**2B: An Inspector Calls**

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| You should analyse the extract linked to the whole text making sure you focus on the way language, structure and context create meaning (40 marks)  **This task covers: AO1 & AO2 & AO3**  Focus on task, subject terminology, analysis, quotes, use of language, structure and form in reference to the extract, links should also be made to the way context is important |

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| **AO1: Literature Reading skills – understanding/knowledge & evidence** | |
| Banding | **Criteria** |
| HIGHEST  (Band 5) | * sustain focus on the task, including overview, convey ideas with consistent coherence and use an appropriate register; * use a sensitive and evaluative approach to the task and analyse the extract and wider text critically; * show a perceptive understanding of the extract and wider text, engaging fully, perhaps with some originality in their personal response; * their responses include pertinent, direct references from across the extract and wider text, including quotations. |

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| **AO2: Literature Reading Skills - Analysis** | |
| Banding | **Criteria** |
| HIGHEST  (Band 5) | * analyse and appreciate writers’ use of language, form and structure; * make assured reference to meanings and effects exploring and evaluating the way meaning and ideas are conveyed through language structure and form; * use precise subject terminology in an appropriate context. |

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| **AO3: Literature Reading Skills - Context** | |
| Banding | **Criteria** |
| HIGHEST (Band 5) | * show an assured understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written, including, where relevant, those of period, location, social structures and literary contexts such as genre, and the contexts in which texts are engaged with by different audiences. |

A guide to 4 things you could talk about for each CHARACTER

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| Arthur Birling | * What he’s like at the beginning and the description we are given of him * His reaction to Inspector Goole * How he treats other characters – Eva, Sheila, Eric, Gerald, Mrs Birling * Have the events of the play affected him in any way? |
| Mrs Birling | * What she is like at the beginning of the play, what impression are we given of her? * How she treated Eva when she asked for help * What she inadvertently says about her own son * Have the events of the play changed her? |
| Shelia Birling | * How she is described at the start of the play – her engagement to Gerald and how this will impact her family * How she treated Eva and her reaction at the news of her death * How she feels at the end of the play about her family, Gerald and her own part in Eva’s death * Sheila as a representative for the younger generation |
| Eric Birling | * How he behaves at the start of the play and his interactions with the family at dinner * How he reacts to his own part in Eva’s death * How he feels about his family after all of the revelations * Eric as a representative for the younger generation |
| Gerald Croft | * What he’s like at the start of the play during the celebration dinner * His part in Eva’s death * How feels about responsibility, guilt and love * Gerald as a representative of the higher classes |
| Inspector Goole | * His approach to his investigation – how he questions each character and forces them to admit their parts in Eva’s death * His reactions and comments on the other characters * What he represents in the novel * His name and what that might mean |

A guide to 4 things you could talk about for each THEME

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| Responsibility | * How each character was responsible for Eva’s death * Who was most responsible? * Which characters admit their responsibility and feel guilt * Ideas about collective responsibility – should we all be responsible for each other? |
| Social Class | * What was J.B Priestly suggesting about social class? * How is the working class represented? * How is the higher class represented? * The play as a moral message on society’s wrongs |
| Family | * The way the characters interact during the celebration dinner * Mrs Birling’s treatment of Gerald Croft and what the engagement will mean for himself * Mr and Mrs Birling’s treatment of Eric * Eric’s role in the family business and how this might have caused his downfall |

