible for the death of his unborn child.  |
|   | 14. The family argue amongst themselves. The Inspector interrupts to give one final speech in which he warns the consequences of not being responsible for others.   |
|   | 15. Gerald returns and after meeting a police inspector, questions the validity of Inspector Goole. After ringing the infirmary, he confirms that no girl of a fitting description had been admitted. Mr and Mrs Birling are overjoyed whilst Sheila and Eric are disgusted that their parents have learned nothing.   |
| 16. The phone rings and Mr Birling relays the message that a girl has just died after drinking disinfectant and a police officer is on their way to ask the family some questions. The curtain falls and the play ends. |  |

| <u>THEMES</u>   |
|---|
| <b>A) Class</b>   |
| The play is set in 1912 so Priestley can remind the 1946 audience what pre-war society was like and warn them to not revert back to the capitalist, selfish society that once ruled. In 1912, the working class were silenced by unfair restrictions and laws that meant they were dependent on the few upper class businessmen who ruled for their own profit. Eva/Daisy therefore represents the "millions and millions" of working class who were exploited in this version of society and acts as a warning to not revert back to this way of life.   |
| <b>B) Social responsibility</b>   |
| In 1942, Priestley helped to set up a new political party, the Common Wealth Party, which later transformed into the Labour party. He was increasingly concerned about the consequences of social inequality and called for greater democracy and public ownership of land so people were more driven to support each other.  |
| <b>C) Age</b>   |
| Sheila and Eric would have been more relatable to the 1946 audience thus their transformation from capitalists to socialists is a way for Priestley to appeal to the upper class members of the audience who could afford a ticket to the theatre when rationing was still enforced. Eric would have resembled the few young men who survived the war and Sheila a modern feminist with the right to vote. On the other hand, Mr and Mrs Birling become villainous characters to the audience as they are unable to change their fixed mindsets and ways of thinking. Priestley encourages the audience to parallel themselves with the younger generation. |
| <b>D) Gender</b>  |
| At the exposition of the play, Sheila and Mrs Birling are excused from the room whilst the men talk about business and politics. We then hear of a working class woman who is exploited and ruined. Women are presented as the weaker sex, as they were through history but Priestley has the Inspector empower Sheila and she becomes the wisest member of the family by the denouement of the play, reflecting the empowerment of women as a result of the franchise and the role they played during WW2.   |

## 'An Inspector Calls' Knowledge Organiser

| Picture   | Quotation   | Explanation  | Picture   | Quotation  | Explanation  |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|
|     | 1) "I speak as a <b>hard-headed businessman</b> " (Mr Birling, Act 1)   | Mr Birling symbolises the outdated capitalists who ruled society before the two world wars. Their arrogant and selfish views that focused on profit over welfare would not fit in post-war Britain where communities had to support each other.                            |    | 6) "Girls of that class." (Mrs Birling, Act 2)   | Mrs Birling presents stereotypical and snobbish views on women of the working class, who she believes are inferior and have lesser morals than those with more money. She uses this to excuse her treatment of Eva/Daisy.  |
|     | 2) "You're <b>squiffy</b> " (Sheila to Eric, Act 1)   | Eric's drinking problems foreshadow that he has something he feels guilty about and is trying to hide. It also hints that he is not happy in his greedy capitalist family.   |    | 7) "She was very <b>pretty – soft brown hair and big dark eyes.</b> " (Gerald, Act 2)                | Priestley has Gerald use adjectives that describe Eva as innocent and vulnerable, therefore making actions that led to her demise more atrocious as the audience feel protective of her.   |
|     | 3) "If you don't <b>come down hard on these people they'll soon be asking for the earth!</b> " (Mr Birling to Inspector Goole, Act 1) | Mr Birling's exclamatory and hyperbolic sentence shows his anger at having to defend his actions to the Inspector. His business mindset shows no compassion for his workers and reveals his desperation to keep "lower costs, higher prices" in order to maximise profits. |   | 8) " <b>We are members of one body. We are</b> responsible for each other." (Inspector Goole, Act 3) | The repetition of the collective pronoun used by the Inspector makes the audience feel he is including them. The metaphor implies that if one part of the body/society is not looked after and becomes broken, the rest of the body/society cannot function fully.                 |
|  | 4) " <b>Unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable</b> " (Mr Birling, Act 1)   | Priestley uses repetition in this example of dramatic irony from the capitalist speech to present Mr Birling's capitalist ideas as idiotic and flawed.   |  | 9) "Look Inspector, I'd <b>give thousands...</b> " (Mr Birling to Inspector Goole, Act 3)            | Panicked that his family's reputation could be ruined by the revealed scandals, Mr Birling thinks he can buy the Inspector's silence. However, escaping social responsibility cannot be bought.  |
|   | 5) "But they're not <b>cheap labour</b> , they're people." (Sheila, Act 1)  | Sheila's transformation begins as the Inspector makes her realise her actions at Millwards had consequences and she feels guilty for her role. Sheila defends working class women and highlights that they are as human as the upper class.                                |  | 10) " <b>Everything's alright</b> now Sheila" (Gerald, Act 3)  | Gerald's attempt to return to how things were before the truth was revealed shows he has learnt nothing about social responsibility and remains unchanged. Sheila's refusal to accept the engagement ring reveals she has become a modern socialist woman with a voice of her own. |



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