



**Exam**

**Preparation**

**Guide**

***AQA English Lit***

***Modern Drama – An Inspector Calls***

***19th Century Prose – A Sign of Four***

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*Key Tips to Success!*

*Well done on your hard work, efforts + progress. Do your best and good luck!*

**50 mins – An Inspector Calls**

*Choice of 2 questions*

Theme – Suggested plan

-Points linked to this

-How relate to various characters including contrasts

-How link to Inspector

-How link to Eva

ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO SAY – THIS IS YOUR MOMENT!

Character – Suggested plan

-Structure - beginning – how portrayed / values / beliefs/ relationships

- View on symbol of Eva – response to death / treatment in life

-View on role of Inspector – respectful, deferential, dismissive, condensing

-Structure – ending - how portrayed / values / beliefs/ relationships

ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO SAY – THIS IS YOUR MOMENT!

***50 mins = 5 mins plan // 40 mins write // 5 mins check***

 **50 min – A Sign of Four**

1 – Key word in Question – what do you know re this?

Note – points, quotes, key words you want to remember

2- Read extract – highlight quotes linking to this

3 – Get writing!

A – Answer question!

B – Analyse quote – layers of meaning + methods

C – Make your links to other parts of book – connect everything you know!

D – How link / what reveal about Victorian era

(if said once, don’t repeat!)

**An Inspector Calls Key Quotes**

* Crofts and Birling are working together – for lower costs and higher prices.’
	+ ‘hard-headed business man’
	+ ‘a man has to make his own way’
	+ ‘community and all that nonsense’
	+ ‘Why shouldn’t they try for higher prices?’
	+ ‘But these girls aren’t cheap labour – they’re people’
* How horrible! // My God!
* ‘You abused the power you had’.
* ‘If I could help her now, I would’
* ‘I can’t stop thinking about it …. I know I’m to blame – and I’m desperately sorry’.
	+ ‘You mustn’t try to build up a wall between us and that girl’.
	+ ‘You and I aren’t the same people who sat down to dinner here’.
	+ ‘Public men have responsibilities as well as privileges’.
	+ ‘that was one of the things that prejudiced me against her case’.
	+ ‘Mother – I begged you and begged you to stop – ‘
	+ ‘you’re not the kind of father a chap could go to when he’s in trouble’.
	+ ‘You killed her…..damn you, damn you –’
	+ ‘I’m not likely to forget’.
	+ ‘I’d give thousands.’
	+ Just used her ….like an animal, a thing, not even a person’.
	+ ‘One Eva Smith has gone – but there are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths still left with us’.
	+ ‘We don’t live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other’.
	+ ‘If men will not learn that lesson, they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish’.
	+ ‘There’s every excuse for what both your mother and I did’.
	+ ‘I’m ashamed …but you’re all beginning to pretend that nothing much has happened’.
	+ ‘I suppose we’re all nice people now’.
	+ ‘It’s too soon’.

**Key Character Points**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Inspector**  | *Confident* *Powerful* *Purposeful* *Thoughtful* *Authoritative**Influential**Omnipotent – unlimited power**Omniscient – all knowing* *Omnipresent – ever present* |
| **Mrs Birling**  | *Prejudiced* *Judgemental* *Dismissive* *Cold* *Exploitative* *Unsympathetic* *Orthodox / traditional* *Submissive / subservient* *Conceited* |
| **Eric** | *Reckless* *Aggressive* *Deceitful* *Narcissistic* *Exploitative**Privileged* *Naïve* *Regretful* *Reflective* |
| **Sheila**  | *Materialistic* *Infantile* *Naïve* *Oppressed**Remorseful* *Repentant* *Insightful* *Independent**Perceptive* *Enlightened* |
| **Mr Birling**  | *Narcissistic* *Condensing* *Patronising* *Materialistic* *Arrogant* *Patriarchal**Stubborn*  *Avaricious**Exploitative**Domineering* *Overconfident*  |
| **Gerald**  | *Materialistic* *Traditional* *Self assured* *Confident* *Exploitative**Manipulative* *Closed minded*  |
| **Eva**  | *Reliant* *Diligent* *Moral* *Vulnerable* *Desperate**Weak* |
| **Alderman Meggarty**  | *Corrupt* *Exploitative* *Narcissistic* *Misogynistic*  |

**AO2 - Key Methods Overview**

* **Structure – start + end** – who change beliefs?
* **Dramatic Irony** -Mr B = think intelligent – undermined + Mrs B failure recognise E is father
* **Contrasts / foils** – older gen vs younger
* **Juxtaposition** – ordering of interrogations
* **Mirroring** – Sheila + Inspector
* **Role Reversal** – Sheila + Mrs Birling
* **Entrances + exits / presence on stage** – use of leaving stage – contrast Eric + Gerald, use of females off stage – impact on recognition
* **Setting** – single set = closed minded views
* **Lighting –** change from pink + intimate – harsher + brighter – reflect Inspector message
* **Symbols** – engagement ring, alcohol, Eva as lower class – microcosm, Inspector as personification of socialism
* **Repetition –** Mr Birling to convince, Sheila of triplet of apoplectic language, inclusive pronoun ‘we’
* **Foreshadowing** – first Inspector – represent WWI – follow up = WWII

**More Detailed Analysis**

**Order of interrogations – Juxtaposed highlight contrasts**

Mr Birling = older generation + does not take responsibility.

Sheila = younger generation + does take responsibility

Gerald = engaged to Sheila = younger but same values + attitudes of older generation

Mrs Birling = older generation + does not take responsibility

Eric = younger generation + does take responsibility

**Analysis**

Contrast/ juxtaposition between older + younger = show different in their attitudes, values + approach

Gerald in middle – has links to both.

Had potential to change but did not do so – sided with the older generation. Engagement to Sheila is broken

**Entrances + Exits + analysis**

Mr Birling – shares capitalist views – this appears to be what triggers the arrival of the Inspector to convey his socialist message

Mrs Birling and Sheila leave – show the gender divides in society – women move to let men speak after dinner.

Mrs Birling is not present when Inspector arrives = this has an impact on her not fully understanding his message as she never fully engaged in his visit

Her actions when arrives are ‘social’ and ‘smiling’- direct contrast to tension

Exits

Gerald exits as upset – however uses this time to find evidence Inspector NOT exist – shows not taking responsibility

Eric exits as upset – however uses this time to TAKE RESPONSIBILITY – comes back ready to admit

Inspector exits after key speech to allow characters to process this

**Eva never present – shows lack of importance in society**

**Cyclical structure**

Mr Birling opens play – shows male dominance. Straight away shows trying to impress Gerald.

Also closes the play – shows he has not changed.

Return of Inspector – shows some characters did not take the opportunity to change
Reflection of World Wars – show consequences will continue if actions do not change

**Lighting**

Starts ‘pink and intimate’ – shows the celebratory tone and atmosphere and the Birlings are clearly feeling comfortable

As play develops, lighting gets brighter and harsher – shows the Inspector is shedding light on their behaviour and trying to get the characters to see what they have done

**Setting**

The set remains in the Birling house throughout – shows the Birling family have failed to connect with the world outside of their own perception.

Failed to recognise world beyond this and other classes.

**Adheres to three Greek unities**

Time – place takes place over the course of one evening

Action – action takes place continuously as the play develops in time it would take

Place – set remains consistent throughout

**Devices used in Inspector’s closing message**

Repetition of ‘remember’ – enforces what he wants them to do – keep thinking about the message he has given

Repetition of ‘killed’ – emotive language – try to connect with characters

Short sentences – blunt and direct message given

Addresses the characters as individuals

Triplet of ‘millions and millions and millions’ – highlights how many other people the Birlings can still have an impact on

Anaphora (three sentences starting the same) – ‘We’ – re-enforce message

‘We’ = inclusive pronoun – highlights wants community to act together

Uses ‘Eva Smith + John Smith’ as representation of lower class

‘fire and blood and anguish’ – triplet of destructive language – link to World War for the horrific impact of not changing – foreshadowing

**AO3 Context – Edwardian Era**

*Set 1912 – PRIOR to World Wars*

*Written 1945 – AFTER World Wars*

*Audience keen awareness of actions – dramatic irony*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Political Ideologies / mindsets/ beliefs / values** **Capitalism****Socialism**  | *Ideals held* *Profit driven to support own progression – Birling + Croft family* *Belief in equality for all – Inspector, Eva + younger generational conversion*  |
| **Gender**  | *Male dominance, power, influence* *Women expected to be deferential, subservient, supportive* *Women weaker sex – sheltered + protected by males* *Women – certain cohorts gained right vote 1918* *Females portray various stages* *Mrs Birling – represents traditional views of subservience towards husband**Sheila Birling – could be seen to represent the battle for a voice for women and break from male dominance – aligned with suffragette movement views* *Eva Smith – could demonstrate the impact / role class had on female independence – never seen – lack of voice / identity / recognition / role* *Dependent on class placement* *Sheila – more well off / bourgeois- main option for success in life – marry from social class for support* *Eva – lower class expected to work to support financial incomes*  |
| **Hierarchy**  | *Rigid class systems which fixed and dictated roles and behaviour* *Movement limited* *limitations due to strict adherence to hierarchy – link to abuse of power + corruption. Character representation of class systems* |
| **Lack of support / charitable assistance** | *Government laissez faire attitude* *Support through charity / church / family – lack of welfare state* *Strict moral code still imposed within this + hierarchical limitations*  |

**How is the role of the Inspector portrayed within the play?**

Priestley uses the role of the Inspector in an extremely important way in the attempt to hold the Birling family to account for their actions towards Eva/Daisy who is symbolic of the lower class. He acts as Priestley’s voice piece for the emerging socialistic view in the 1940s in comparison to the more traditional capitalistic view represented by the Birling family.

