

York Notes *Pathway to Success*

AN INSPECTOR CALLS

Studying or revising *An Inspector Calls*? Not sure where to start or how much you know? This pack is a great way to self-assess, learn, practise and progress!

START HERE

TEST YOURSELF!

Use our 4-Step Check-up pack to decide where you are in your studies of *An Inspector Calls*

NOT SO
CONFIDENT?

INTRO PACK

Complete our *Introductory Pack* to quickly get to grips with the basics

Pages 5–12

FEELING OK BUT NEED
SOME MORE HELP?

WORKBOOK PAGES

Try out some key pages from our popular Workbook to hone your skills

Pages 13–16

PRACTICE TEST

Use what you know! Complete our York Notes practice test and check your answer

Pages 17–19

**LINKS and
SUPPORT**

Expand and embed your knowledge with our handy list of links and resources

Pages 20–21



YOUR 4-Step CHECK-UP ON AN INSPECTOR CALLS

Step 1 PLOT AND CHARACTERS

Where are you in your *An Inspector Calls* studies? Start by answering these quiz-style questions to check your knowledge of the plot and characters.

1. In **whose house** does the play take place?
2. **What event** is being celebrated?
3. **What award** does **Arthur Birling** tell **Gerald** he is hoping to get?
4. **What** is the **name of the Inspector**? In **what way** could this be seen to be appropriate?
5. **What details** does the **Inspector** reveal about the **death of a young woman** when he arrives?
6. **Why** did **Arthur Birling** sack **Eva Smith**?
7. **What shop** did **Eva** go to work in after she was sacked?
8. In **what way** was **Sheila** responsible for **Eva losing her job** at the shop?
9. At the **end of Act One**, **what key information** does **Gerald** tell **Sheila** they should keep from the Inspector? **What** is **her response**?
10. **Where** did **Gerald** meet **Eva/Daisy** for the **first time**?
11. According to **Gerald**, **why** did he **help Eva/Daisy**?
12. **What item** does **Sheila** return to **Gerald** after he has admitted he knew **Eva/Daisy**?
13. **Why** did **Eva/Daisy** come to **Mrs Birling's charity committee** for help?
14. **Why** did **Mrs Birling** turn down her request?
15. **What fact** about the situation does **Sheila** realise **before Mrs Birling** does?
16. **What state** was **Eric** in when he met **Eva/Daisy** in the bar?
17. **How** did **Eric** get the **money** he wanted to give to **Eva/Daisy** to help her?
18. **What future event** is probably being referred to when the **Inspector** says people will soon learn a lesson 'taught in fire and blood and anguish'?
19. **Who** checks whether the **Inspector** was a **real police-officer**?
20. The play ends with a **phone call**. **Who** has phoned and **what do they have to say**?

Step 2 LANGUAGE AND THEMES

How much do you know about the language and themes of the play?

1. Here are **five quotations** from the play. Can you identify **who** is speaking (and, where relevant, who is being referred to)?
 - a) *'I'm talking as a hard-headed, practical man of business.'* (Act One)
 - b) *'You used the power you had, as a daughter of a good customer and also of a man well-known in the town, to punish the girl...?'* (Act One)
 - c) *'You were the wonderful Fairy Prince. You must have adored it...'* (Act Two)
 - d) *'You've had children. You must have known what she was feeling. And you slammed the door in her face.'* (Act Two)
 - e) *'[You] just used her for the end of a stupid drunken evening, as if she was an animal, a thing, not a person.'* (Act Three)
2. Read these **further quotations**. What **theme(s)** do you think they are linked to, or explore, e.g. Responsibility? Inequality? Why?
 - a) **Birling:** *'Take my word for it...a man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own...'* (Act One)
 - b) **Mrs Birling (to Sheila):** *'...you'll realise that men with important work to do sometimes have to spend all their time and energy on their business.'* (Act One)
 - c) **Eric (to his father, about Eva and the strike):** *'Why shouldn't they try for higher wages? We try for the highest possible prices.'* (Act One)
 - d) **The Inspector:** *'We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other.'* (Act Three)
 - e) **Eric (to his father):** *'You're not the kind of father a chap could go to when he's in trouble...'* (Act Three)

Step 3 WRITING SKILLS

A student has drafted this paragraph about the character of Gerald.

