2.11 Literature: An Inspector Calls (J.B. Priestley): 30-minute Pack

AQA 8702 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Explain how Priestley uses the character of the Inspector to challenge Mr Birling's view of responsibility.

(Total for Question 1 is 6 marks)

2 Explain how Priestley presents Mrs Birling as an unsympathetic character.

(Total for Question 2 is 8 marks)

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3 Write about how Priestley presents ideas about responsibility in the play.

(Total for Question 3 is 12 marks)

4 Analyse how Priestley uses stage directions to create atmosphere and meaning at key moments in the play.

(Total for Question 4 is 8 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.11 Literature: An Inspector Calls (J.B. Priestley): 30-minute Pack

Question 1

Level 3 Clear, relevant explanation: analyses how the Inspector's calm, controlled questioning and refusal to be intimidated undermine Mr Birling's authority, with clear reference to the text. **5-6**

Level 2 Some explanation: identifies a relevant method the Inspector uses with a generally appropriate comment, with some textual reference. **3-4**

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

Indicative content:

- the Inspector remains calm and unhurried even when Mr Birling tries to use his social status and business connections to intimidate him, undermining Birling's assumption that authority follows from wealth
- his method of questioning one character fully before moving to the next, refusing to let the family close ranks, structurally prevents Mr Birling from controlling the interview as he controls his household
- the Inspector directly states the idea that everyone bears some responsibility for one another, opposing Birling's belief that a man should only look after himself and his own family
- by revealing that Birling's own decision (sacking Eva Smith for asking for higher wages) began the chain of events, the Inspector demonstrates that Birling's practical business decisions have real moral consequences, contradicting Birling's dismissal of such concerns as sentimental

Question 2

Level 4 Clear, well-supported explanation: analyses specific methods (her refusal of responsibility, her cold judgement of Eva, the dramatic irony of her final revelation) with well-chosen textual reference. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear explanation: explains at least two relevant methods with relevant textual reference. **5-6**

Level 2 Some explanation: identifies one relevant method with some textual reference. **3-4**

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

Indicative content:

- Mrs Birling refuses to accept any responsibility for her actions throughout the interview, presenting her as rigid and unwilling to examine her own conduct even when questioned directly
- her cold, moralising judgement of the pregnant young woman who came to her charity committee for help, blaming the girl rather than the men involved, presents her as harsh and hypocritical
- the dramatic irony of her confidently condemning 'the girl's' unnamed lover as the person truly responsible, not realising she is describing her own son, makes her judgemental attitude appear especially misguided to the audience
- even at the play's end, when other characters have begun to change, Mrs Birling remains committed to denying wrongdoing, presenting her as the character least willing or able to learn from the evening's events

Question 3

Level 4 Convincing, well-structured response: sustained analysis of how responsibility is presented through several characters/methods across the whole play, with judicious quotation and confident subject terminology. **10-12**

Level 3 Clear response: explains how responsibility is presented through at least two characters/methods, with relevant quotation. **7-9**

Level 2 Some response: identifies relevant moments relating to responsibility with some supporting quotation. **4-6**

Level 1 Simple, limited response: makes a simple, undeveloped point about responsibility with little or no quotation. **1-3**

Indicative content:

- the Inspector's central message directly opposes individual, self-interested responsibility with a collective idea that everyone's actions affect others, and this message frames the whole play's structure
- the older generation (Mr and Mrs Birling) consistently deny personal responsibility, minimising their own roles and insisting the matter is now closed once the Inspector leaves
- the younger generation (Sheila and Eric) accept responsibility more fully, showing genuine guilt and a willingness to change their future behaviour as a result
- the cyclical structure, ending with a phone call announcing a real inspector and a real death, punishes the family's refusal to learn by suggesting the consequences of ignoring responsibility will return
- Priestley, writing shortly after the Second World War, uses the play to argue for a more socially responsible, collective future, making responsibility as much a political as a personal theme

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Question 4

Level 4 Convincing, well-supported analysis: analyses more than one use of stage directions (lighting, setting, sound, the doorbell) and their combined effect on meaning, with precise reference and subject terminology.	**7-8**
Level 3 Clear analysis: explains how at least one significant stage direction creates atmosphere or meaning, with relevant reference.	**5-6**
Level 2 Some analysis: identifies a relevant stage direction with a generally appropriate comment.	**3-4**
Level 1 Simple, limited analysis: makes a simple or general comment on staging with little development.	**1-2**

Indicative content:

- the initial description of the lighting as warm and comfortable, before turning brighter and harder once the Inspector arrives, signals a shift from the family's self-satisfied private world to a more exposed, interrogated one
- the single, unchanging dining-room setting across the whole play creates a sense of confinement, forcing the family to face the consequences of their actions without any change of scene to escape into
- the sharp ring of the front doorbell at the Inspector's arrival, answered by the sharp ring of the telephone in the play's closing moments, is used structurally to signal that the family's ordeal may not yet be over, building a cyclical sense of dread
- the timing of the play as continuous, real-time action across the stage directions reinforces the sense that the family cannot pause or delay the moral reckoning the Inspector brings

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