Priestley’s use of the name of the Inspector is extremely important. He is introduced as the Inspector Goole on arrival. Priestley has used a pun of the word **‘ghoul’** on his name to suggest a certain supernatural element to his character. This could be what allows for him omnipresent nature which gives him the foreknowledge of both the fate of Eva/Daisy as well as the information regarding the characters. This also allows Priestley to employ dramatic irony here as our suspicions regarding who the Inspector is are raised much quicker than those of the characters in the play who do not start to question his existence to the end.

The lighting Priestley used throughout the play is also extremely important in conveying the role of the Inspector. Before he arrives we are told the lighting is **‘pink and intimate’** which conveys the naïve nature of the Birling family who are simply celebrating and are unware of how their evening will progress. However, we are told that the light **becomes ‘brighter and harder’** over the course of the play. This is extremely significant for the staging of the play as it fully represents the purpose of the Inspector – he is there to shed light on their actions and to help them see the impact of their behaviour on the lower class. With the absence of Eva Smith due to her death and the lack of reference to his own social status, he could also be seen as a method of giving her the voice which she was denied right the way through her death. The same way as a police inspector tries to maintain justice, we could also see his character as trying to get her and in turn the lower class justice which they have been refused. His role is to make them see the impact of their actions on the class.

However, the reactions to his appearance differ between the characters Priestley created. It is again interesting to note the point in which he first enters – it could be interpreted that Mr Birling’s staunch capitalistic statement **–‘a man has to make his own way’** and derogatory and dismissive view of socialism as **‘nonsense’** could be what triggers his arrival. This again suggests his foreknowledge for such a significantly timed entrance. However, we see the more senior members of the Birling family feel threatened by his natural authority in their house. Both separately try to intimidate him by reminding him of their status in community eg ‘**Lord Mayor, ‘having royalty stay’** and **‘playing golf with the Chief Constable’**. However, the Inspector remains calm and unaware of the manipulation they try to use at this stage, simply answering in a **‘dry’** tone. He shows he does not feel threatened by their role and this displays again his message that we should face the consequences of our behaviour regardless of our acts.

His calmness and control is shown on many occasions through Priestley’s characterisation. He only lets the characters see the photograph one at a time and states he follows **‘one line of enquiry at a time’**. He clearly shows he is in charge and has a clear view of the case. A key phrase which he uses soon after his arrival is **‘a chain of events’** which highlights his belief that all actions have a consequence – regardless of class. This control lasts throughout the play as it is he who chooses the order of the questioning and most importantly by letting Eric have a drink at the start of Act 3. This shows he is clearly overpowering Mr Birling who would have taken great offence at this as his own authority is being challenged in his own house. However, despite this, the Inspector remains focused on the questioning at hand.

This focus on the questioning quickly has had an impact on the younger generation. We have seen that the older generation are more annoyed at someone else showing control in their own house but his arrival also triggers the more independent thoughts of Sheila and Eric. Both are more prepared to show their initial sympathy for her death - **‘How horrible!’** and **‘My God!’** The use of the exclamation mark shows more genuine emotion that the impatience of their Father. They are both more in alignment with the upcoming socialist views of the Inspector by questioning their Father over the firing ‘**Why shouldn’t they try for higher wages’** and **‘these girls aren’t cheap labour – they’re people’**. This shows the immediate and rapid impact the Inspector has had on them.

Priestley conveys that this reaction continues on them as both act to continue his work after his departure. We see he has triggered a clear role reversal in the family with the younger generation now prompting the older generation about their actions and showing their disgust towards them. Sheila had earlier recognised his foreknowledge by warning Gerald that **‘he knows’** about their behaviour and also trying to warn her stubborn mother. However, at the end she even mirrors his own words - **‘fire and blood and anguish’**. She fully appreciates the destruction he alluded which the audience would recognise as a symbol for war and continues to warn them. This shows the long lasting impact of the Inspector even after his departure.

However, Priestley effectively uses the closing words of the Inspector which hold the most impact and demonstrate his message fully. We see him again take control over the growing chaos with a short imperative **‘Stop!’** This is also followed by the short sentences which address various members to conclude what he has taught them. We see the Inspector repeat the emotive term **‘kill’** to really show the characters the impact of their actions as well as the warning **‘remember’**. This is clearly picked up by the younger generation. We see Priestley use this as a key way to convey his own views in the triplet **–‘We do not live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other’.** The repetition of the inclusive pronoun ‘we’ also emphasises the socialist viewpoint of equality and togetherness which was growing in 1940s. Most importantly, as already discussed he alludes to the destruction if this is ignored in the triplet **‘fire and blood and anguish’** which the audience would clearly associate with the war taking place. Most significantly, he uses this as a clear warning. The final twist at the close of the play with the imminent arrival of an Inspector could easily link to the second World War as Priestley’s message that if we do not listen to the words of the Inspector, nothing will change.

Priestley has effectively shown the Inspector is vital in the play. He is one with the ultimate control to reveal the outside world beyond the set of the Birling house which is all they appeared to be aware of. The younger generation take advantage of the knowledge which he brings to try and bring change which shows the deep impact the Inspector has had.

**Although Eva is not is not present in the play, to what extent does she play an important role in the play?**

Priestley significantly shows that Eva Smith does not appear in the play but she is a vital character within it. It is her character which triggers the inspection of the Birling family and she is the symbol for the working class in the play to show their treatment at the hands of those further up the social hierarchy. She may not appear on stage but her presence is felt throughout.

Priestley conveys that she is important because it is her life which has constantly been intertwined with those in the Birling family –even though all of them failed to see the significance of her when they met her. What is important is that all of the characters treated her in a negative way when she was alive but it is only after her death that they become aware of the importance of their actions on her life. In the words of the Inspector, **‘the chain of events’** which connects them. It is the character of the Inspector who is most important to link to Eva as many see him act as an advocate or voice for Eva which she is unable to have in the play. The fact that she is not present and is dead could represent the fact that she is still seen an unimportant by the characters of the Birling family but the presence of the Inspector heightens her own importance by forcing them to see how they treated her.

Priestley demonstrates that the way in which they did treat her is very important in showing her role in the play. She is the direct consequence of most of their actions and also provides a much deeper insight into the rigid class system of Edwardian England of 1912. We see her as part of the labouring class when she worked for Mr Birling – this provides an insight into the workers in factories which allowed the upper middle class to maintain their wealth. Despite clearly being a prominent member of his work force due to the actions which happened, the fact that he doesn’t even recognise her name or photograph instantly conveys his dismissive attitude of the lower class and his workers. Eva is key to show the treatment factory workers faced. We see they were clearly objectified and not given many rights which is what led to the strike. The strike is a key event in understanding the importance of Eva – despite the fact women were not given the right to vote until 1918 and 1928 if between 21-30, she clearly demonstrates someone who is fighting for equal rights. The fact she was a vocal member of the strike also demonstrates socialist values and mindset – in a direct contrast to her employer Mr Birling. We see her moral qualities here as she was prepared to lose money to make a key point and had to sacrifice her only form of employment in doing so.

This shows her importance as she was advocating for individual rights in contrast with how she was seen by Mr Birling.

The next way she proves an important character is in how she can be contrasted with Sheila. Both women were similar in age but the key defining separation is their place in the class system. Priestley creates a foil between them by showing several likenesses in their characters but the point in their lives is very different. Sheila does later recognise the irony of her drinking champagne to celebrate the start of what would have been an exciting new start in her life. However, Eva has been reduced to drinking disinfectant in order to try and end her life. The fact both frequented Milwards creates another parallel but also serves the differences – for Sheila this is part of her life of leisure but Eva recognises her luck in gaining employment there. A small moment of Sheila’s bad mood has dire consequences for Eva – Sheila gets to go home and continue her life but this is a defining moment for Eva as she has now lost two jobs and is unlikely to get another. Sheila is delighted by the **‘beauty’** of her engagement ring and is warned by her mother she will have to accept her husband to be working long hours. She is caught up in the materialistic lifestyle which will continue having secured a husband. Eva, however, is simply used by Gerald and Eric for a sexual relationship which she is aware has no real future or prospects. Their lives are very different due to the class system.