Although Gerald hid his relationship with Eva/Daisy, Priestley suggests that he is less than the others for her death. As the Inspector states about Gerald, he at least had some affection for her and made her happy for a time. Yet, we must not forget that it is Gerald who at the end of the play is the person who

1. Copy out the paragraph and add in the **missing detail** in the **first sentence**
2. Put **quotation marks** around the quotation the student uses
3. **Finish** the paragraph, completing the **last sentence**

Step 4 CLOSE ANALYSIS

Choose **ONE** of the following extracts from the play, and then respond to the task that follows.

Act	Extract to read
One	<p>From: Birling: ...Now, about this girl, Eva Smith...</p> <p>To: Eric: <i>It isn't if you can't go and work somewhere else.</i></p>
Two	<p>From: Inspector: And you've nothing further to tell me?</p> <p>To: Inspector (very sternly): <i>Her position now is that she lies with a burnt-out inside on a slab.</i></p>
Three	<p>From: Birling (unhappily): Look, Inspector – I'd give thousands – yes, thousands –</p> <p>To: Stage direction: <i>He walks straight out, leaving them staring, subdued and wondering.</i></p>



Why is the extract you have chosen important? Write one to two paragraphs (between 75 and 100 words) about:

- What it tells us about the characters or relationships at this point
- Any themes or ideas which are suggested from the language
- How the scene could link with other scenes or parts of the play

How did you do?

**NOT SO
CONFIDENT?**

Turn to the next page and complete our **INTRO PACK** to quickly get to grips with the basics

Try out the **LINKS and SUPPORT** (pp. 19–20)

**FEELING OK AND
READY TO MOVE ON?**

Check out the **WORKBOOK PAGES** (pp. 13–16) to hone your essay writing skills

Have a go at our sample **PRACTICE TEST** (pp. 17–18)

INTRO PACK

AN INSPECTOR CALLS

BY J. B. PRIESTLEY

AN INTRODUCTORY PACK FOR GCSE

This pack is a great way to get to grips with one of your key GCSE English Literature texts. Put together by the English Literature experts at York Notes, it will really kickstart your studies!

So – what's in the pack?

1. Find out about J. B. Priestley, his times and the plot of *An Inspector Calls*.
2. Explore the settings of the play – which characters and what key events are linked to these places.
3. Have a go at some warm-up tasks and activities to keep your brain active, and get a head start on your studies.
4. Follow up with our suggested links and ideas: websites, videos, and so on.

We hope you enjoy your introduction to this great text!



Who was J. B. Priestley?

Three key things about J. B. Priestley

1. He had a comfortable **middle-class** childhood.
2. He decided to **leave school** at sixteen to experience real life, working as a clerk in a wool company, while **writing articles** for local papers.
3. He **fought** and was **badly wounded** in the **First World War**, so saw the **effects of war** first hand.



What was his early life like?

- He was born John Boynton Priestley in **1894** in **Bradford, Yorkshire**, where his father was a **headmaster**.
- He went to **Cambridge University** in 1919 after fighting in the First World War.
- In 1922, he began working in London as a **journalist** and his first collection of essays, *Brief Diversions*, was published.

Why did he write *An Inspector Calls*?

- He travelled around Britain during the **Great Depression** and saw **mass unemployment**.
- He developed a concern for the working classes and the poor, and became a **socialist**.
- After the **Second World War**, many people felt the need for social change. Priestley's play about **social inequality** reflected the mood of the time.

What was the response to *An Inspector Calls*?

- *An Inspector Calls* was first performed in the Soviet Union in 1945 and in London in **1946**.
- It received mixed reviews from the British critics. Some found it too '**moralising**', but others loved it – especially the ending.
- The play was given a new lease of life in 1992, after **Stephen Daldry's** production was widely praised for its power and inventive stage set.

An Inspector Calls – the plot

An Inspector Calls is set in 1912 in the Midlands, just a couple of years before the outbreak of the First World War.

Act One, Part 1

- A spring evening at the **Birlings' house**; the Birling family celebrates **Sheila Birling** and **Gerald Croft's** engagement.
- **Mr Birling** gives a pompous speech about his views on business and the economy.
- Gerald presents Sheila with an engagement ring.
- **Eric Birling**, Sheila's brother, enters and eagerly takes a drink.
- The evening is interrupted by a police inspector.

