

VERULAM SCHOOL
ENGLISH FACULTY



An Inspector Calls
Revision Activities



Preparing for Unit 1 Section A: An Inspector Calls

There will be a choice of two questions on *An Inspector Calls* (questions 17 and 18 on the exam paper). You have **45 minutes** to answer one of these questions.

Your answer will be assessed for AO1 (interpretation) and AO2 (analysis).

According to the mark-scheme, a top band response will show:-

-an insightful understanding of the task and the text

Does your answer actually answer the exam question?

-close analysis of detail to support opinions

Have you based your answer on specific examples from the text?

-analysis of the writer's use of language and its effect on the audience

Have you written in PEE paragraphs?

Do you use literary terms?

Do you comment on Priestley's intentions?

Do you comment on the effect on the audience?

-a convincing interpretation of the ideas and themes in the play

Do you understand how the examples you've used fit in with the bigger themes and issues in the play?

Exam questions will assess your knowledge of characters or their relationships, themes and issues in the text or will ask you to focus on a particular moment and comment on how it fits with the rest of the play.

Example questions are on the next page. Use these questions in your revision.

KNOWLEDGE OF CHARACTERS AND RELATIONSHIPS

- a) How far do you believe Mrs Birling is more responsible for the death of Eva Smith than the other characters?
- b) What do you think is Inspector Goole's role in the play? How does Priestley present him?
- c) How does Priestley build sympathy for Eva Smith throughout the play?
- d) How does Priestley present the change in Sheila during the course of the play *An Inspector Calls*? How do you think this change reflects some of Priestley's ideas?
- e) Write about the way the relationship between Gerald and Sheila develops during the play.
- f) The audience never actually meets Eva Smith but only hears about her from different characters. What does Priestley achieve by withholding Eva's character from the audience in this way?
- g) What is revealed about family relationships throughout the play?
- h) How does the younger generation differ from the older generation in the play?
- i) How does Priestley show that tension is at the heart of the Birling family?

KNOWLEDGE OF ISSUES AND THEMES

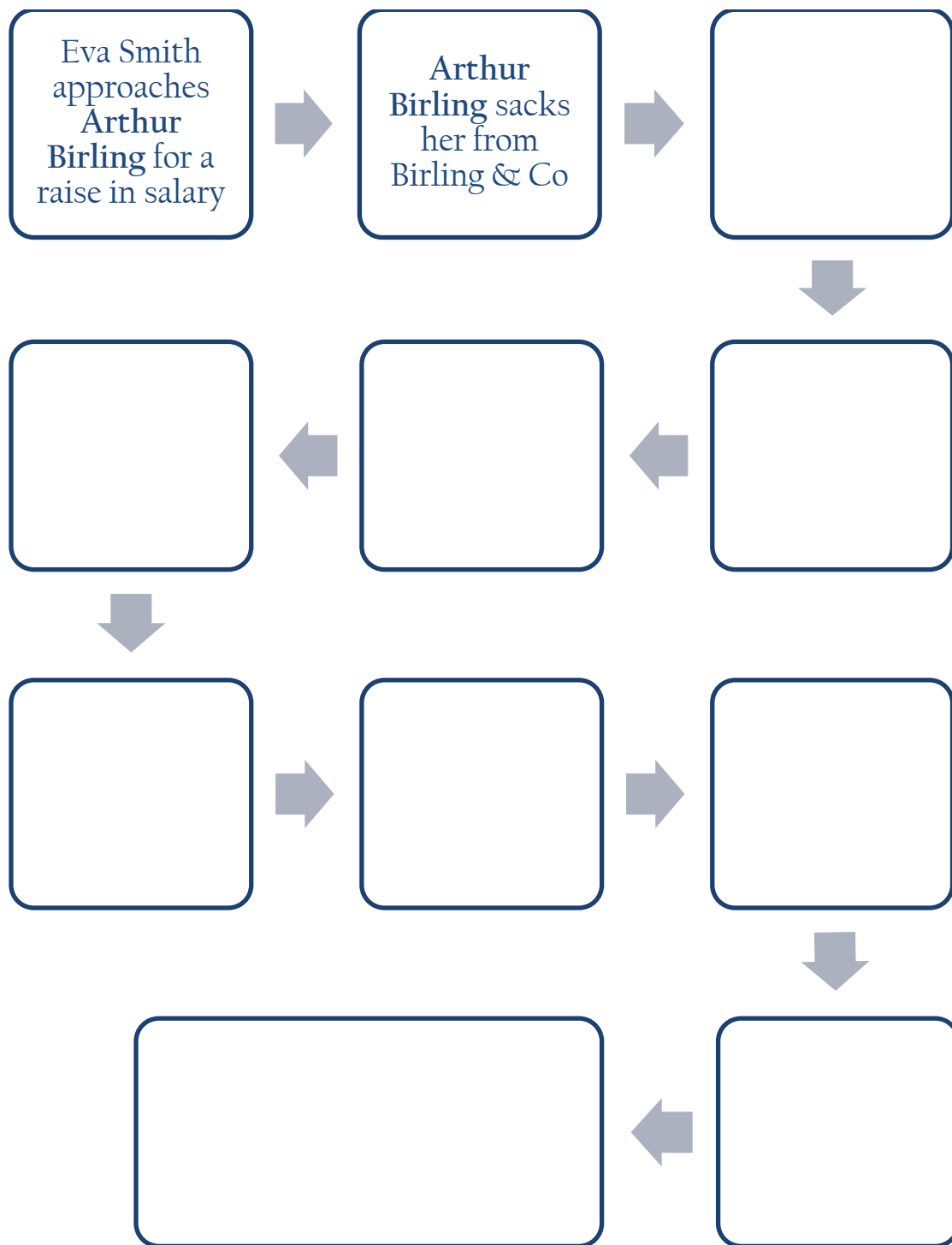
- a) "An Inspector Calls is full of lies and deceit." How far do you agree with this statement? What methods does Priestley use to lead you to your view?
- b) How is the theme of gender inequality explored in the play?
- c) How does Priestley present the theme of class differences in *An Inspector Calls*?
- d) How does Priestley present ideas about social duty in *An Inspector Calls*?
- e) How does the play explore the issue of time and the past's impact on the present?
- f) What do you think the Inspector set out to achieve? How successful do you think he is?
- g) Priestley criticises the selfishness of people like the Birlings. What methods does he use to present this selfishness?
- h) *An Inspector Calls* has been called "a play of contrasts". Write about how Priestley presents some of the contrasts in the play.