It is extremely important how Priestley shows the way in which men respond to her is also very different and this is again another reason why her role in the play is key. We have seen the comfortable life Sheila lives due to her family background however this is very different for Eva. Men treat her very differently. We see that the other characters are constantly trying to protect Sheila from hearing **‘unpleasant news’** and telling her to go to bed. However, this protection is rarely shown to Eva. We do see Gerald ‘rescue’ her from Aldermand Meggarty but again this was more a way for him to feel he was doing a good deed and the impact on him. The location of the Palace Stalls Bar suggests her position of the vagrant class and her association with prostitutes is made through this. We see both Gerald and Eric have a relationship with her which shows the male dominance in this – particularly in Eric’s as he recognised he was in the state where he could have **‘turned nasty’**. Both dispose of her and end the relationship when it is no longer convenient to them – hence why some critics associate the name selected as ‘Renton’ to show their short term use of her. Unlike Sheila, all know that the class system would not allow a more serious relationship to develop. The role of Eva/ Daisy highlights the differences of how men viewed women in different class systems.

Finally, the role of Daisy is used to show the judgemental nature many of the higher class held against them. The fact she changed her name straight away highlights she knew she would be judged and her attempts to create a different life for herself despite her limited means. However, when her fortunes did not improve, we can clearly see the impact of a society which lacked a Welfare State. People would have been expected to be more reliant on their families or charitable organisations. As Daisy’s parents were dead, she was reliant on a charity but ironically the **‘prominent’** member is Mrs Birling. This would have been a way in which she maintained her reputation in the community through her association with this. It would have been viewed in a very negative way for Daisy to be having a child outside of marriage which is why we see her use a married name in order to gain more support. However, by using the name Mrs Birling, we see the judgemental nature of Sybil who was then **‘prejudiced’** against the case. Despite what Sheila had warned, Mrs Birling believed there was a **‘wall’** between them and did not like the association between them. Her distaste had already been evident and she again refers to her as ‘girls of that class’. Her dismissive attitude is evident here and ironically believes her class position had a direct correlation with her morals – she doesn’t recognise the lack of morals in her own family. Despite knowing the outcome, Mrs Birling never feels any guilt or shame for how she treated Daisy and in fact her own grandchild. The role of Daisy shows the biased, prejudiced and judgemental attitude of the upper class.

Priestley’s effective use of the role of Eva/ Daisy is key. The news of her death does trigger a change in the personalities of Eric and Sheila who appreciate the message of the Inspector that although **‘one Eva Smith has gone, there are millions and millions and millions of Eva and John Smiths’**. The triplet heightens how many other people their actions have consequences on and they have responsibility for. Although Mr and Mrs Birling fail to recognise the importance of Eva in their lives, the returning Inspector shows that the role of Eva is not about to be forgotten. She plays a key role despite not appearing in the play.

**To what extent does the character of Mrs Birling change throughout the play?**

Within the play, Priestley successfully shows we do not see a change in her character as it develops. The audience recognise that the visit of the Inspector has no impact on her and despite his message she fails to take responsibility for her actions in relation to Daisy Renton or the lower class as a whole.

We first see how Mrs Birling reacts at the beginning of the play through Priestley’s structure. The opening stage directions describe her as **‘cold’** which demonstrates how she reacts throughout. The fact she is described as her husband’s **‘social superior’** gives an immediate insight into her place in the social hierarchy and this is reflected from the beginning. We see she is very conscious of how she is expected to act and criticises her husband for thanking the cook. More importantly, we see how she almost excuses Gerald for not seeing her daughter more – **‘you’ll realise that men with important work sometimes have to spend time on their businesses’.** This indicates she has also accepted Mr Birling’s work and recognises this as a key part of the social order which she adheres to which is also seen when she follows the tradition of leaving the men after the dinner. We see that the traditions of her class are deeply embedded as she continues these without question.

Priestley shows that her place in society indicates the high moral expectations which she enforces on those around her. We firstly saw this in Act 1 when Eric and Sheila are squabbling and she shows her distaste when Sheila calls Eric **‘squiffy’.** She responds with **‘the things you girls pick up these days’** which show her dislike of Sheila using this colloquial term. This is shown further when she is disgusted both at Gerald’s affair and Aldermand Meggarty – this shows her contempt for behaviour which does not meet her high and exact standards. This will later be extremely dishonest when we see her own role but this starts to indicate the judgemental nature which she conveys to those around her.

Priestley demonstrates her social pretences further when she first meets the Inspector. She shows her unawareness of the tension in the room and the stage directions show her as **‘smiling’** and **‘social’**. This shows she is trying to also convey her role as the powerful lady of the house to the Inspector and like Mr Birling tries to demonstrate her superiority over him by reminding him of her husband’s role of Lord Mayor. This shows again how reliant she is on her social standing and believes this means she is exempt from his questioning. We see how she expects her children to also behave in a certain way, repeatedly telling Sheila to **‘go to bed’** and treating her in a rather childish way. Ironically, she completely disregards her daughter’s advice to ‘**not build up a wall between us and that girl’** which shows she feels that she knows better than anyone else. The way she responds here shows she does not like to have her authority challenged.

The way she refers to the lower class before her own interrogation conveys her narrow minded view and lack of interest. She repeatedly refers to Eva/Daisy as **‘girls of that class’** which conveys her contempt and open distain for them. Mrs Birling fails to see them as individuals and like her husband simply objectifies them as having lower morals due to their status in the class system. Ironically, we have seen her children act in a completely different way by showing some sympathy towards what has happened but it is during Mrs Birling’s own interrogation which completely reveals her cold attitude towards both Eva and the lower class who she represents.

We see that the way she treated Daisy is the key insight we are given into her character and the defiant attitude she responds to the Inspector with which she believes she is entitled to as she has down nothing wrong in her eyes. The audience are told she works for the Brumley Women’s Charity Organisation – in 1912 the lack of the welfare state meant the role of charity was key to those in need and this would have been a key way for Mrs Birling to present an image of herself to the community. Despite being a **‘prominent’** member, we see the irony of how easily she refused to help when she felt that her place on the social hierarchy was being challenged when Daisy selected the name Birling to present herself. This caused Mrs Birling great offense as she does not feel that they could be any connection – this small action means she admitted she was ‘prejudiced’ against her case. She judged her simply on this and refused to help. She repeatedly called her case **‘nonsense’** and **‘ridiculous’** which shows she did not feel she had any responsibility to help and was keen to pass the responsibility back to the Father without showing any human kindness. She was extremely demeaning to her by stating **‘as if a girl of that sort would ever turn down money’** which shows the low expectations she maintains of the lower class, completely missing the irony that Daisy acted in a much more moral way than her own son. These actions clearly represent Mrs Birling as a judgemental woman who abused her own status to dismiss someone who had simply annoyed her.

However, Priestley suggests that it is Mrs Birling’s reaction to this and her behaviour when the Inspector leaves which show that she has not moved on from her earlier behaviour. She is quick to point out he ‘**didn’t make her confess’** and stated that she always believed there was something not right about his role. She is more concerned about the way she has been spoken to that what he has actually said to her. She latches on positively to the news Gerald brings back and refers to him as **‘clever’** – this shows she is clearly only thinking of her own position rather than the way he has treated her daughter. This displays the narcissistic elements of her personality which show even at the end of the play she, unlike her children, refuses to accept any wrong doing on her part. She is behaving in a way which parallels her earlier actions and so has not changed.

Priestley’s structure of her interrogation highlights the fact that she is in direct contrast with the younger generation in the reaction to the Inspector. In the same way Mr Birling and Sheila’s questioning was paralleled, we see the contrast between hers and the following confession of Eric to highlight the difference in these. Even as the lights of the play get brighter, she fails to metaphorically see the impacts of her actions. In the same way that the play conforms to the three Greek unities, this allows the audience to further recognise the lack of change in her character over these. The fact the play all takes place in the Birlings’ house completely highlights that she has failed to see the world beyond her own limited view and fail to recognise the impact she has had negatively on others.

Priestley has successfully conveyed that despite the Inspector’s message that **‘we don’t live alone’**, Mrs Birling has failed to see how her actions have had a negative impact on others. She remained unchanged by the visit and is still the same selfish and arrogant woman who is more concerned with her status and reputation.

**To what extent does the Inspector have an impact on the character of Eric?**

Priestley highlights that the character of Eric both begins and ends the play seeming isolated and disconnected from his parents. However, the actions as to why this is and his own character has changed dramatically in his time as the Inspector has a large impact on his life and how he evaluates his actions.

Priestley demonstrates before the Inspector arrives, Eric is evidently sullen and withdrawn from the rest of his family. He seems out of place with the celebratory atmosphere around him. The opening stage directions already show him as someone who feels out of place ‘**half shy, half assertive’.** We see this firstly as no-one seems to speak directly to him at the beginning except with Sheila makes a snipe at him telling him **‘not to be an ass’** and he later responds with **‘steady the buffs’**. There seems to be a sense of tension here but much more so with his Father, Mr Birling who seems dismissive and almost frustrated by him. We see Mr Birling act in a rather patronising way to them all by referring to them as **‘youngsters’** but is more so to Eric **–‘just let me finish’** when he tries to say his thoughts on war. The cause of this tension is demonstrated further when the women leave. We have already heard Mr Birling refer to Gerald as ‘**the son in law I’ve always wanted’** which suggests Eric has not fulfilled the qualities he wanted as a son and we see how he treats them differently when they are together. We see his abrupt speech towards him in comparison to Gerald. This clearly reflects at this early stage of the play that Eric is an outsider in the family.

