**De Aston**

**English Department**



**Year 10: An Inspector Calls**

**Academic Excellence Book**

The role of the Academic Excellence Booklet is for you to complete these tasks over the next six weeks. These activities are purposely designed to challenge you, so don’t worry if you find them difficult. You’re meant to! Learning happens when people have to think hard. That being said, your English teacher is a specialist, so ask any of us for help, anytime!

1. ***An Inspector Calls* and Minor Characters**

Priestley emphasises the Birlings’ responsibilities to the wider community by focusing on their treatment of Eva Smith; to gain higher marks, you could also discuss the maid, Edna, and the Birlings’ attitudes towards her. Servants like Enda would work incredibly long hours and would often finish a shift only when their employers released them: note how Mrs Birling asks Edna to ‘wait up’ to make tea for the family.

**How does Priestley make the point that Edna, reflecting a lower class woman, is one of the ‘millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths’?** Use SQuad and refer to the wider play

1. ***An Inspector Calls* and Settings**

The action of the play takes place in a single setting that does not change: The Birlings’ dining room one evening in spring, 1912.

**How does this help to create a claustrophobic mood and reflect on a static society in 1912?**

The lighting is described as ‘pink and intimate’ and soon changes when Inspector Goole arrives.

**How does Priestley infer that the Inspector’s enquiries will be clear sighted and probing?** Use SQuaD

The Birlings’ home is in a fictional north Midlands city, Brumley. The name Brumley has a likeness with Birmingham’s nickname ‘Brum.’ Brumley is also onomatopoeic with a deep engine-like sound, reminding us of the working class industry that Birmingham was once famous for.

**How does Priestley create a sense of irony by placing the play in a manufacturing city?**

1. *An Inspector Calls* **and Feminism**

*An Inspector Calls* was written after World War Two. As many British men went away to fight during the war, their positions in work had to be filled by women. **This helped change existing perceptions.** Men had to acknowledge the fact that women were just as capable as them. As a result of this, many women enjoyed a newfound freedom that working and earning money allowed them.

**Not all men saw this change in attitude as a good thing and stayed stuck in the past.** Priestley explores the impact of these new gender roles through the independence of Eva Smith and the sexist attitudes of Mr Birling.

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| **Theorist**: Simone de **Beauvoir**  | **Key ideas:*** Gender is different from one’s biological sex and is a social construction. **Society expects each gender to behave in a distinct way.**
* Women are oppressed as they are **only valued for their looks** and their societal functions as wives and mothers. This is a restrictive gender role.
* Women are ‘the second sex’ as they are **seen as less powerful and important to men.**
* Society is therefore patriarchal (male dominated).
 | **Key Terminology:** * Androcentrism
* Equality
* Gender role
* Liberation
* Objectification
* Patriarchy
* Power
* Reinforce/Subvert
* Stereotypical
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Critical theorist **Simone de Beauvoir** states that **‘women are seen as less powerful and important to men.’**

**How does Mr Birling evidence this theory?** Use SqUAD

**Beauvoir** also claims that women are ‘**only valued for their looks.’**

 How is this idea presented in *An Inspector Calls?* Use SquAD

‘She was claiming elaborate fine feelings and scruples that were simply absurd in a girl in her position.’

**How does Mrs Birling show that she is just as cruel and old fashioned as men are?** Use SQuAD

Later on in the play, **how does Sheila undermine de Beauvoir’s theories?** Use SQuAD



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