2.17 Literature: An Inspector Calls - Character Study in Depth: 1-hour Pack

AQA 8702 · about 60 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Explain how Priestley presents Eric Birling as a character who does not fit comfortably into his own family.

(Total for Question 1 is 8 marks)

2 Explain how Priestley uses the character of Eric Birling to criticise the behaviour of some young men of his class towards women.

(Total for Question 2 is 10 marks)

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3 Explore how Mrs Birling's treatment of Eva Smith's appeal to her charity organisation reveals Priestley's wider message about class and responsibility.

(Total for Question 3 is 10 marks)

4 Explain how Priestley uses the characters of Sheila and Eric together to suggest that the younger generation offers more hope for change than the older generation.

(Total for Question 4 is 10 marks)

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5 Write about how Priestley presents the Inspector as a mysterious and controlling figure across the play as a whole. In your answer, you should refer to the ways Priestley uses language, form and structure, as well as characterisation, to create this impression.

(Total for Question 5 is 20 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.17 Literature: An Inspector Calls - Character Study in Depth: 1-hour Pack

Question 1

Level 4 Clear, well-supported explanation: analyses more than one way Eric's discomfort within his family is presented, with well-chosen textual reference. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear explanation: explains at least one clear method with relevant textual reference. **5-6**

Level 2 Some explanation: identifies a relevant point about Eric with some textual reference. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, limited explanation: makes a simple or general comment on Eric with little development. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- his awkward, nervous manner at the start of the play, contrasting sharply with his father's confidence
- his drinking, which other characters notice and comment on before its cause is fully explained
- his willingness to challenge his father's treatment of the workers, unlike the rest of the family at first
- his open honesty and guilt once his part in Eva Smith's story is revealed, contrasting with his parents' denial
- his isolation from his mother in particular once she realises her own refusal to help was connected to her son

Question 2

Level 4 Convincing, well-structured explanation: analyses how Eric's characterisation criticises male privilege, with judicious textual reference and clear understanding of context. **9-10**

Level 3 Clear explanation: explains at least two relevant points with relevant textual reference. **6-8**

Level 2 Some explanation: identifies one relevant point with some textual reference. **3-5**

Level 1 Simple, limited explanation: makes a simple, undeveloped point with little textual reference. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- Eric's drinking is linked to the pressure and unearned privilege he feels within his social position
- his initial encounter with Eva Smith begins because he will not leave her alone and later takes advantage of her while drunk
- he uses his position to give her stolen money rather than offering genuine, honest support
- his shame and inability to explain his own actions clearly contrast with his father's outright denial of wrongdoing
- Priestley uses Eric's honesty by the play's end to suggest some hope that younger men of his class might behave differently, despite his earlier conduct

Question 3

Level 4 Convincing, well-structured exploration: analyses how this scene reveals Priestley's wider message, with judicious textual reference and clear understanding of context. **9-10**

Level 3 Clear exploration: explains at least two relevant points with relevant textual reference. **6-8**

Level 2 Some exploration: identifies one relevant point with some textual reference. **3-5**

Level 1 Simple, limited exploration: makes a simple, undeveloped point with little textual reference. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- Mrs Birling judges Eva's case on her manner and her use of a false name, rather than on her genuine need
- she refuses help partly because she believes Eva is presuming above her station simply by asking
- she insists the father of Eva's child should be made an example of, without realising this is her own son
- her continued refusal to accept responsibility, even once the truth is revealed, shows a lack of the change Priestley hopes for
- the scene links private charity and personal prejudice to Priestley's broader argument about how society treats its poorest members

Question 4

Level 4 Convincing, well-structured explanation: analyses how Sheila and Eric together suggest generational hope, with judicious textual reference and confident subject terminology. **9-10**

Level 3 Clear explanation: explains at least two relevant points with relevant textual reference. **6-8**

Level 2 Some explanation: identifies one relevant point with some textual reference. **3-5**

Level 1 Simple, limited explanation: makes a simple, undeveloped point with little textual reference. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- both Sheila and Eric accept responsibility for their part in Eva Smith's story relatively quickly, compared with their parents
- both continue to feel guilt and distress throughout the final act, rather than trying to move past the evening's events
- both attempt, at different points, to stop their parents and Gerald from simply dismissing the Inspector's message
- their reactions are placed in direct contrast with Mr and Mrs Birling's relief once they believe the Inspector may not have been genuine
- this generational contrast supports Priestley's argument that social attitudes can change over time, even if the older generation resists

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Question 5

Level 4 Convincing, well-structured response: sustained, perceptive analysis of the Inspector's mystery and control across the whole play, with judicious quotation and confident subject terminology; contextual understanding integrated fully into the argument.	**16-20**
Level 3 Clear, relevant response: explains how the Inspector's mystery and control are presented through several methods, with relevant quotation and a clear contextual point.	**11-15**
Level 2 Some, generic response: identifies relevant moments relating to the Inspector with some quotation; makes a generic or partly relevant contextual comment.	**6-10**
Level 1 Simple, limited response: makes a simple, undeveloped point with little or no quotation; little or no contextual comment.	**1-5**

Indicative content:

- his sudden, unexplained arrival immediately after Mr Birling's confident speech dismissing collective responsibility creates an unsettling contrast that structures the rest of the play
- his ambiguous name (suggesting 'ghoul') hints at something beyond an ordinary police officer, without ever confirming or denying a supernatural explanation
- his method of questioning one character at a time, at his own pace, and refusing to be rushed, keeps control of the interrogation firmly with him rather than the family
- his apparent prior knowledge of facts before he asks about them suggests an authority beyond what an ordinary investigating officer would have
- his refusal to be intimidated by Mr Birling's wealth, status or threats presents him as answerable to a different, higher kind of authority
- his closing speech, warning of dire consequences if society does not learn the lesson of collective responsibility, functions as Priestley's own political mouthpiece rather than simply the words of an investigating officer
- the play's ending, leaving his true identity unresolved and immediately followed by news of a real death and a real inspector on the way, sustains his mystery right up to the final curtain
- Priestley, writing shortly after the Second World War but setting the play in 1912, uses the Inspector's control and unresolved mystery to press a contemporary post-war audience towards accepting a message of shared responsibility

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