Despite Eric feeling left out, the behaviour his past character demonstrated through his actions with Daisy shows how much he has been influenced by his Father’s lifestyle and attitude. We see there are similarities between them as Eric has also used money as a way of solving his issues when he got Daisy pregnant. This misuse of money and dismissive behaviour of the lower class is clearly learned behaviour from his Father. This also ironically points out the similarities between himself and Gerald as both have made use of Daisy as simply an object for their own pleasure on their terms. Many see the name ‘Renton’ as a suggestion for how she is treated by them – rent suggesting used for a short time just when needed. It is important that we recognise Eric’s previous behaviour to show how he moves on from this empty and hedonistic lifestyle when the Inspector arrives.

Priestley shows it is when the Inspector arrives that we see Eric become more confident to share his own views and opinions. Like Sheila, we see his initial reaction to the death contains genuine shock and emotion – **‘My God!’** The exclamation mark here is used to show that he does show real sympathy here and this is the audience’s first gauge that Eric has the potential to change. This reaction allows him to develop into a more humane figure who is willing to defend the workers in the factory and demonstrate an understanding of their plight. He is willing to show his different views from both his Father and Gerald – which would not have been an easy choice to make. His statement **‘Why shouldn’t they try for higher wages’** shows that he is beginning to recognise their rights and question the state of his father’s factory – his own work place. He shows a greater sympathy for them saying **‘I would have let her stay’** demonstrating an understanding of the lower class which is own Father and Gerald are oblivious to. Interestingly, Sheila begins to share similar views which shows there is perhaps more which the younger generation have in common than they previously thought.

Interestingly, Eric shows a the Inspector has had a deep impact on him as he is one of the only characters who has already made the connection to Daisy himself and returns ready to confess this. Priestley has structured the play for maximum impact through the use of dramatic irony so that the audience are made aware through Mrs Birling’s interrogation that Eric is the Father – a fact which she had remained frustratingly naïve to. This shows that unlike Gerald, Eric has used his exit from the stage to reflect on his actions and has been able to take what the Inspector has already taught him and apply this to his own life. In direct contrast, Gerald used this time outside of the house to shift the responsibility for his actions. Eric is the only member of the Birling family to leave the house. The house acts as a metaphor for the narrow minded narcissistic view they have had but Eric shows he is able to shed this and recognise the impact of his actions.

When Priestley shows Eric’s return to the stage, we see the full impact of the Inspector’s message embedded. His anger and frustration is clear through his disjointed speech and coarse language **‘You killed her – you killed her – damn you, damn you!’** It would not have been seen as appropriate for a man to openly display his feelings but we see Eric is extremely emotional when he realises the full impact of both his and his mother’s actions in the death of Daisy and his child. Their interrogations again are placed together to show the direct contrast between these and their reactions. Despite the news of the death of the baby, the priority of Mr Birling is more focused on the money which Eric stole which shows how little he has learnt from the evening. However, Eric refuses to back down and sides with Sheila to show their disgust at their parents. They have fully appreciated the message of the Inspector that **‘We do not live alone’**. He has recognised how this applies to him.

Priestley has structured the play to show at the end, Eric is still distanced from his parents – arguably even more so than at the beginning. However, he has instead learnt about the impact of his own poor treatment and forceful nature of his personality on the lower class. However, the layers of his personality are quickly revealed as we see the potential for a more independent character who shows an appreciation for the socialist way of thinking and shows an understanding of the plight of the lower class. Eric’s character has been deeply impacted by the Inspector.

**To what extend do we see the role of Sheila develop over the course of the play?**

Priestley has effectively shown that Sheila undergoes the greatest transformation in the play as she changes from being a stereotypical female member of her class to becoming a much more independent young woman. The visit from the Inspector has a clear impact on him to the point we see her elevate to complete his teachings after his departure to the contrasting older generation family members.

Priestley uses the opening of the play as a key way of promoting Sheila as a young ‘carefree’ woman who represents the lifestyle of many other women with the same social standing in 1912. Her engagement to Gerald is used to demonstrate the usual life pathways or opportunities presented to a woman of this class and we see her happy and positive reaction towards this **– ‘isn’t it a beauty’**. We do however see a glimpse of tension when she brings up **‘last summer’** which seems to be the source of a disagreement which could suggest there is more to their relation that we see at this point. We also see a rather dismissive attitude towards her brother when she refers to him as an **‘ass’** which shows they do not seem very close and a rather immature side to her in how she refers to her mother. We see her come across as a young woman who is simply very pleased at the news of her marriage.

The use of how she knew Eva Smith is also important in showing the way in which Sheila used to act. Priestley creates a foil between these two characters to highlight their many similarities of pretty young women of a similar age but uses their different positions in the social hierarchy to show the importance of class in Edwardian England. Their similar interests are demonstrated through the use of the clothes shop Milwards – Sheila is a regular customer there due to her parents’ money whereas for Eva this is simply a much more pleasant working environment than the Birling factory. It is here we clearly see the impact of her capitalistic upbringing when she abuses her ‘**bad mood’** to ensure Eva is fired. The Inspector points out her **‘jealously’** at Eva’s looks which is extremely ironic as Eva had much more reason to be jealous of Sheila who simply, like her Father, objectified her as a way of taking out her mood on others. Like the name Eva Smith symbolises, Sheila just saw her as an indistinctive member of the working class without any real identity behind her. This shows us the previous character attributes of Sheila and how heavily influenced she was by the upbringing she had.

However, the change Priestley shows in Sheila is evident early into the visit of the Inspector. As soon as he arrives, we see an immediate change in her behaviour. Her reaction to the death of Eva – **‘How horrible!’** mirrors that of her brother’s **‘My God!’** The exclamation mark is used here to show genuine shock and concern about the death of the girl and at this point it is evident that Sheila is capable of displaying sympathy for her death – much more than her Father is.

In the same way we see Eric diverting from the views of his Father regarding business, we also see Sheila’s confidence in her individual response that **‘these girls aren’t cheap labour – they’re people!’** In direct contrast to how she herself had earlier treated Eva, she is now recognising the individuality of the working class and that they are not simply there for the disposal of the more powerful classes. She recognises the clear parallels between their lives which Priestley has cleverly set up – she is celebrating a new chapter of her life which is about to begin by drinking champagne. However, in direct contrast, Eva’s life has come to an abrupt end through drinking disinfectant. This signals that Sheila is showing much more awareness for the lower class due to the arrival of the Inspector.

The tension created at the end of Act 1 is important in developing the character of Sheila. The structure of the play is extremely important in the order of interrogations – Mr Birling has been questioned first to represent his role of head of the family but has clearly stated **‘I don’t accept any responsibility’.** Sheila is questioned directly after to heighten the differences in their responses as she states **‘I know I’m to blame and I’m desperately sorry’.** She fully accepts her part in the death but more significantly recognises the role of the Inspector in this. She tries to warn Gerald at the close of the Act that ‘**he knows’**. Sheila is the first – and only – character to recognise the foreknowledge his character clearly contains.

We see this knowledge that she has uncovered develop through Act 2 as we see the beginning of a role reversal between her and her mother. The mother who Sheila sought approval for when showing off the engagement ring is now seen by Sheila as someone who is acting in a naïve way and she tries to warn her of this. She shows her recognition of the Inspector’s message by stating **‘you mustn’t try to build a kind of wall between us and that girl’** which shows she fully appreciates the message he is giving that they are not as separated as the Birlings first thought. The fact the play only takes place in their house represents the closed minded view of the older generation which Sheila clearly recognises here.

Priestley highlights how Sheila has grown in independence throughout the play despite her parents and even Gerald trying to protect her and send her to bed to avoid **‘unpleasant news’**. However, she shows her change by questioning Gerald herself and through ultimately through the epiphany that **‘you and I aren’t the same people who sat down here for dinner tonight’.** The act of removing the engagement ring would be seen as a scandalous act in 1912 and shows how much she has changed from the opening scene. The fact that she doesn’t take the ring back at the end of the play heightens this despite the pressure that Mr Birling seems to place on her. She has recognised that their values and attitudes are too different and that this is more important than financial security or prestige for her Father. She has made a clear change.

The final way we see a clear change is through her behaviour in the close of the play. Despite previously arguing with her brother, they are now both aligned by their similar views against their parents. However, it is possible to interpret that the Inspector has had a greater impact on Sheila as she goes as far as to mirror and repeat the words that he used – **‘fire and blood and anguish’**. This shows he has had a very deep impact on him and she is open about the fear she feels about the fact her parents are acting like nothing has happened. She has shown that the message of the Inspector is now deeply embedded in her character.

Priestley has successfully shown it is clear that the character of Sheila has changed dramatically through the trigger of the Inspector. His visit has given her the confidence to break many society’s deeply engrained traditions and act as a more independent, socially aware young woman.

