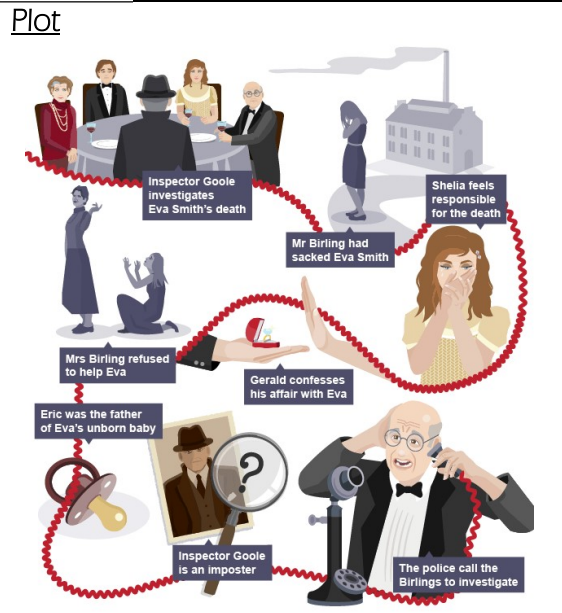




KS4 Drama Knowledge Organiser – An Inspector Calls



Dramatic Devices

Dramatic irony – Birling’s speeches, Mrs Birling’s witless implication of Eric.

Stage directions – Often revealing more about the characters (do NOT ignore them!)

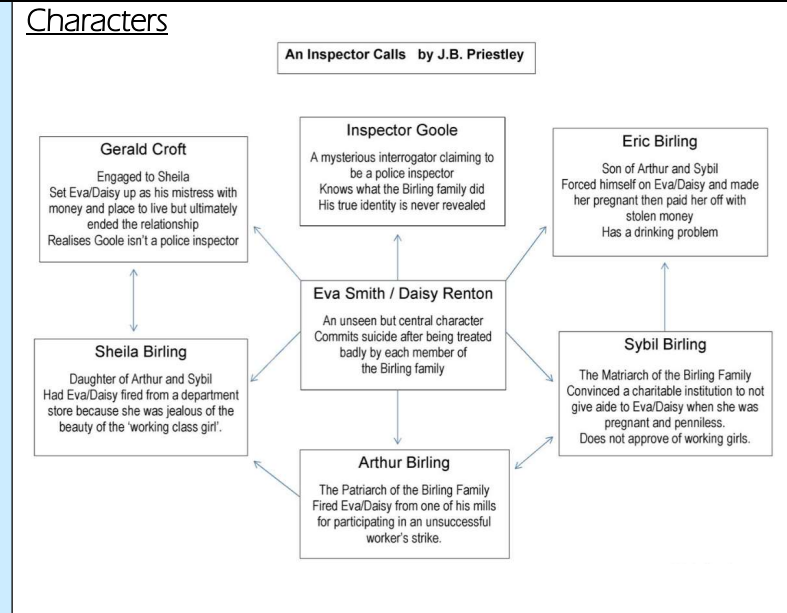
Tension – Builds throughout the play; interrogation of characters, personal relationships, secrecy.

Cliff-hanger – Eric’s reappearance in Act 3; the ending allowing the audience to make up their own minds.

Foreshadowing – Symbolism (The Titanic), Mr Birling’s “knighthood”, mention of war.

Time-lapse – Set in 1912, written in 1945; audience in privileged position.

The fourth wall – It’s suggested that The Inspector’s final speech is addressed directly to audience.



Context – Think about how these things will impact on your choice of lighting/sound/costume/set/stage space/performance...

1912
Set just before WWI and the sinking of the Titanic. A moment of rising international tensions and industrial expansion. End of Victorian era saw the demise of the rigid class system. Labour Party, founded in 1900, gaining momentum. The Russian Revolution began in 1917.

1945
People were recovering from six years of warfare, danger and uncertainty. Class distinctions greatly reduced as a result of two world wars. Women had a more valued place in society. Desire for social change. Following WW2, Labour Party won a landslide victory over Winston Churchill and the Conservatives.

Wealth, Power and Influence
The Birlings and the Crofts are representative of the wealthy upper-class. They all misuse their social influence to benefit themselves. Their actions adversely affect the vulnerable people in society.

Blame and Responsibility
Who is to blame for Eva’s death? Each of the Birlings contribute to a chain of events leading to the destruction of Eva Smith. What responsibilities do the characters have to each other? To society?

Public v Private
How do the public lives, the facades, of the Birlings juxtapose their private personas? What are their motivations for this? What are the repercussions, and for who?

Morality and Legality
What are the moral and legal laws of the society depicted in the play? How do they interweave? What actions do the characters undertake that are wrong, morally or legally?

Class Politics
How do the ideologies of capitalism and socialism collide in the play? Which characters are representative of which political allegiance? Is there a correlation between a character’s political beliefs and their behaviours?

Prejudice
What are the prejudices held by the Birlings? What are their inherent views regarding class and status? How do they act on these prejudices, and what are the consequences?

Young v Old
What differences are evident between the younger and older generation? They react and behave differently throughout the play – why? What are their attitudes towards each other? What do they learn? Which characters change, and how?