

DIGITAL THEATRE+

LESSON PLAN FOR REMOTE LEARNING
DRAMA/THEATRE

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AN INSPECTOR CALLS

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LESSON PLAN LENGTH: 60 MINUTES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Engage in detailed conversations about the elements of both a well-made play and a mystery/crime thriller
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to use elements of both a well-made play and a mystery/crime thriller by creating an original narrative
- Feel confident as they begin an early-stage analysis of the characters and situations through having an awareness of the structure and events of the play

To teach this lesson, you will need the following resources found in your toolkit:

- [An Inspector Calls | BBC Studios](#)
- [An Inspector Calls Practical Workshop Guide](#)
- [Plot Point Cards](#)

Plus:

- For the entire lesson – a video conference link for your chosen platform*
- For Exercise 1 – a pre-prepared Google Sheet* with editing rights for all students (Tip: Press 'share' to copy the link to your Sheet and make sure to change the settings to 'anyone with the link can edit'.)
- For Exercises 2 and 3 – a pre-prepared email outlining the group tasks and including necessary resources. Students will be working in groups without your supervision, so the clearer the email, the better. Make sure you include times (the times they should take to complete each activity, the time that they should meet on a group call and the time that you should all meet on a class call).

**Keeping students and teachers safe during remote education is essential. Please ensure any online platform you are using to communicate or coordinate with students is suitable for their age group and check privacy settings. For further information, see the [NSPCC guidance](#).*

For further resources to help you teach *An Inspector Calls*, including the [full-length production](#), [Practical Workshop Guide](#) and [Concise Introduction to J.B. Priestley](#), visit www.digitaltheatreplus.com

EXERCISE 1

IT'S A MYSTERY

- This activity can be carried out while on a video call together or independently at a set time.
- Share the link to a pre-prepared Google Sheet with the following four column headings: student name, titles, why and elements. Populate the first column with the names of all participating students.
- Ask students to watch a clip (11:41 – 13:57) of the production of [*An Inspector Calls*](#) found on Digital Theatre+.
- Give students time to fill in the table. Explain that in the 'title' column they should write down the titles of their favourite mysteries/crime dramas/thrillers. In the 'why' column, they should record why those titles are favourites and what it is that makes them stand out. For the 'elements' column, they should create a list of elements which they think are essential to making a great mystery/crime drama/thriller.
- Invite students to look at each other's responses on the document. If you're on a video call, draw attention to common themes and ideas which emerge. If students are working independently, ask them to pay attention to common themes and ideas which emerge as they're reading each other's responses.



ESTIMATED TIME:
15 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is to get the group working together collaboratively and agree upon common ideas and elements of a mystery/crime thriller.

EXERCISE 2

THE WELL-MADE PLAY



ESTIMATED TIME:
20 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is for the group to create an engaging narrative within the framework of a well-made play and a crime thriller, which builds to a climax and a conclusion.

This is an excellent opportunity to examine how character relationships assist in telling the story of a drama work and to introduce the idea of formulating a deeper understanding and appreciation of a drama work by considering its specific purpose or intended audience.

- In an email to students, introduce them to Aristotle's unities of action, place and time and the concept of the well-made play:
- A well-made play is a popular dramatic genre from the 19th century.
- It follows the principles of Aristotle's unities of action (focusing in on one main plot), place (the action takes place in one location) and time (the action takes place during a short period of time, no more than one day).
- Allocate students a group (of around five members) and ask them to meet on a video call together at a set time.
- Each group should take 10 minutes to create a scene from their own well-made play (this can be done as an outline, a bullet-pointed list of key plot points, etc).
- Have them create a simple domestic scene that takes place in one room of the house. In their scenes, ask them to slowly reveal something that builds to a climax – the climax should be related to something that happened before the play begins.
- Ask each group to share their play outline with the rest of the class.

Extension activity: Meet with students on a video call and have them improvise their stories based on their outlines. Discuss what has been shown.

Discussion points could include:

- How did the scene build to a climax?
- What was the story?
- Did it happen before the scene took place?
- Did the scene follow Aristotle's unities?
- How does *An Inspector Calls* fit into the category of a well-made play and a crime thriller?
 - The action focuses on the suicide of Eva Smith (which has occurred before the start of the play) and who may be responsible for her death (one plot)

- The play takes place over the course of one evening (one time)
- The setting is the Birling's house - specifically the dining room (one place)
- All of the characters, with the exception of Edna the maid, are potential suspects for different reasons (crime thriller)
- There is one inspector interrogating the characters (crime thriller)

EXERCISE 3

THE CRIME THRILLER



ESTIMATED TIME:
25 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is for students to practically experience the key plot points of the story and how they may have unfolded - providing them with a basic framework of the narrative and its structure as they prepare to read the text.