**What do we learn about the character of Mr Birling throughout the play?**

Priestley shows how Mr Birling acts as a representative for those who are determined to better themselves through the use of money and profit. They are focused purely on this and on themselves rather than look at the impact of their actions on those around them.

The first way Priestley shows the character of Mr Birling presented is through his behaviour at the dinner party before the Inspector arrives. He uses this opportunity to demonstrate his superiority in his family but also the audience can see the desperation he has to maintain and improve his standing on the social hierarchy. The fact he has the opening words in the play convey the dominance the male member of the family would have over his household in 1912 but also show his need to please Gerald who is from a much more important family through pointing out the port matches what his Father drinks. His need for social approval here is key. The fact the dinner party is to celebrate the engagement of Sheila and Gerald also acts as a way of seeing his pleasure at how this will benefit himself – **‘Crofts and Birlings are working together for lower costs and higher prices’.** His narcissistic nature is evident through this and through his excessive length of turn shown by Priestley here. He uses this to display his thoughts on the world. This is extremely significant due to the dramatic irony employed here – his predictions about the Titanic being **‘unsinkable’** and the triplet regarding **‘peace and prosperity and rapid progress’** make him feel knowledgeable and his authority in 1912 but the post 1945 audience will fully recognise that he is not as intelligent as he believes and actually highlight his own naivety. This is further highlighted through the repetition of **‘hard headed practical business man’** which he believes is convincing to all but instead undermines our initial view of him as a character who is not as superior as they like to believe.

This behaviour also serves to portray Mr Birling as a proud capitalist who is more than happy to share his views on business. This could be partly to align himself with the successful Gerald Croft but it is evident that Mr Birling believes that wealth is accumulated through the manual work of others in his factory for his own self progression. He makes derogatory comments about socialists – those who advocate equality (like the Inspector will proceed to) as **‘nonsense’** and states that **‘a man should make his own way’**. Priestley does this to make it clear to the audience the business orientated attitudes and values of Mr Birling at this point in the play. However, it is also seen as the trigger for the arrival of the Inspector who arrives at this point. This can clearly be seen as the reason that he has arrived – in order to question Mr Birling on his views and challenge these.

However, the character of Mr Birling is revealed further in his contempt for both Eva Smith and in correlation the Inspector himself. This shows his dismissive attitude of others who fail to agree with him. He refers to Eva as a **‘wretched girl’** which shows his negative view of her and this is shown further when he automatically assumes that she was fired from Milwards for **‘causing trouble’**. This demonstrates his negative view of her due to her social class - much like his own wife who simply refers to them as ‘girls of that class’. This highlights that both of the older generation are dismissive and demeaning towards them. Ironically, we have seen Mr Birling objectifying his workers as a way simply of making extra money when this is also what Eva was striking for – to earn more money. However, she was fighting for this for equality and as she believed it was right whereas Mr Birling states **‘it is my duty to keep labour costs down’**. His priorities are solely seen through business and how he can make more money at the expense of others. He clearly states **‘I can’t take any responsibility’** showing he does not recognise how his actions have had an impact on her. This contempt is also shown to the character of the Inspector. Despite Eric and Sheila’s emotional reaction to her death, he is simply described as being **‘impatient’**. This is further displayed when he tries to intimidate the Inspector by using his social standing to try to halt the Inspector by telling him about his role of Lord Mayor and having royalty staying. He further tries to manipulate him by saying he **‘played golf’** with the Inspector’s boss as a way of using his power and connections to surpass this conversation. It is clear that Mr Birling thinks his role and authority in the community means he is exempt from responsibility.

Priestley further develops Mr Birling’s character in the way in which he reacts to different members of the younger generation. His influence over the upbringing and behaviour of Erica and Sheila is clear as both have shown a parallel with him in how they abused his role in both Milwards and through the theft of money. However, despite both of his children admitting their wrong doing (unlike him) the way he treats them is very different. We see his traditional role towards Sheila by trying to protect her and referring to her as a **‘child’.** He does fail to see the irony that he acts in this way towards his daughter but failed to do so towards Eva. However, we see his anger is reserved solely towards Eric when he finds out about the stolen money. This could again highlight the importance of money to Mr Birling as this greatly infuriates him and his temper towards Eric is clear. We have seen from the beginning of the play that Mr Birling feels he has more in common with Gerald, calling him **‘the son in law I’ve always wanted’**. This highlights the pride he feels that Gerald and him have values in common whereas Eric begins to disagree with him and the way Mr Birling has treated the workers. The relationship breaks down further as Eric points out **‘you’re not the kind of father a chap can go to’** which shows a deep seated resentment and distance between them. The way that Mr Birling has treated them clearly reveals a hypocritical approach and a resentment towards his son – all of which again stems from his want for wealth.

Despite Priestley structuring Mr Birling’s interrogation first, he has not changed his view point or perception based on what he has seen after this. We are told that the lights on the play get brighter as the play develops but this does not seem to have any impact on the vision of Mr Birling. He is present for the majority of the play but this further re-enforces the point that he has failed to change. The fact that the same set remains highlights that Mr Birling is so deeply embedded in the world he has made for himself that he can’t see beyond this to the world of **‘Eva and John Smiths’** beyond this. Interestingly, before the Inspector leaves, he offer to pay **‘thousands’**. This truly conveys he has missed the lesson – his money can not bring him what he wants yet he still uses this as a symbol to get his own way and his main focus is still his reputation after this. This is the key reason why he is happy to believe this is a **‘bluff’** when Gerald returns – Mr Birling simply is willing to accept the version which best suits his vision of himself just like his wife. However, the fact he takes the final call from the police Inspector heightens the cyclical message the Inspector delivered **regarding ‘fire and blood and anguish’.** This repeat visit could reflect the recent WWII as a reminder of what happens when we refuse to accept any responsibility – just like Mr Birling.

Priestley has successfully shown that Mr Birling remains unchanged by the message of the Inspector – he will have the face the consequence for this by the second visit. He was given the opportunity but his arrogance and belief in his own superiority meant he was not willing to listen to others or decline his capitalist views which he clearly values so deeply.

**How is the role of Gerald significant in the play?**

Priestley has presented the character of Gerald as the newly engaged husband to be to Sheila Birling and is present on this evening to celebrate this. However, his role in the play goes much further – he is challenged to show where his values in life lie and the extent to which he will go to secure his and his family’s reputation.

He is firstly presented in a positive way to Mr Birling and as a foil to the character of Eric, Mr Birling’s own son. The opening lines of the play are actually directed to Gerald which instantly displays the high regard that Mr Birling holds him in and demonstrates the lengths he will go to please him. The port is used as a symbol of social acceptance from Mr Birling in order to ‘fit in’ with Gerald’s family. He uses Gerald as a judge as to accept him and recognise him as a social equal. Gerald is also used as a way to demonstrate Mr Birling’s capitalist views – throughout Act 1 Gerald parallels his business views **‘We would have done exactly the same’.** This shows us that Gerald, like Mr Birling, has been brought up in a capitalist way and fully adheres to the use of lower class women in the factories on lower wages as way of creating their profits. His political and business views are clearly aligned with Mr Birling which suggests why Mr Birling is also so pleased with the engagement as it will lead to **‘Crofts and Birlings working together for lower costs and higher prices’**. Gerald is clearly associated with the business values and this is why Mr Birling refers to him as the **‘son in law he has always wanted’** which shows how much Gerald is valued by him.

Priestley has also used him in direct contrast to Eric as a further way of highlighting the distance in Mr Birling’s relationship with his own son. This quote shows a level of dismissal towards his own son. We see Gerald use this approval in the family and mocks Eric at several opportunities eg **‘unless Eric’s been up to something’.** This indicates that Gerald is also fully capable of manipulating his position and saying or doing what he wants. As stated, his attitude towards business is identical to Mr Birling’s whereas we see Eric state **‘I’d have let them stay’** highlighting their differences. We see a clear contrast between Eric and Gerald has formed.

We also see Gerald as a character used for Mr Birling to seek approval from when he shares the news about his Knighthood. He deliberately tells him this in order to gain a sense of approval – this is key to him as he seems to think that Lord and Lady Croft feel Gerald could have done better for himself than his daughter. He is used to represent the aristocratic position which Mr Birling is striving to achieve.

Like the rest of the characters, Gerald has also used this position in order to manipulate others to a much further extent than making fun of Eric. We have been aware of underlying tension in his relationship with Sheila from the beginning when she references last summer and the Inspector acts as a way of explaining this fuller by highlighting Gerald’s affair with Daisy. Although this affair did commence with altruistic purposes with Gerald offering her food and accommodation, he is of course able to do this due to his position and this is again a way of him showing off the wealth he has. It was this feeling which led to the affair developing and Gerald admitted he did **‘adore’** being her Fairy Prince. This shows Gerald’s real intent – he liked the feeling of having someone love him and look up to him but again ended the affair when he wanted to. Some associate this with the name Priestley uses – ‘Renton’ to demonstrate that Gerald has only made use of her for a short time when it suited him. However at this point, we do see some genuine human emotion from Gerald which is key in allowing the audience to question if this means that he – like Sheila and Eric will go on to do – will recognise his impact on others.