**LITERATURE An Inspector Calls Extract 1**

INSPECTOR: You’re not even sorry now, when you know what happened to the girl?  
MRS BIRLING: I’m sorry she should have come to such a horrible end. But I accept no blame for it at all.  
INSPECTOR: Who is to blame then?  
MRS BIRLING: First, the girl herself.  
SHEILA [bitterly]: For letting Father and me have her chucked out of her jobs!  
MRS BIRLING: Secondly, I blame the young man who was the father of the child she was going to have. If, as she said, he didn’t belong to her class, and was some drunken young idler, then that’s all the more reason he shouldn’t escape. He should be made an example of. If the girl’s death is due to anybody, then it’s due to him.  
INSPECTOR: And if her story is true — that he was stealing money —  
MRS BIRLING [rather agitated now]: There’s no point in assuming that —   
INSPECTOR: But suppose we do, what then?  
MRS BIRLING: Then he’d be entirely responsible — because the girl wouldn’t have come to us, and have been refused assistance, if it hadn’t been for him —  
INSPECTOR: So he’s the chief culprit anyhow.  
MRS BIRLING: Certainly. And he ought to be dealt with very severely —  
SHEILA [with sudden alarm]: Mother — stop — stop!  
BIRLING: Be quiet, Sheila!  
SHEILA: But don’t you see —–  
MRS BIRLING [severely]: You’re behaving like an hysterical child tonight. [SHEILA begins crying quietly. MRS BIRLING turns to INSPECTOR.] And if you’d take steps to find this young man and then make sure that he’s compelled to confess in public his responsibility — instead of staying here asking quite unnecessary questions — then you really would be doing your duty.  
INSPECTOR [grimly]: Don’t worry, Mrs Birling. I shall do my duty. [He looks at his watch.]  
  
J. B. Priestley, An Inspector Calls and Other Plays (Penguin Books, 1969)

**You should use the extract above and your knowledge of the whole novel to answer this question.**

Write about responsibility in the play and the way J B Priestley presents this throughout.

In your response you should:

 refer to the extract and the play as a whole;

 show your understanding of characters and events in the novel;

 refer to the contexts of the novel. [40]

**LITERATURE An Inspector Calls Extract 2**

*Eric goes for a whiskey. His whole manner of handing the decanter and then the drink shows his familiarity with quick heavy drinking. The others watch him narrowly.*

BIRLING*: (Bitterly)* I understand a lot of things now I didn’t understand before.

INSPECTOR: Don’t start on that. I want to get on. (*To Eric*) When did you first meet this girl?

ERIC: One night last November.

INSPECTOR: Where did you meet her?

ERIC: In the Palace bar. I’d been there an hour or so with two or three chaps. I was a bit squiffy.

INSPECTOR: What happened then?

ERIC: I began talking to her, and I stood her a few drinks. I was rather far gone by the time we had to go.

INSPECTOR: Was she drunk too?

ERIC: She told me afterwards that she was a bit, chiefly because she’d not had much to eat that day.

INSPECTOR: Why had she gone there-?

ERIC: She wasn’t the usual sort. But – well, I suppose she didn’t know what to do. There was some woman who wanted her to go there. I never quite understood about that.

INSPECTOR: You went with her to her lodging that night?

ERIC: Yes, I insisted – it seems. I’m not very clear about it, but afterwards she told me she didn’t want me to go in but that - well, I was in that state when a chap easily turns nasty – and I threatened to make a row.

INSPECTOR: So she let you in?

ERIC: Yes. And that’s when it happened. And I didn’t even remember – that’s the hellish thing. Oh – my God! – how stupid it all is!

MRS BIRLING: (*with a cry*) Oh – Eric – how could you?

BIRLING: (*sharply*) Sheila, take your mother along to the drawing room –

SHEILA: (*protesting*) But – I want to –

BIRLING: (*very sharply*) You heard what I said.

**You should use the extract above and your knowledge of the whole play to answer this question.**

Write about Eric and how he changes throughout the play.

In your response you should:

 refer to the extract and the play as a whole;

 show your understanding of characters and events in the novel;

 refer to the contexts of the play. [40]

**LITERATURE An Inspector Calls Extract 3**

SHEILA: The worst part is. But you’re forgetting one thing I still can’t forget. Everything we said happened really happened. If it didn’t end tragically, then that’s lucky for us. But it might have done.