Act One, Part 2

- **Inspector Goole** is enquiring about the suicide of a young girl (**Eva Smith**) whom he has just seen in the **hospital/infirmary**.
- He questions Mr Birling about his treatment of Eva as his **factory** worker. Birling admits he sacked her for leading a strike for more money.
- Sheila admits she met Eva in her next job as a shop assistant at **Milwards department store**. She treated Eva badly, because she was envious of her appearance, and got her fired.
- The Inspector reveals that Eva then changed her name to **Daisy Renton**, and Gerald's reaction makes it clear that he knew her too.
- Sheila confronts Gerald, who is forced to admit he knew Eva/Daisy.

Act Two, Part 1

- **Mrs Birling** enters and tries to bully the Inspector.
- Gerald reveals to the Inspector where he met Daisy, in the **Palace Variety Theatre** Bar. Now a prostitute, she was being harassed by a drunk alderman, **Joe Meggarty**.
- Gerald helped her '**escape**'. He gives further details of his affair with her, including keeping her in a friend's flat for several months.
- He recounts how she ended the affair, and went away for a while.
- Sheila expresses shame for the way she treated Eva. She gives the engagement ring back to Gerald, who goes out for a walk.

Act Two, Part 2

- Mrs Birling is forced to admit that she knew Eva/Daisy, who had come to her charitable organisation for help as she was pregnant. But Mrs Birling refused to help her.
- She objected to Eva/Daisy as she'd used the name '**Mrs Birling**' and then admitted she wasn't married so in her view had '**no right**' to call herself that.
- Mrs Birling says the father of the unborn child is to blame. Sheila tries to stop her speaking.
- There is a realisation that Eric is the father.
- Eric enters.

Act Three, Part 1

- Eric confesses that he got Eva pregnant. Mrs Birling is distressed. It is clear that Eric is a heavy drinker from his reaction to the revelations.
- Eric learns that his mother refused to help Eva when she went to her and accuses her of killing her grandchild.
- Eric reveals that he met Eva/Daisy in the **Palace Variety Theatre** Bar, and then forced himself on her back at her lodgings.
- He then saw her on several more occasions, until she told him she was pregnant.
- Eric stole money to give to her but she refused it when she found out it was stolen.
- The Inspector gives a powerful monologue on social justice and responsibility, then exits.

Act Three, Part 2

- Mr and Mrs Birling refuse to accept responsibility for Eva's death. Sheila and Eric acknowledge their part in it.
- Gerald returns, having discovered that there is no evidence of an Inspector Goole on the force.
- The family decide that the Inspector was an imposter and that there was no suicide.
- However, the phone then rings – a police inspector is on his way from the **police station** to talk to them about the suicide of a young woman.



The settings of *An Inspector Calls*

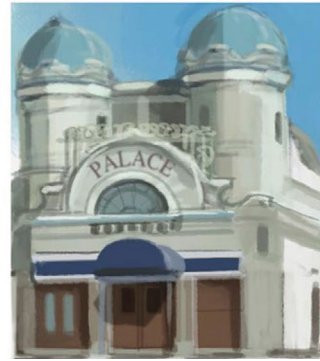
Look at these pictures of some key settings in *An Inspector Calls*. Can you label each setting with any of the important events or characters linked to it?



The factory



Milwards



**Palace Variety
Theatre**



The Birlings' house



The police station



Hospital/Infirmary

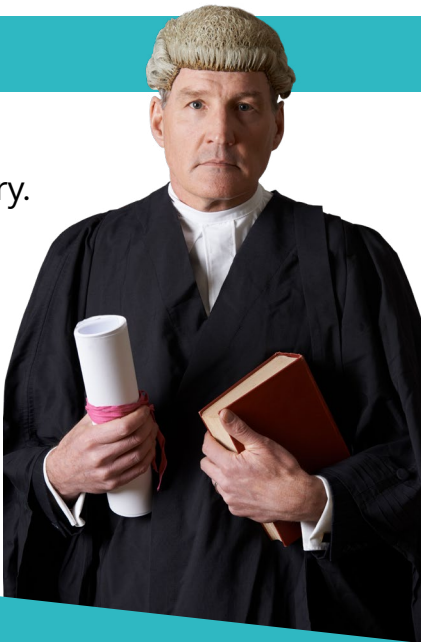
Try these tasks

1. The guilt scale

Now that you have read the plot summary or the play itself, it's time for you to take on the role of judge and jury.

Looking back over the events of the play (or the events which happened before the play began), who would you say is most responsible for Eva/Daisy's death?