Priestley uses the fact that Sheila breaks off the engagement would have been seen as a shocking action as Gerald would – as we have seen through Mr Birling’s happiness – have been just the kind of suitable and appropriate man a woman from the high class would have liked to have been with. However, this break in the engagement highlights the distance which is now developing between the attitudes and values of Gerald and Sheila. The fact he leaves the stage at this point of the play is extremely significant in recognising the further role and importance of Gerald. He is the only character along with Eric who leaves the house during the course of the play. This could act as a way of showing the characters the world which they are part of outside of the confines of the **‘large suburban house’** which signals their wealth. However, the contrast between Eric and Gerald continues here - Eric has used this time to reflect on his actions and recognise the impact of these. Gerald, on the other hand, uses this time in order to set in motion the process of events which prove the Inspector is not real by questioning this with another officer. Gerald has used this time to excuse his actions and pass responsibility rather than accept it which makes this absence from the stage critical. It reveals his true personality.

The final way in which Gerald’s role is significant is by sharing this news with the rest of the Birling family. The older generation are all too ready to accept his version and he aligns himself further with them through his actions of ringing the Infirmary to ask if a girl has been admitted. It is interesting that his interrogation was placed exactly in the middle of these which reflected his status in the generation – he had the potential to change due to the kindness he did show. However, rather than recognise and accept his wrong doing, he follows the same leads of the older members of the Birlings and like the beginning still shares and accepts the same values of them. This is fully evident when Sheila refuses to accept the engagement ring back – she fully acknowledges that **‘you and I are not the same people who sat down here for dinner tonight’** whereas he has not recognised the role of the Inspector. Ironically, we have seen the light on stage getting brighter with his message but by leaving the stage Gerald has remained oblivious to the changes that Sheila and Eric have made.

Priestley has shown that Gerald is a very interesting character in the play – his initial reactions lead us to believe that he does show kindness for others. However this is shattered when we recognise that his actions have to be with him at the forefront and that the aristocratic world of money and profit is one which is too deeply embedded in his character to make any significant changes despite the opportunity he is given.

**A Sign of Four Key Quotes**

• Scarred with innumerable puncture-marks

• "My mind rebels at stagnation”

• ‘But I abhor the dull routine of existence’.

• ‘The only unofficial consulting detective’

• The work itself …. is my highest reward.’

• ‘when the police are out of their depth’

• a calculating-machine

• A client is to me a mere unit’

• ‘what an attractive woman!’

• instinct to turn to me for comfort and protection.

• ‘Women are never to be entirely trusted.’

• ‘Emotion is opposed to true cold reason.’

• Golden barrier

* The cursed greed which has been my besetting sin

• ‘We had plenty of money ourselves. I desired no more’.

• ‘Averse to part …. Inclined to my father’s fault’.

**Athelney Jones**

-Wheezed

-‘Let us apply common sense to the matter.’

-in a sneering voice, but impressed none the less,

From paper

-trained and experienced

-well-known technical knowledge and his powers of minute observation

-prompt and energetic action of the officers of the law

Does show recognition

-I think he would have made a most promising officer (on Sherlock)

**Baker Street Irregulars**

-‘It is the unofficial force’

-‘They can go everywhere, see everything, overhear every one.’

**Tonga**

**Descriptions about Tonga’s race (Sherlock’s book)**

**-‘**fierce, morose, and intractable people’

-'They are naturally hideous’

-‘distorted features’

Boat Chase

savage, distorted creature

bestiality and cruelty

chattered at us with a half animal fury.

**Closing Motivations**

*"The division seems rather unfair," I remarked. "You have done all the work in this business. I get a wife out of it, Jones gets the credit, pray what remains for you?"*

*"For me," said Sherlock Holmes, "there still remains the cocaine-bottle." And he stretched his long white hand up for it’*

**Characters**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sherlock  | *Intelligent* *Rational* *Scientific* *Logical* *Emotionless**Conceited* *Patronising*  |
| Watson  | *Emotional / romantic* *Loyal* *Compassionate* *Traditional / orthodox**Supportive*  |
| Mary Morstan  | *Anxious* *Delicate / fragile / vulnerable* *Supportive*  |
| Major Sholto  | *Narcissistic* *Greedy* *Avaricious**Exploitative* *Lacking morals* |
| Thaddeus Sholto  | *Eccentric* *Moral* *Loyal* *Insensitive / lacking emotions*  |
| Bartholomew Sholto  | *Narcissistic* *Lacking moral* *Greedy*  |
| Captain Morstan  | *Narcissistic* *Lacking moral* *Greedy**Exploitative*  |
| Athelney Jones  | *Incompetent* *Pompous* *Unaware* *Inadequate*  |
| Jonathan Small  | *Calculating* *Loyal* *Aggressive* *Spiteful* *Obsessive* *Exploitative*  |
| Tonga  | *Loyal / devoted* *Savage* *Dehumanised / animalistic* *Described in derogatory way*  |
| Mrs Bernstone |  *Weak* *Vulnerable* *Fragile / delicate*  |
| The Smith Family  | *Lower class* *Poorly educated* *Traditional roles*  |
| Mrs Forrester  | *Supportive**Maternal* *Devoted* |

**AO2 – Key Methods**

* **Structure** – start + end – use of drugs
* **Use of narrative** – Watson to connect to reader, multiple embedded narratives highlight past
* **Plot + subplot** - contrast between mystery + romance
* **Contrasts** – plots, Sherlock + Watson, Sherlock + police, Thaddeus + Bartholomew
* **Foreshadowing** – Sherlock’s abilities through analysis of watch + shoe to Watson
* **Pathetic fallacy** – London as dark + dangerous
* **Parallels / mirroring** – Bartholomew + Major Sholto, Jonathan Small + Major Sholto + Captain Morstan

**Symbolism** – treasure / aspects of treasure – used ironically!

**Key Structural points**

* Subplot – contrast mystery + crime with romantic – each plot represents Sherlock or Watson. Contrast in these match their characters
* Cyclical Structure
* Starts + ends – Sherlock taking drugs – shows how easily his brain becomes bored again
* Foreshadowing - Inference + deduction of Watson’s shoe + watch foreshadow his skills at crime scene
* Narrated by Watson – provides bridge to Sherlock’s thoughts. More approachable + relatable character
* Reader follow crime chronologically with characters
* Use of other narrators to fill in story – Mary, Thaddeus, Small – to tell their viewpoints
* Embedded narrative – ‘story within a story’ of Jonathan Small

**Contrasts**

* Sherlock vs Watson – logical + reasoned vs emotive + feelings
* Mary vs lower class women
* Sherlock vs Jones – Sherlock natural ability vs Jones doing as job
* Sherlock vs Sholtos – Sherlock driven by sense of solving crimes vs Sholtos driven by wealth
* Sherlock vs Jonathan Small – same as above!
* Jones vs Sholtos + Small

**AO3 – Context – Victorian Era**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Gender | male- dominant, women ‘weaker sex’/ Angel of House – submissive + need protectedRole of Gentleman – expectations of men to act appropriately in line with class |
| Social Class | strictly defined layers of hierarchy treasure would have been ‘barrier’ between Mary + Watson. Use of dialogue of working class + the Baker Street Irregulars. However, Sherlock transcends these barriers to work with everyone.  |
| Expansion of British Empire  | British colonialism in India, Indian rebellions, corruption, belief of superiority, abuse of power, more travel = population rise = increase of mistrust = racism + higher crimeTonga – personify / microcosm / represent |
| Public view of incompetence of police | seen as low skilled + ineffectiveJones – personify / microcosm / represent  |
| Religion vs science | beliefs, like many aspects of era, transition towards more scientific advancementsSherlock personify this ideology  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Role of gender  | Female adhering to expectations – all! Men – Watson + Thaddeus act to support and protect Sherlock – unaware |
| Corruption  | Link to expansion of British Empire Behaviour of those in India Impact of breakdown of relationships due to treasure – CM + MS, T + B Jonathan Small’s actionsTreatment towards Tonga Police – lack skill and awareness to uncover this Sherlock’s contrasting approaches  |
| Betrayal / loyalty  | Role of treasure in breakdown of relationships = CM + MS, T + B, JS + T Actions of what happens to treasure Characters who more loyal – W + T Sherlock’s intentions Lack of ability of police to support  |
| Class system  | Sherlock – aware / work for / knows people of all levels Impact of lifestyle of Sholto family Contrast with lower class – JS, Smith family, area Toby the dog collected Higher class – Mrs F Impact of money on Mary – impact on impending relationship  |
| Motivation  | Treasure key one Who all is motivated by it? Sherlock’s – solve crimes, take drugs to keep mind stimulated otherwise Watson – moral duties + emotions Jones – improving reputation of police  |

**Extract 22 – Role of women / gender**

Conan Doyle effectively presents the portrayal of women within the Victorian era to show both how they were expected to act and also use other characters to convey the way in which others were expected to act towards them. In a time prior to women having the right to vote and lacking independence, we clearly see the expectations of this time period.