BIRLING: (*Jovially*) But the whole thing’s different now. Come, come, you can see that, can’t you? (*Imitating Inspector in his final speech*) You all helped kill her. (*Pointing at Sheila and Erica, and laughing.*) And I wish you could have seen the look on your faces when he said that.

*Sheila moves towards the door.*

Going to bed, young woman?

SHEILA: (*tensely)* I want to get out of this. It frightens me the way you talk.

BIRLING: (*heartily)*  Nonsense! You’ll have a good laugh over it yet. Look, you better ask Gerald for that ring you gave back to him, hadn’t you? Then you’ll feel better.

SHEILA: (*passionately)* You’re pretending everything’s just as it was before.

ERIC: I’m not!

SHEILA: No, but these others are.

BIRLING: Well, isn’t it? We’ve been had, that’s all.

SHEILA: So nothing really happened. So there’s nothing to be sorry for, nothing to learn. We can all go on behaving just was we did.

MRS BIRLING: Well, why shouldn’t we?

SHEILA: I tell you – whoever the inspector was, it was anything but a joke. You knew it then. You began to learn something. And now you’ve stopped. You’re ready to go on in the same old way.

BIRLING: (*amused*) And you’re not eh?

SHEILA: No, because I remember what he said, how he looked, and what that made me feel. Fire and blood and anguish. And it frightens me the way you talk., and I can’t listen to any more of it.

ERIC: And I agree with Sheila. It frightens me too.

**You should use the extract above and your knowledge of the whole novel to answer this question.**

Write about the way J B Priestley writes about the difference between generations in the play.

In your response you should:

 refer to the extract and the play as a whole;

 show your understanding of mood/atmosphere and events in the play;

 refer to the contexts of the play. [40]

**LITERATURE An Inspector Calls Extract 4**

INSPECTOR: But just remember this. One Eva Smith has gone – but there are 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.

**You should use the extract above and your knowledge of the whole novel to answer this question.**

Write about J B Priestley’s attitude towards social responsibility.

In your response you should:

 refer to the extract and the play as a whole;

 show your understanding of characters and events in the play;

 refer to the contexts of the novel. [40]

**Edwardian England: The Setting for ‘An Inspector Calls’**

For many plays and novels, the historical setting may have little relevance, but Priestley’s characters are so involved with social conditions of the time, and Eva Smith is such a vivid example of the fate of many young women living in poverty then, that some understanding of the historical background of the play is necessary.

**1912: Arthur Birling’s England**

The society of Birling’s England exhibited huge social divisions and distinctions. One historian has observed that ‘*class divisions were never so acutely felt as by the Edwardians’*.

The most *acutely* felt divisions were those of income and wealth, and, as a consequence, of living standards. In fact 87% of the country’s total personal wealth was in the hands of 5% of the population.

Eight million people had to get by on less than 25 shillings a week and as a result were *‘underfed, under-housed and insufficiently clothed… Their growth is stunted, their mental powers are cramped, their health is undermined.’*

‘Look at the people who swarm the streets to see the Lord Mayor’s Show, and where will you see a more pitiable sight? These beef-eating, port-drinking fellows in Piccadilly, exercised, scrubbed, groomed, they are all well enough to be sure; but his other side of the shield is distressing to look at. Poor, stunted, bad complexioned, shabbily dressed, ill-featured are these pork- eating, gin drinking denizens of the East End. Crowds I have seen in America, in Mexico, and in most of the great cities of Europe… nowhere is there such squalor, such pinching poverty, so many undersized, so many plainly and revolting diseased, so much human rottenness as here…’

*(England and the English from an American*

*Point of View, 1909.)*

Working conditions were much harder for most people than today. A typical basic working week was about sixty hours -– that'’ eleven hours a day plus half-day on Saturday. Trade unionism was still in its very early days and workers had very few rights or protection, or control over their working conditions. There were rules and fines in most workplaces for the workers to obey, but few regulations about safety, working conditions and sufficient work breaks.