Using the scale below, label it with the names of the characters from the box. Then add your evidence – why you think that person deserves to be higher or lower on the list.



MOST GUILTY	EVIDENCE?
LEAST GUILTY	



Gerald Croft



Eric



Sheila



Mrs Birling



Mr Birling

2. You, the detective

You will need to have read Act One for this and be *really* forensic in finding clues.

Priestley gives lots of hints at the start of the play about what is going to happen in the story. Can you find these clues in Act One? Either write in actual quotations or your own words what is said or happens.

Hint: They all occur before the Inspector arrives!



Clues that Eric Birling is a drinker and possibly slightly unstable. Or that he might have done something wrong.



Clues that Arthur Birling is *not* a sound judge of the future!



Clues that Arthur Birling is self-centred and likes to control people.



Clues that suggest the whole Birling family might only *appear* to be decent. (Look for what Gerald says!)



Clues that Sheila and Gerald's relationship isn't as solid as it seems to be. (Look for something Sheila says about the summer that has just passed.)

3. My perspective

Choose **one** of the following characters. Imagine they decide to write a letter to Eva/Daisy after her death to explain or excuse their actions, or to express their guilt or regret.

Sheila

Eric

Gerald



You could start it like this:

Dear Eva/Daisy,

I know this is too late for you to read, but I wanted to write to you in order to...



Well done!

Now get some more practice with some Workbook-style tasks – turn to page 13.

WORKBOOK PRACTICE



Tackling exam tasks

A01

A02

DECODING QUESTIONS

It is important to be able to identify key words in exam tasks and then quickly generate some ideas.

1 Read this task and notice how the key words have been underlined:

Question: In what ways does Mr Birling respond to the Inspector throughout the play?

Write about:

- How Birling responds to the Inspector both at the start and as the play progresses
- How Priestley presents Birling by the ways he writes

Now do the same with this task, i.e. underline the key words:

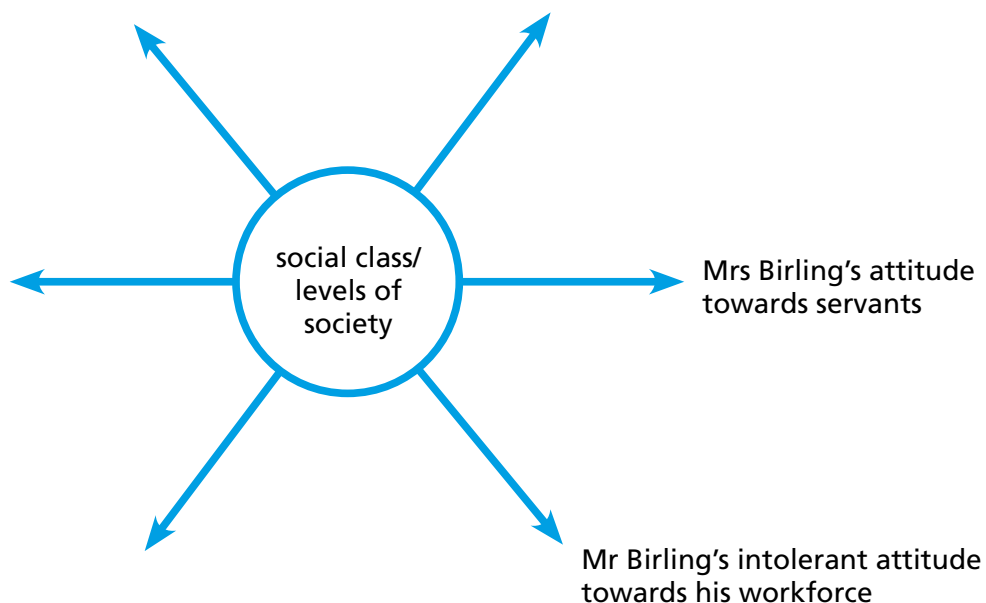
Question: How does J. B. Priestley tackle ideas about social class and levels of society in the play?

Write about:

- Ideas about social class and levels of society
- How Priestley presents those ideas

GENERATING IDEAS

2 Now you need to generate ideas quickly. Use the spider diagram* below and add as many ideas of your own as you can:



*You could do this as a list if you wish.