Conan Doyle uses Watson as the main narrator of the novel which is effective as not only does it provide the reader with an insight into Sherlock’s mind and thought processes and make these more accessible, we can also relate to him more through his more emotional accounts. This use of emotion is clear in how he discusses the character of Mary in this extract. This is also interesting as it provides a reflection into a society where women are typically seen as lacking a voice in deference to the role of the man. Conan Doyle does subvert this to an extent when he first introduces the character as we do see he uses her narrative almost as a flashback account to convey her dilemmas and woes. This is interesting as she is the only character who Conan Doyle names – as a single character for most of the novel, this is contrasted through the use of other female characters who are seen through the identity of their husbands through the use of their married names.

We will see that Mary is used by Conan Doyle as a microcosm of the etiquette expected from women however, he also uses Watson’s character in order to portray the expectations associated with a gentleman in the Victorian era. Throughout both this extract and the text, we see Watson adhere to this. We firstly see this though the verb ‘**escorted**’. This suggests that Watson accompanied Mary which would be significant to show how a man would have been expected to provide a level of care and protection for a female. The use of ‘escort’ also holds with this an inference of dominance – it would suggest that they are the ones in control of this action. The fact that Watson is taking her home after a difficult emotional night shows he wishes to provide this support. We see this later in the follow up trips which he makes to ensure the case is communicated with her. This is key in showing how he as a man is looking after the female who would need this level of guidance.

Conan Doyle has also used Watson’s narrative to convey Mary in a positive way throughout the text. He uses heavenly imagery through the phrase ‘**angelic nature’**. This shows that he associates her with an angel which suggests that she represents almost an idealised perfection in his mind. This has been foreshadowed from their very first meeting when he used the adjective ‘**attractive**’ to describe her. The use of heavenly imagery is also extremely significant in linking to the ideology of the Victorian era which saw women as the ‘Angel of the Home’. This is a significant phrase as it gives us the insight that women were seen as guardians and almost protectors of the domestic sphere – the home is their domain and were they are linked and associated with. It would be seen as their responsibility to cater for the domestic and maternal jobs. The use of **‘angelic’** associating to the concept of perfection is also shown through the symbolism behind the name which Conan Doyle has selected. The readers would associate the name ‘Mary’ with the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus who is upheld religiously as being a female who embodies the qualities associated with a godly, ideal, perfect woman. Although the Victorian era did represent a time of change, with religion becoming more dominated by scientific approaches and beliefs – personified through the character of Sherlock – this reference would still have been significant.

In order to further link Mary to this concept, Conan Doyle has repeatedly used colour imagery associated with her. The first time she is introduced to the reader, she is wearing a white feather – the last time, a cyclical structure is created in this as she is wearing a white dress. This colour is symbolic in showing peace which is what Mary’s character embodies as well as showing the purity which women were expected to have. We have seen how Mary acts as a woman would have been expected through the way in which she controlled her emotion – ‘**borne trouble with a calm face’**. Women were given high expectations and would have been expected to carry themselves appropriately in front of other which she has done. The white could also link to her innocence – we have already seen how Victorian women would have been protected, sheltered and their security maintained by the male role which is why we also hear later that Watson does not tell her the full details of their actions. Conan Doyle shows he restricts certain information in order to not worry or upset her. We also saw this when the characters first arrived at Pondicherry Lodge. This setting was significant as the gothic style descriptions and use of pathetic fallacy indicated a perilous event ahead through the death of Bartholomew. In the face of this, we are told that Watson felt an **‘instinct’** to **‘comfort and protect’** her. The use of **‘instinct’** is important as it conveys again his association with the expectations of a gentleman – he did this without thought – it was simply his automatic reaction to look after and provide security for her, much like in the journey there itself. The use of white could also be significant in foreshadowing the engagement between them at the end of the text which showed Watson’s motivations come true, in direct contrast to Sherlock’s who simply wished to solve the crime. Despite his positive comments regarding Mary at the close of the text, we see Conan Doyle has used his character as a foil to Watson’s emotional response through referring to Mary as a ‘**mere unit’**. This highlights the lack of significance he places on his clients and **‘unit’** suggests the removal of all emotional and personal connections – a direct contrast to Watson.

We also see the role of women, as part of the ‘Angel of the Home’ ideology to act in a caring and maternal way. Conan Doyle uses the adjective ‘**frightened’** here in relation to Mrs Bernstone, the housekeeper of Pondicherry Lodge who was overcome with fear of the events. As a female, Mary took on the role of staying with the women in order to ensure her emotional well being. This shows that the role of a woman would have been to support and care for others in need – which Conan Doyle effectively shows Mary to do. This is also linked to the role of her profession. Conan Doyle shows us that in the Victorian era, women who would have been required to work – women who were unmarried and not high enough in the social hierarchy to be provided for – in a job which again was linked to the concepts of domestic and maternal duties. Mary’s role of a governess would fully adhere to this and provide insights into the pathways for women of Mary’s social standing. Interestingly, the character of Mrs Forrester, who Mary works for is also portrayed in a paralleling way. We are told of her ‘**motherly**’ actions towards Mary which again suggests her maternal bond and protection towards another women. Mary’s own mother has passed away so Conan Doyle uses this character to show Mrs Forrester taking on this role in an appropriate way. We also see the use of the adverb ‘**tenderly’** to describe her actions which shows both the care expected from the female gender and the delicacy and fragile nature of Mary who this is directed towards.

Finally, we have referred to the rigid social class structure which dictated the social interactions of the Victorian era. Conan Doyle shows us the pathways Mary follows due to her current life situations. However, we see the character of Watson lament about the role of money and how this would impact her social standing and in turn chance of a relationship with him. ‘**Was it fair ……. take such advantage of an intimacy which chance had brought about?’** is effective in demonstrating that Watson holds a strong moral belief that as a gentleman, it would not look socially appropriate to be with Mary as it may look as if he is taking advantage of her. This is ironic given the large number of characters Conan Doyle presents in a more narcissistic fashion who are instead focused on gaining the money for their own personal lifestyles such as the Sholtos or Jonathan Small.

Throughout the text, Mary has been used effectively to convey the positive associations with the female gender as well as the limitations of this role within the Victorian era. The use of his subplot has effectively given an insight into the views of the female gender.

**Extract 13 – Greed // corruption // manipulation**

Conan Doyle shows an array of characters who demonstrate the trait of greed and how it inevitably plays a role in the downfall of the character. This could be used to convey to his readers the importance of respecting the rights and ownership of others in an era where the British Empire was experiencing rapid expansion leading not only to greed but to corruption from this.

Conan Doyle has used Watson as the main narrator throughout his text. He does this successfully to provide the readers with an insight into the workings of the brilliant mind of Sherlock and to create a relatable character. However, we see in this extract that he also uses the technique of using other narrators in order to convey other key pieces of information in almost a flashback style. In this extract, we see the voice of Major Sholto is used through Thaddeus Sholto in order to provide us with information regarding the past. Conan Doyle has interwoven other narrative voices such as Mary Mortsan as well as the extended embedded narrative of Jonathan Small which have been effective at providing us, the readers, key information to retrieve key information along with Sherlock, the protagonist of the story. This use of the narrative voice provides effective insight into the role greed and corruption has played in the Sholto family.

Ironically, Conan Doyle uses the adjective ‘**poor**’ to describe Mary as an orphan. This could have a double meaning – **‘poor’** to suggest he does contain a level of both sympathy for the state of life she has had due to the consequences of his failure to share the treasure. This conveys to us that he may contain some level of remorse for the actions his greed has led him. Ironically, the word ‘poor’ also reminds us of the lifestyle she has had to lead in contrast to the riches which adorn the Sholto household – seen in both Pondicherry Lodge and also reflected through Thaddeus’ home. Conan Doyle uses luxurious, opulent adjectives and words from the lexical field of wealth such as **‘gold’** and ‘**silver**’ alongside references to **‘tiger skins’** to show the role the Empire has played in demonstrating wealth. In contrast, we learn that Mary, whilst not in the lower class by any means, has not enjoyed the same expensive lifestyle Major Sholto has provided for his children due to his greed to keep the treasure rather than split as agreed. Ironically, this is paralleled through the character of Jonathan Small who originally believed that gaining the treasure would benefit his family which again did not become true.

Conan Doyle’s use of the adjective ‘**cursed**’ greed is extremely significant. The use of this word suggests negative connotations – that it will bring only downfall and destruction. Ironically, this word is also repeated by Jonathan Small. We see that Conan Doyle has used mirroring throughout his text to show that the characters who desire and crave the treasure the most lose not only this but it leads essentially to their downfall. Not only did it lead Jonathan Small to murder an innocent man in order to originally take possession of the treasure, it also destroyed the friendship between Major Sholto and Captain Morstan. This example of behaviours also led to the breakdown of the relationship between the twins in the younger generation of the Sholto family. This shows us that Major Sholto has finally recognised and had an epiphany of the negative impact obtaining the treasure in a wrongful way has had. Essentially, Conan Doyle may be using this as a warning or lesson to those in the Victorian era who were also taking advantage of the expansion of the British Empire and manipulating and corrupting their roles of position and power to obtain what was not legally or morally theirs. We also see this greed lead to the corruption of power through Conan Doyle’s use the relationship between Jonathan Small and Tonga. This could be seen as a representation again of those with lesser power or status being dominated and used by those with more eg Jonathan Small. This word is key as it sums up the negative impact the greed has had on the lives of those involved with it.