- In your email before Exercise 2, include the **Plot Point Cards** (found in your toolkit) which illustrate each character's involvement in Eva's death. Also include an answer sheet with the correct order on, making sure to tell students not to check until they've completed the activity.
- Working individually now, tell students they have two minutes to put the characters' crimes in what they believe is the correct order in which they occurred.
- Once in the correct order, students should choose two or three of the key plot points to reenact. They are welcome to use any props they have to hand. Once they have set up their scene, they should take a photo of themselves with a self timer (or have a photo taken of them if possible) to capture the moment. Have students share their photos with the rest of the group without saying which key plot point it relates to.
- Meet on a class video call. Discuss the photos and see if students can guess what each other's pictures represent. Invite your students to reflect on the ways we can make things *physically* clear (without speaking).
- Finish by asking your class what other stories (books, films, tv, plays) they can think of that adhere to the formula of a well-made play and a crime thriller. In their own time, invite them to think about how physicality plays a part in key plot points.

Further activities to enhance your lessons can be found in your toolkit or in the *An Inspector Calls Practical Workshop Guide*. You can find more resources to help you teach *An Inspector Calls* and other texts at www.digitaltheatreplus.com.

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By Sophocles

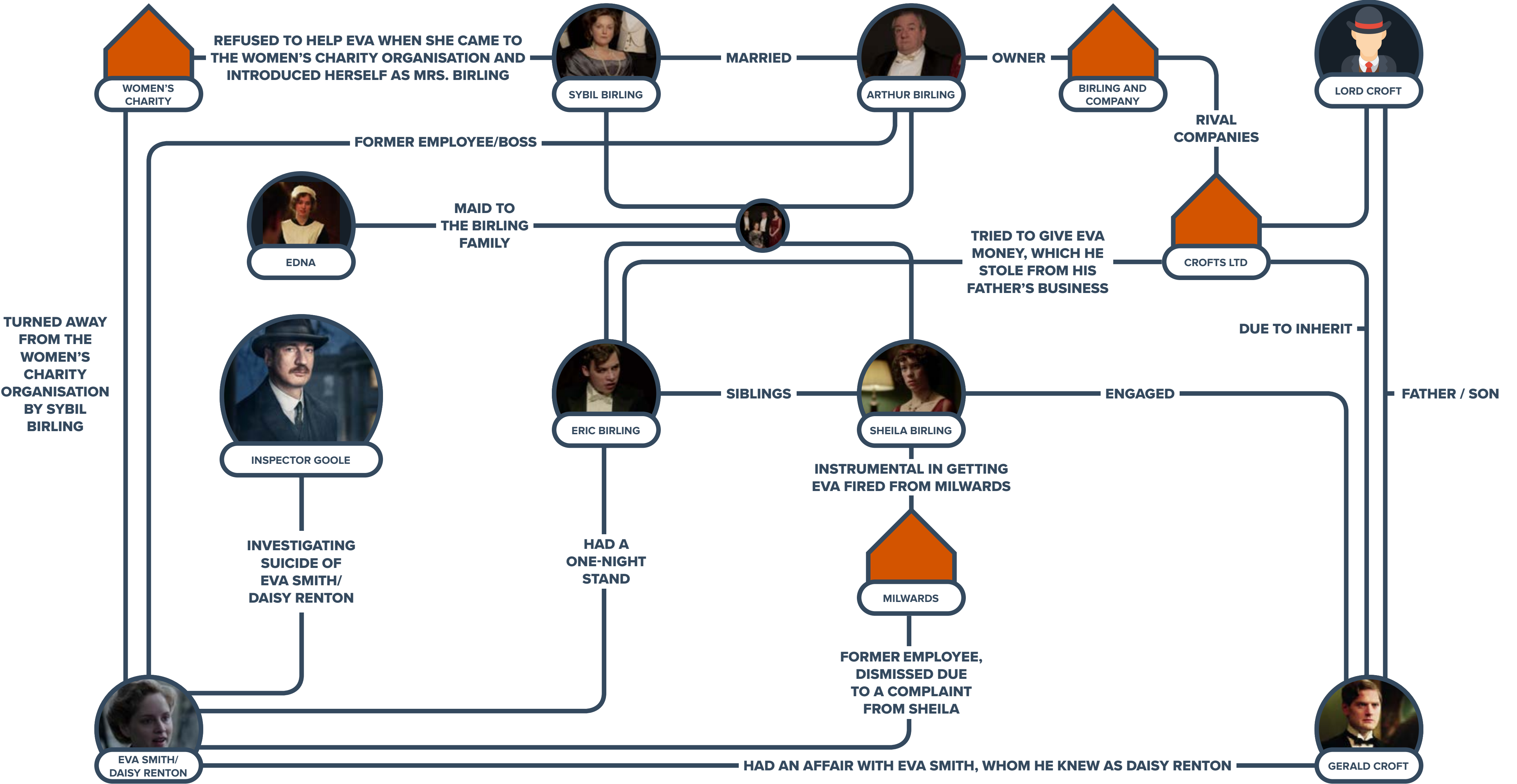
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And more!