PLANNING AN ESSAY

Here is the **exam-style** task from the previous page:

Question: *How does J. B. Priestley tackle ideas about social class and levels of society in the play?*

Write about:

- Ideas about social class and levels of society
- How Priestley presents those ideas

③ Using the ideas you generated, write a simple **plan** with **five key points** (the first two have been done for you). Check back to the spider diagram or list you made.

a) Priestley depicts Mrs Birling's disdainful attitude to servants.

b) He depicts Mr Birling's intolerant attitude to his workforce.

c)

d)

e)

④ Now list **five quotations**, one for each point (the first two have been provided for you):

a) '*Birling*: ... Good dinner too, Sybil. Tell cook from me ...'

'*Mrs Birling*: (reproachfully) Arthur, you're not supposed to say such things –'

b) '*Birling*: ... labour trouble Don't worry. ... We employers at last are coming together to see that our interests ... are properly protected.'

c)

d)

e)

⑤ Now read this task and **write a plan of your own**, including **quotations**, on a separate sheet of paper.

Read from the stage directions '*The INSPECTOR enters and EDNA goes*' (Act One, p. 11) to the stage directions '*and now BIRLING notices him.*' (Act One, p. 13).

Question: *How is the Inspector depicted in this scene and how does Mr Birling respond to him?*

PROGRESS LOG [tick the correct box]

Needs more work ☐

Getting there ☐

Under control ☐

OPENING PARAGRAPHS

Read this task:

Question: *How does J. B. Priestley depict the relationship between workers and employers in the play?*

Now look at these alternative openings to the essay and read the expert viewpoints underneath:

Student A

Priestley depicts the relationship between workers and employers in several different ways and circumstances. As the play opens, we see how Edna the Birlings' maid behaves and is treated and the cook is also mentioned. Later we see how Mr Birling treats his workers at the factory, including Eva Smith in particular, as well as the effect Sheila Birling has on her.

Student B

Mr Birling treats his workers badly. They work for him in his factory but he does not want to pay them an increase. So they go on strike. That means Mr Birling sacks the ring leaders without thinking about them. One of these is Eva Smith. So she has to get another job.

Expert viewpoint 1: This is a clear opening paragraph that outlines some of the relationships to be discussed. It also suggests that these relationships take place in different settings and circumstances. How Sheila affects Eva Smith through Eva's employers, Milwards, should have been mentioned more fully.

Mid level

Expert viewpoint 2: This opening recounts the relationship between Mr Birling and his workers, without outlining what is to be discussed in the essay, which is the point of the introduction. Other kinds of worker/employer relationships need to be mentioned.

Lower level

- Which comment belongs to which answer? Match the paragraph (A or B) to the expert's feedback (1 or 2).

Student A: Student B:

- Now it's your turn. Write the opening paragraph to this task on a separate sheet of paper:

Read from the stage directions '*The INSPECTOR enters and EDNA goes*' (Act One, p. 11) to the stage directions '*and now BIRLING notices him.*' (Act One, p. 13).

Question: *How is the Inspector depicted in this scene and how does Mr Birling respond to him?*

Remember:

- Introduce the topic in general terms, perhaps **explaining** or '**unpicking**' the key **words** or **ideas** in the task (such as 'depict').
- Mention the **different possibilities** or ideas that you are going to address.
- Use the **author's name**.

WRITING ABOUT TECHNIQUES

Here are two paragraphs in response to a different task, where the students have focused on the writer's techniques. The task is:

Read from *'Birling: (jovially) But the whole thing's different now'* (p. 70) to the stage directions *'the curtain falls.'* (p. 72).

Question: *What techniques does Priestley use to show the impact of the Inspector's words in this scene?*

Student A

When Sheila repeats the Inspector's words she says, 'Fire and blood and anguish.' This tells us that she is afraid about the future if people do not help one another or there is no community spirit. The way Priestley chooses to repeat the words through another character drives home his message to the audience. And as we know there was trouble in the future.

Student B

Priestley chooses Sheila to repeat the Inspector's powerful words, 'Fire and blood and anguish,' so conveying her fears for future conflict if we do not care for one another. Not only has the Inspector had a profound effect on Sheila, but also the repetition of these words particularly from the mouth of a member of the wealthy class, reinforces Priestley's message that conflict will certainly occur. Ironically, we know it did, both in the conflict of two World Wars and the General Strike of 1926, when there was wide-scale industrial action.

Expert viewpoint 1: This higher-level response describes the impact that the Inspector's words had on Sheila. It also states the wider implications of the Inspector's words for the audience and gives evidence. It discusses the writer's techniques, using literary terms to good effect. The second sentence is a little long, but nonetheless links ideas very successfully.