By and large, a worker was at the mercy of his or her employer.

It was estimated in 1899 that for a family of two adults and three children to survive they needed about 21 shillings a week (£1.05). On average, men working in towns earned just under a pound but in the country 15 shillings (75p) was more common. Women’s wages were, on average, half that of men’s.

**Questions:**

1. What percentage of the country’s wealth did the upper classes have in 1912?
2. How are the 8 million poor people of England described?
3. What were the working conditions in Edwardian England like for the working class?
4. How much did men and women earn per week?

Some background notes to ‘An Inspector Calls’ from BBC in Context   
(read and answer questions once the whole play has been read)

Priestley was a radical writer with a Socialist, idealistic vision of a better world where people took responsibility for each other to create a fair society, where the Eva and John Smiths were looked after properly. During the 1939-1945 war he regularly broadcasted on the radio, not only to keep up morale to win the war but also to try and ensure that life after the war was better that it had been before, that people should this time take notice of the warnings, and create a better world for future generations. The war had offered full employment to help the war effort; it also created equality, as all classes had been evacuated together, as the armed forces had thrown the classes together; and as rationing had made most people equally frugal. There was therefore available in 1945 a vision of a new, Socialist Britain, and a mood for change away from the Conservative government of Winston Churchill, which is why Britain voted in a Labour landslide government in 1945 under Clement Atlee, which was to pioneer many reforms, among them the National Health Service. Priestley summed up these hopes and feelings in a famous broadcast just after the war ‘Journey into Daylight’: ”We lived at last in a community with a normal, common purpose; we had a glimpse then of what life might be if men and women freely dedicated themselves, not to their appetites and their prejudices, their vanities and fears, but to some great common task.”

It was in this mood that Priestley wrote ‘An Inspector Calls’, to an audience hoping to learn from their mistakes. The world of 1912 of the Birlings represented the opposite of what people hoped for in 1945. The question the play asks is ‘Do we return to the Edwardian values of 1912, or do we move forward to create a more equal, fairer world, where people look after each other, and learn from their mistakes?’

Mr Birling represents the misplaced complacency of employers and manufacturers who refused to heed the warnings of starving workers who were going on strike in their millions asking for reasonable living wages. Industries were booming, refusing to pay workers properly and by allowing thousands to be killed in pit explosions or in dangerous factory conditions. There were no unemployment benefits, rights for workers, or health services for the poor, and the workhouse would pick up the destitute if they had not already died of cold. The rich and the poor never met socially in Edwardian England. Writers like H.G. Wells and Bernard Shaw were trying to draw attention to the inequalities, but the middle classes were disinclined to listen.

Women like Sheila were brought up merely to marry well, and had no idea of the world outside their social class. With the rise of the Suffragette movement from 1903, however, middle class women started to be heard and to challenge the conventions. Sheila is the sort of woman who would have joined such a movement, and worked in a factory in the war, having learned her lesson from the Inspector.

Mrs Birling’s charity work only scratched the surface of the problem, and women like her would have been involved in such operations to ease their consciences and to be seen to be doing some good, although they were unlikely to be on the side of any movement for real change in the status quo, or in asking their rich husbands to pay their women workers a reasonable wage.

If women lost their jobs, prostitution was one of the only options left to them with no welfare state to provide for them. Men like Eric and Gerald would mix with these women without ever seeing them as real people, but merely using them for a moment’s pleasure.

“An Inspector Calls’ is therefore an idealistic play. When the Inspector says ‘We don’t live alone’ he is speaking for Priestley, not only in 1945, but also to us now. If we, as individuals, behave better, society will be a better place; if we don’t listen to the warnings, we will be taught the lesson in ‘fire, blood and anguish’. We all have choices. Sheila (and Eric to a lesser extent) are desperate for change, and will behave differently; Gerald could change, but refuses to; the older Birlings have learnt nothing. Priestley looks to the younger generation to create a better world as we move into the next millennium.