CLOSE READING QUESTIONS

- 1) In the opening of the play, how does Priestley hint at events which are to come in the rest of the play?
- 2) "The way that Priestley has written the end of this play makes it seem as though the play is about to begin all over again." How effective do you think this is as an ending to the play?

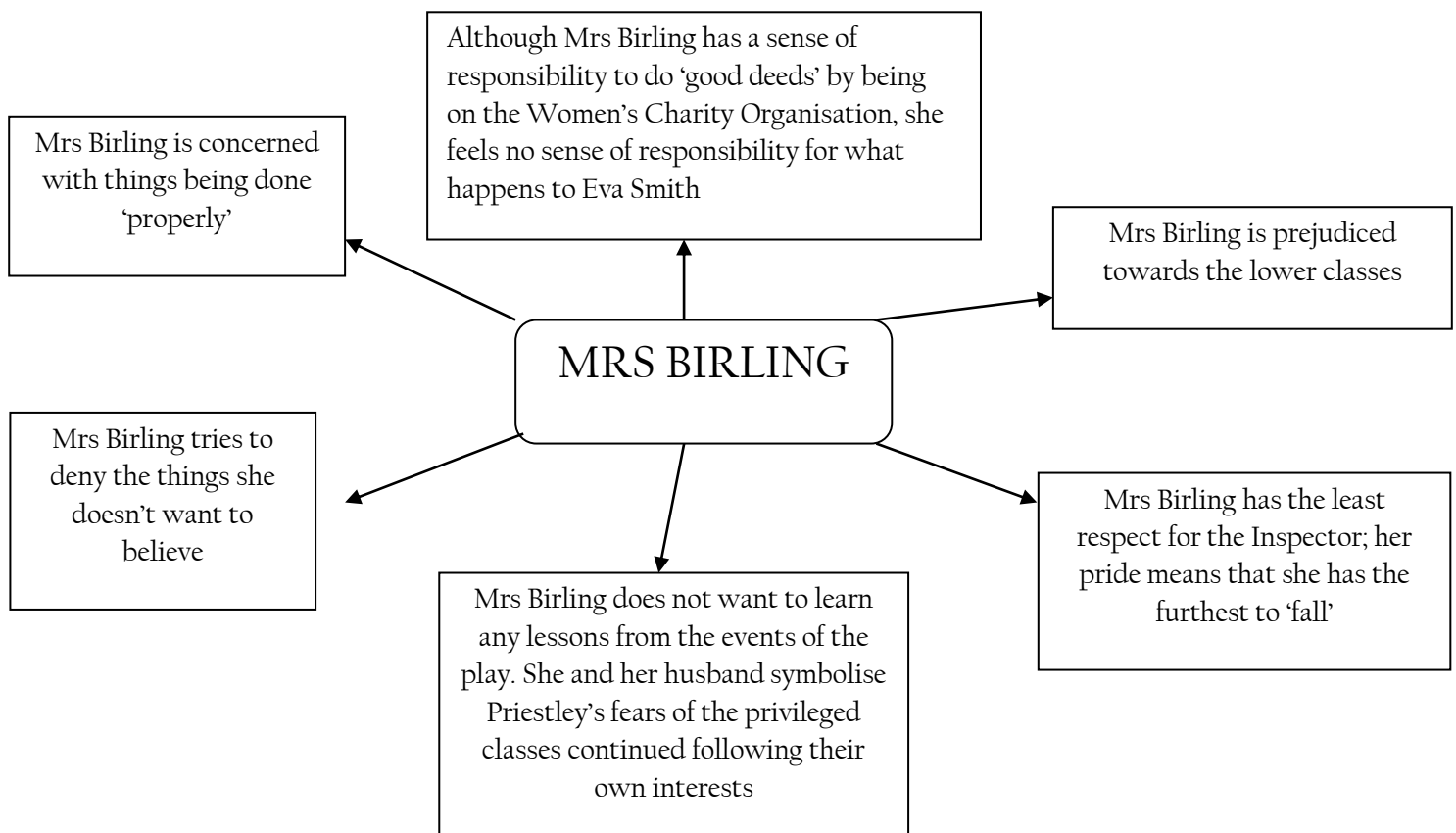
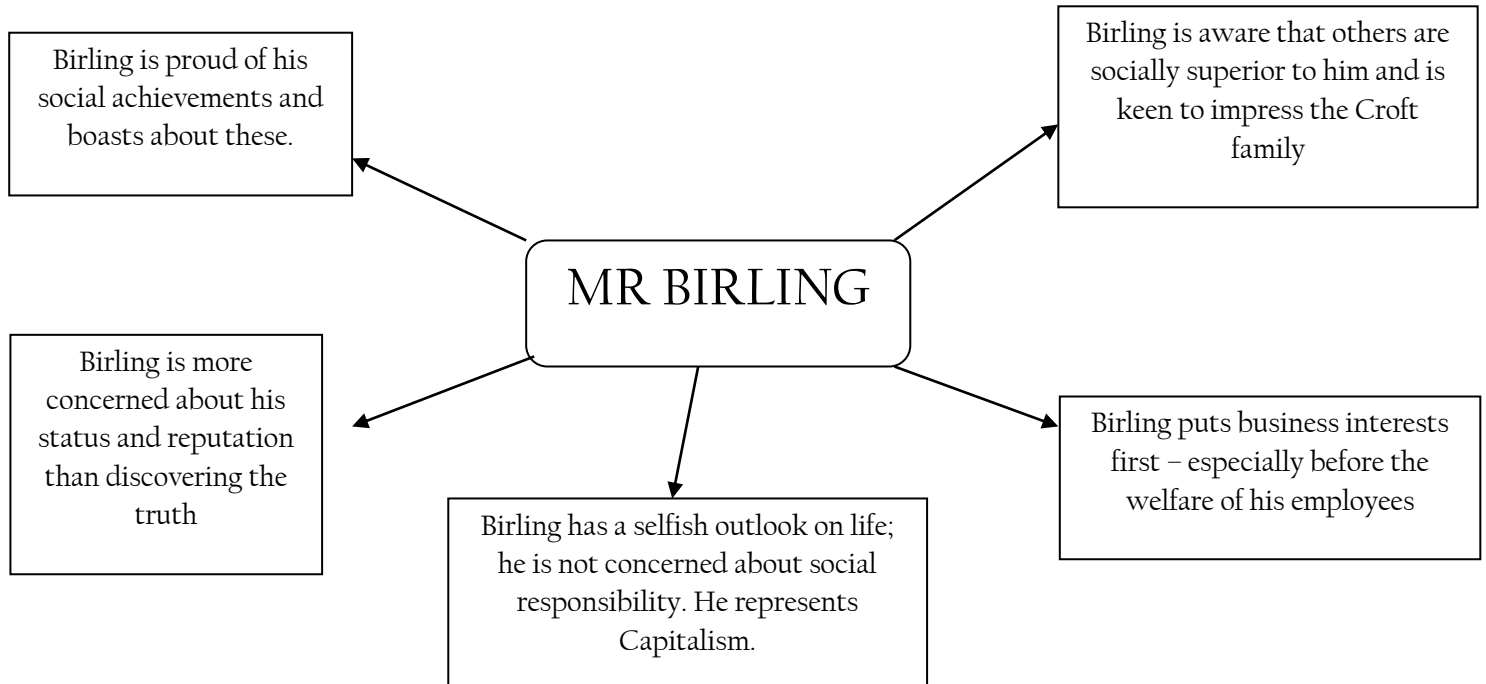
Eva Smith Chain of Events

