2.11 Literature: An Inspector Calls (J.B. Priestley): Test Pack

AQA 8702 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 List four facts we learn about Arthur Birling's business and social position at the start of the play.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 Explain how Priestley presents ideas about social class through the character of Mr Birling.

(Total for Question 2 is 8 marks)

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3 Analyse how Priestley presents the change in Eric Birling's character across the course of the play.

(Total for Question 3 is 10 marks)

4 Write about how Priestley presents ideas about gender in the play, and comment on the significance of women's limited social position in 1912.

(Total for Question 4 is 15 marks)

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

Question 1

he is a wealthy factory owner/manufacturer (oe)	**B1**
he hopes to be knighted / is expecting an honour	**B1**
his daughter Sheila is engaged to Gerald Croft, whose family owns a rival, higher-status firm	**B1**
any other valid fact, e.g. he was once Lord Mayor / he sees himself as a hard-headed practical man of business / he dismisses talk of workers' rights	**B1**

Answer: Any four of: he owns a factory/works in manufacturing; he is hoping for a knighthood; his daughter's engagement to Gerald links his family to a higher-status rival firm; he was previously Lord Mayor; he prides himself on being practical and businesslike; he dismisses ideas about collective responsibility for workers.

Question 2

Level 4 Clear, well-supported explanation: analyses how Birling's speech and actions present the attitudes of the wealthy business class in 1912, with well-chosen textual reference and clear understanding of context.	**7-8**
Level 3 Clear explanation: explains how Birling's views reflect class attitudes, with relevant textual reference and some understanding of context.	**5-6**
Level 2 Some explanation: identifies a relevant point about Birling's class attitudes with some textual reference.	**3-4**
Level 1 Simple, limited explanation: makes a simple or general comment on Birling with little development.	**1-2**

Indicative content:

- Birling's pride in his knighthood prospects and his concern for how a public scandal might damage his reputation shows a class obsessed with appearance and status rather than moral substance
- his dismissive attitude towards his workers, treating a request for fair wages as an inconvenience rather than a legitimate concern, presents the wealthy manufacturing class as detached from the real hardship of those beneath them
- his admiration for Gerald's family firm, which he sees as more socially superior to his own, shows how the play presents class as a hierarchy that even wealthy characters are anxious about climbing
- Priestley, writing in 1945 but setting the play in 1912, uses Birling's confident, dismissive attitudes to let a post-war audience judge the complacency of the pre-war capitalist class with the benefit of hindsight

Question 3

Level 4 Convincing, well-structured analysis: tracks Eric's presentation from his uneasy early behaviour through to his direct challenge of his parents, with judicious textual reference and confident subject terminology.	**9-10**
Level 3 Clear analysis: explains at least two stages of Eric's development with relevant textual reference.	**6-8**
Level 2 Some analysis: identifies a relevant stage of Eric's development with some textual reference.	**3-5**
Level 1 Simple, limited analysis: makes a simple, undeveloped point about Eric with little textual reference.	**1-2**

Indicative content:

- Eric is presented early on as awkward and unsettled, laughing oddly and drinking more than is comfortable, hinting at a hidden guilt before the Inspector's questioning reveals its cause
- as his involvement in Eva's story emerges, Eric is shown to be genuinely distressed by what he has done, distinguishing his guilt from his parents' more defensive reactions
- his open anger at his mother once he learns she turned away the same girl he had wronged, without knowing the connection, marks a decisive break in family loyalty in favour of moral honesty
- by the play's end, Eric joins Sheila in openly criticising his parents for wanting to forget the evening's lessons, presenting him as one of the younger generation who has been genuinely changed by events

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Question 4

Level 4 Convincing, critical response: sustained, perceptive analysis of gender across several characters and methods, with judicious quotation and confident terminology; contextual point about 1912 women's roles integrated fully. **12-15**

Level 3 Clear, relevant response: explains how gender is presented through at least two characters/methods, with relevant quotation and a clear contextual point. **8-11**

Level 2 Some, generic response: identifies relevant moments relating to gender with some quotation; makes a generic or partly relevant contextual comment. **4-7**

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

Indicative content:

- Eva's powerlessness, unable to secure fair pay, protection from an affair, or charitable help once she is judged immoral, shows how few options a working-class woman had to resist mistreatment by men or by other women in power
- Mrs Birling's position on the charity committee, deciding whether Eva deserves help, shows how even women who benefited from the era's limited opportunities could still exercise harsh, unaccountable power over women with less status
- Sheila's growing independence and refusal to be simply reassured or managed by the male characters by the play's end suggests a more assertive model of womanhood emerging in the younger generation
- Gerald and Eric's very different but equally consequence-free treatment of Eva highlights how the era's expectations placed the burden of consequence and judgement disproportionately on women rather than the men involved
- in 1912, married women had very limited independent legal and economic status, and unmarried working women had few protections, meaning the play's female characters have dramatically different degrees of power depending on class as well as gender

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