Expert viewpoint 2: This mid-level response highlights the effect of the Inspector's words on Sheila. However, the quotation, though appropriate, is not sufficiently embedded in the sentence. There is one instance of the writer's technique mentioned but no others and in the final sentence the point made is not developed and no evidence or examples are given.

Higher level

Mid level

- ③ Which comment belongs to which answer? Match the paragraph (A or B) to the expert's feedback (1 or 2).

Student A: Student B:

- ④ Now, take another **aspect** of the scene and on a separate sheet of paper write your own **paragraph**. You could **comment** on one of these aspects:

- Mr Birling's response at the beginning of the scene
- The changes of mood throughout the scene
- The end of the play

Start your plan here and continue it on a separate sheet of paper.



Great work!

Now try a Practice question – turn to page 17.

[illegible]

Answer

Below is a short (indicative content) answer to the question on page 17 covering the three main Assessment Objectives.

For AO4, you should be aiming to:

- spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy
- consistently use vocabulary and sentence structures to achieve effective control of meaning.

Your answer could include the following:

AO1

- Gerald is part of the business world and agrees with Birling about the strike.
- His engagement to Sheila is problematic and he clearly deceived her the previous summer with his secret affair.
- His relationship with Daisy Renton shows he has a genuine side and a capacity to care and be compassionate.
- He doesn't stay with Daisy or think of what might happen when she leaves Morgan Terrace.
- His thoughts about the Inspector being a fraud show his desire to avoid his responsibilities and any blame.

AO2

- Gerald's language mirrors that of Birling at the start.
- He describes Daisy with real affection and he challenges Mrs Birling's view that his affair was 'disgusting'.
- His tone with the Inspector is linked to social status and class inequality.
- Priestley uses Gerald's accounts of the Palace Bar to show the darker side of Brumley.

AO3

- Gerald represents an older, established, landed upper class.
- He also shares the capitalist values of Birling and other factory owners of the time.
- He highlights some of the issues about class inequality in that both he and Daisy know they can't stay together.
- He also highlights the gender inequality of the time by financially supporting Daisy when she is at Morgan Terrace.

You've done it!

You have almost completed this *Pathway to Success!*
Now, check out some further links and ideas on pages 20–21.

Want to know more?

Here are some really useful and interesting resources you could check out.

Background to the play and information on J. B. Priestley himself

1. The J. B. Priestley society have a website dedicated to him and his work. There is a lot to take in here, but the section on *An Inspector Calls* includes a speech introducing a production of the play, and links to other resources, including the National Theatre's production.
Go to: www.jbpriestleysociety.com, click on 'Works' and find 'An Inspector Calls'.
2. YouTube has interesting and accessible resources on the context of the play – for example, how Priestley's own war experiences and the social conditions of the time influenced his political views.
Go to: www.youtube.com, search 'An Inspector Calls ClickView' and click on the playlist.
Also go to: www.youtube.com and search 'An Inspector Calls Historical and Social Context'.
3. The **British Library** has many excellent resources about the play in general and about Priestley's own life, including a letter he wrote to his parents from the First World War trenches in 1916.
Go to: www.bl.uk and search for 'Priestley war letter'.



Finding out more about the plot, themes and characters

1. The play has been produced numerous times, but there have been several stand-out versions. Perhaps the best known of these is Stephen Daldry's National Theatre production which has been revived several times. This has its own website where you can watch a trailer and find out a bit more about his interpretation:
Go to: **www.aninspectorcalls.com**
2. The BBC produced its own version in 2015. You can watch a trailer and clips from the production online, but as with the National Theatre production, bear in mind these are adaptations, so might have slight differences from the original. Remember, Eva/Daisy never actually appears in the original play. Just search the web for 'BBC An Inspector Calls 2015' to find them.
3. There are also various clips and podcasts with actors, directors, etc. talking about the characters and themes, as well as educational sites with explanations.

Go to: **www.youtube.com** and search for 'An Inspector Calls cast interviews BBC drama'.

4. Finally, for resources on all these aspects, the BBC website has several short videos worth watching.

Go to: **www.bbc.co.uk/teach**, click 'Secondary', select 'English Literature 14–16', click 'Invasion of the Bookreaders' to find resources on *An Inspector Calls*.



Finally, don't forget that York Notes has lots more resources to help you with your studies!

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Study Guide



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