Mr. Birling had Eva Smith fired from his factory as she was the ringleader of a group of workers who had asked for higher pay.




Sheila makes a complaint against Eva Smith at Milwards. She thought that Eva had smiled when she tried on the dress that didn't suit her. This results in her being sacked again.



Gerald admits to having an affair with Eva over the summer, which is why he did not see Sheila. However, he knew her as Daisy Renton.



Mrs. Birling refused to help Eva when she came to The Brumley Women's Charity Organisation for help. Daisy introduced herself as Mrs. Birling when she came to the charity and Mrs. Birling did not like this and sent her away.



Eric met Daisy on a night out drinking. He slept with her and she became pregnant. They both knew that they weren't in love and marriage wasn't an option, but Eric wanted to help by giving her money. She refused to accept the money when she discovered that Eric had stolen it from his father's business.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the name of the shop that Eva Smith was dismissed from after Sheila Birling made a complaint against her?

2. What is a morality play?

3. Which two of the seven deadly sins is Sheila Birling guilty of?

4. Who said, "I consider it your duty. And now no doubt you'd like to say goodnight"?

5. The damning, hell-like prophecy alluding to the war, which Inspector Goole delivers is similar to a prophecy from another play. Name the play and who gave the prophecy.

6. How did Eva Smith die?

7. Who said, "He could have kept her on instead of throwing her out."?

8. Who said, "There are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths still left with us"?

9. What is dramatic irony?

10. Name five examples of good public speaking skills.

11. What is the central message of the play?

12. Who takes on the role of the Greek chorus in the play?

13. In Greek tragedies, what was the aim of the Greek chorus?

ANSWERS

1. What is the name of the shop that Eva Smith was dismissed from after Sheila Birling made a complaint against her?

Answer: Milwards

2. What is a morality play? When were they prominent and what was the focus?

Answer: A morality play is a play that aims to teach the audience a lesson. They were prominent during the 15th and 16th centuries, and focused on the Seven deadly sins: lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy and pride.

3. Which two of the seven deadly sins is Sheila Birling guilty of?

Answer: Wrath and envy

4. Who said, "I consider it your duty. And now no doubt you'd like to say goodnight"?

Answer: Mrs. Birling

5. The damning, hell-like prophecy alluding to the war, which Inspector Goole delivers is similar to a prophecy from another play. Name the play and who gave the prophecy.

Answer: The play is Macbeth, and the characters are the witches

6. How did Eva Smith die?

Answer: She swallowed a lot of strong disinfectant and it burnt her inside out

7. Who said, "He could have kept her on instead of throwing her out"?

Answer: Eric Birling

8. Who said, "There are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths still left with us"?

Answer: Inspector Goole

9. What is dramatic irony?

Answer: When what the characters in the play say or do is understood by the audience but not grasped by the characters onstage.

10. Name five examples of good public speaking skills.

Answer: Eye contact, diction, intonation, pace, positive and open body language

11. What is the central message of the play?

Answer: We are responsible for each other.

12. Who takes on the role of the Greek chorus in the play?

Answer: Inspector Goole

13. In Greek tragedies, what was the aim of the Greek chorus?

Answer: The aim of the chorus was to narrate, and comment on, the action. The chorus provided a variety of background and summary information to help the audience follow the performance.

The following questions have been crafted to deepen and expand your students' understanding of the text. They can be used for homework or to prompt classroom discussions.

- The characters' involvement in Eva's death are all revealed on the night of a happy occasion. Why do you think Priestley chose this occasion?
- How is *An Inspector Calls* a morality play?
- Do any of the characters in *An Inspector Calls* manage to redeem themselves? If so, who and how?
- How is the theme of gender shown in the play?
- In *An Inspector Calls*, how do the characters with higher social status treat the characters of a lower social status?
- Who is Inspector Goole?
 - Is he a real inspector?
 - Was he some sort of hoaxer?
 - Was he a ghost or spirit?
 - Is he the voice of J.B. Priestley?
 - Is he something else?