We see that greed has also left Major Sholto quite morally bound about making decisions. He states ‘**so blind and foolish a thing is avarice’**. This shows that he recognises the limitations his ‘**avarice**’ – his extreme want for the treasure – has led. However, despite this, ironically, we are still told he did not want to part with anything until he had passed away - **But send her nothing ………until I am gone.’** The use of **‘But’** shows that he is still not able to fully act in an appropriate way and subverts the expectations of how a gentleman would be viewed in the Victorian era. There was a deep seated belief that women were weak, fragile and vulnerable and therefore needed the support and security of a male. However, we see that Major Sholto defies this by restricting Mary in both a financial and emotional way by keeping the news of her father’s death a secret. We see that his greed has corrupted him from acting how a Victorian reader would have expected. This is in direct contrast to Watson who we see adhere to this concept. Firstly, he is aware that if Mary obtained the treasure this would create a ‘**barrier**’ between them as the rigid social hierarchies of the Victorian era would have meant it would be difficult to maintain a relationship from these different lifestyles. Conan Doyle also shows the character of Watson as aware that he does not want to look like he is taking advantage of her newly acquired role if the treasure was given. We see throughout the course of their relationship which is foreshadowed from their first meeting is one where Watson prioritises the needs of Mary by being there to **‘comfort and protect’** as a male figure would have been expected to do. In stark contrast, we see Conan Doyle use first person narrative in Major Sholto’s line here which highlights his narcissistic nature in comparison. The greed has again subverted his moral values meaning he does not act in an appropriate gentlemanly way. Despite this, we also see a contrast in the characterisation of Thaddeus who does recognise they had **‘plenty of money’** and therefore **‘desired no more’**. This conveys that despite his father’s example, the character of Thaddeus – and Mary, who spoke ‘**calmly’** about the loss of the treasure, that the younger generation provide hope that the greed linked to imperialism can be overturned.

Finally, we see the narration of Major Sholto outline the death of his friend Captain Morstan. We again see the role of greed here as the very source of the argument was about **‘the division of the treasure’**. This is significant as the word ‘**division**’ could again hold deeper meanings – it also led to the division of their friendship and the next generation to follow. Ironically, by hitting his head on the treasure chest following his suspected heart attack shows Conan Doyle showing the role this has played and the impact of their greed. This is again repeated in how we see the downfall of other characters – Major Sholto’s own death, that of his son and the imprisonment of Jonathan Small. We continue to see his greed and corrupt nature when he did not report what had happened for fear of an ‘**official inquiry could not be made without bringing out some facts about the treasure’.** This again conveys his narcissistic behaviour – he is again prioritising the ownership of the treasure rather than risk this being questioned. This also shows his corruption of his position which he does not want to lose. Again Conan Doyle is clearly showing how those with power do not always use this appropriately. We also see this to a degree through the representation of the police force through the microcosmic character of Jones. Despite his lack of abilities in his role which are clearly contrasted through Sherlock’s skills, we see his abuse of power by ensuring the positive, biased view of his role of solving the crime and his actions through the newspaper account. We see that his greed to want to have recognition leads to misinformation. Whilst Conan Doyle has shown readers from the very opening of the text that the ‘**work itself is my highest reward’**, showing his motivation is from the resolution of crimes in contrast to those motivated by a desire to obtain more wealth, we see that Jones again wants to enhance his own standing. Unlike many other characters, Sherlock’s condensing nature of the police and Conan Doyle’s negative portrayal of them as almost comedic characters, shows that not all characters are as consumed by the greed as others. Watson and Sherlock’s relationship – despite their contrasting views on emotion – highlight one which is not corrupted and tainted by the search for the treasure to enhance their own lifestyle.

Conan Doyle has effectively used the characters noted within this extract and throughout the novel to show the detrimental impacts which greed can hold. The abuse of power and the consequential corruption shows an insight into the Victorian era which is contrasted through the roles of other key characters.

**The Sign of Four Extract 3**

**How does Conan Doyle present his views on his role and the role of this police in this extract and throughout the novel?**

In this extract Conan Doyle presents Sherlock Holmes and his role as complex and unique. Conan Doyle uses language to show Holmes’ superior thinking skills and presents a contrast to that of the police.

Firstly, in the extract we can see that Conan Doyle presents Holmes as man who bores easily when he almost makes a plea **‘give me the most abstruse cryptogram or the most intricate analysis’.** This suggests to the reader that the work he does is a basic need for a man like Holmes. By the use of the adverb **‘most’** suggests to the reader that Holmes is capable of solving the most complex of problems, and anything less does not provide him with enough mental stimulation. This work is a basic need for a man like Holmes and if he does not have problems to solve he is willing to experiment on his own mind through drug taking; which was witnessed at the beginning of the novella, when through Watson’s narration the reader discovers that his **‘forearm and wrist [are], all dotted and scarred with innumerable puncture marks’.** The reader is able to see that if Holmes does not have the mental stimulation of having problems to solve then he needs another way to stop his mind from stagnating.

Conan Doyle has also presented Holmes’ role as being unique because he has invented his own profession as **‘the only unofficial consulting detective’.** This suggests to the reader that Holmes is a character of great intellect as nobody else is capable of doing the work he does. It can also suggest that he likes to do things in his own way and may find it difficult to cope with any other methodology apart from his own. The use of the adverb ‘only’ demonstrates his superiority and possible arrogance on his part. This can be seen later on in the novella when we are able to contrast Holmes’s methods to Jones’s at Pondicherry Lodge. Holmes operates logically and acts almost like an animal ‘**like those of a trained bloodhound-picking out a scent’** presenting to the reader someone who follows the scent of each clue, taking a new path each time a dead end is reached. The use of the animalist imagery heightens Sherlock’s skills and shows the reader that his senses are greater than human. This is in contrast to Athelney Jones who Conan Doyle uses to highlight the negative perception of the police force in Victorian England. He is also used as a foil to highlight Sherlock’s skills. Conan Doyle has used repeated examples of animal imagery to show Sherlock’s great deal of care and focus; however, we do not see Jones make any effort to search the room. Instead he states they must go on **‘facts’** despite not looking for any.

Again Conan Doyle presents the role of the police through Athelney Jones to show the negative perception of the police force in Victorian England. He has used a list of adjectives **‘stout, portly man…red faced, burley and plethoric’** to describe the appearance of Jones suggesting to the reader that Jones is a somewhat comical character. His **‘red face’** and his blustering nature contrasts with the composure of Sherlock who is described as **‘swift, silent and furtive’.** This conveys to the reader that the police force are not to be taken very seriously and they appear incompetent next to Sherlock.

Conan Doyle also presents Holmes as being very dismissive of Jones and the way the police force work when he says they are **‘out of their depth…which…is their normal state’** suggesting that the police force are usually ineffective and are incapable of doing their job properly. Again we see the contrast between Holmes and Jones when Holmes refers to himself as an **‘expert’** and **a ‘specialist’** suggesting to the reader that there is nobody else quite like him. By using the nouns **‘expert’** and **‘specialist’** puts forward to the reader that he has a great deal of knowledge and is very skilled in his chosen profession, however there is also an air of arrogance about him when he criticises the police. He feels he is far superior and believes that his skills cannot be challenged. We can also see that Holmes can be dismissive of close friends such as Watson when he is very honest with Watson about his feelings on his writing in the Study in Scarlet. He says **‘I glanced over it’** suggesting to Watson that it was not worth a closer look. Again this shows Sherlock does not like to compromise in any way, and he is presented as not really valuing the opinions of others. By using the verb ‘**glanced**’ demonstrates to the reader that Holmes believes that his skills are far superior to those of Watson; he does not believe that anything Watson has written will add any value to the case.

Though connected with logic, Conan Doyle presents Holmes as inventive and creative in his approach to his work. His use of disguise, his contacts, is methods of questioning are just some examples. In contrast Conan Doyle presents Jones in a humorous way. He does this to undermine his character and show the views of the public towards the police. This is evident when he says **‘no room for theories’** but follows this with a theory! Although Sherlock tries to show him evidence, we see Jones’ dismissive attitude towards this as he calls it **‘hocus-pocus’.** This shows us the lack of respect he has towards the crime scene in contrast to Sherlock who has shown a high amount of care. We have seen his use of short sentences and questions to show he has been taking in details which Jones dismisses. Conan Doyle presents their attitudes towards the crime scene completely differently, showing Sherlock’s superior skills and Jones’s incompetence.

The role of Holmes is key to keeping the plot moving forward and Conan Doyle presents him as accomplished and skilled in his chosen profession. This is in complete contrast to Jones whose role appears to be to entertain rather than take part in any serious detective work. Conan Doyle is contrasting the two characters to explore Sherlock’s fine skills as a detective but is also criticising the work of the police in the Victorian era.