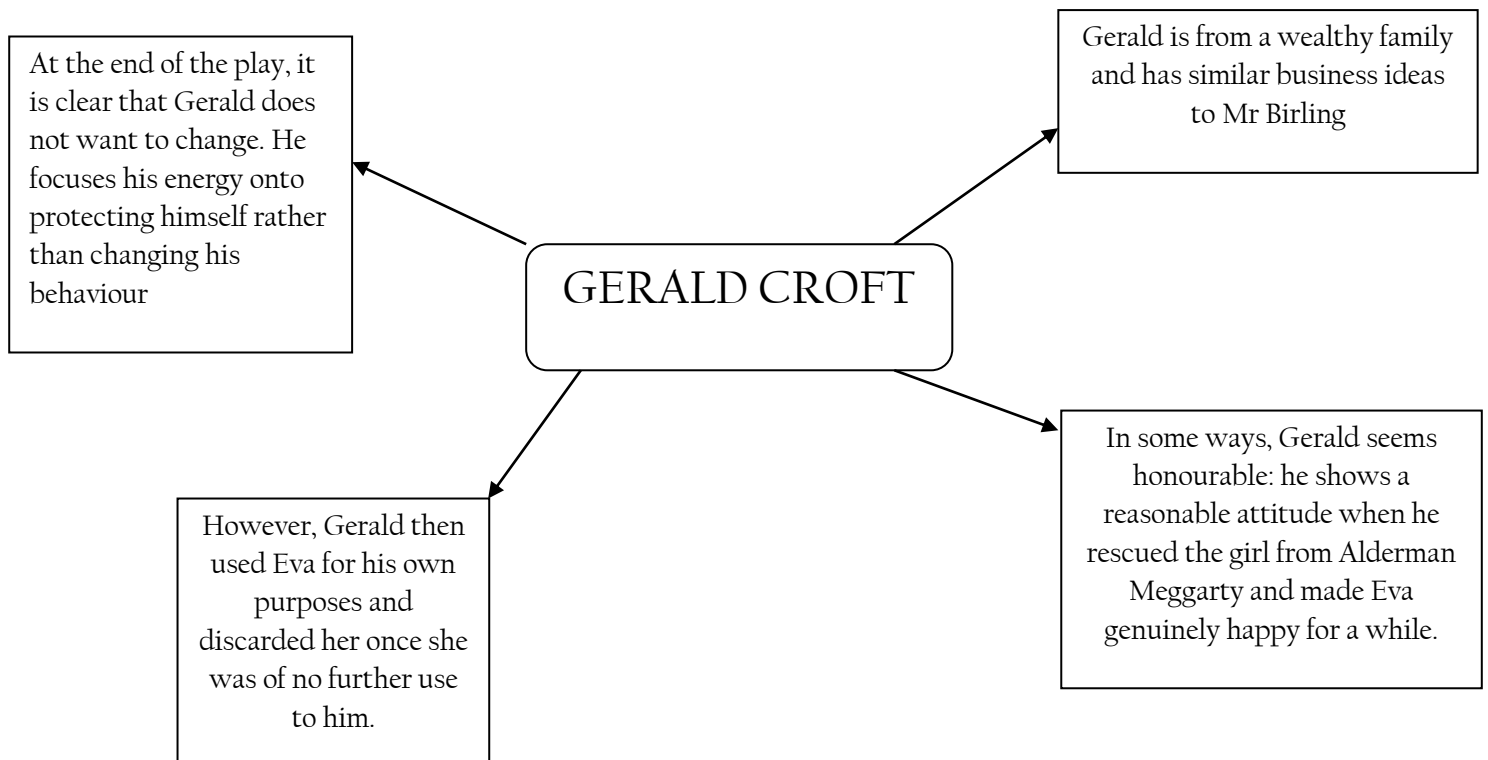
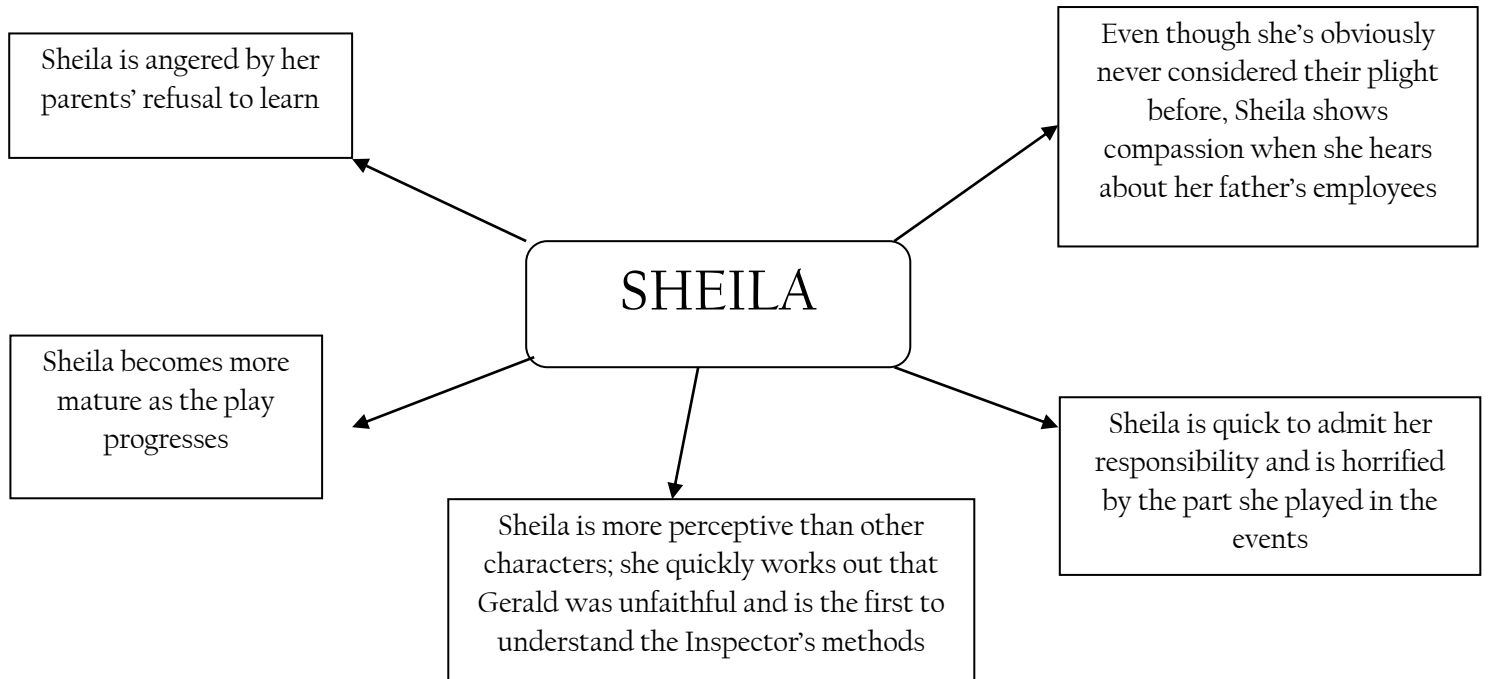
The Inspector refers to the family's behaviour as a 'chain of events'. Complete the 'chain' below to record how each of them contributed to the girl's suicide.

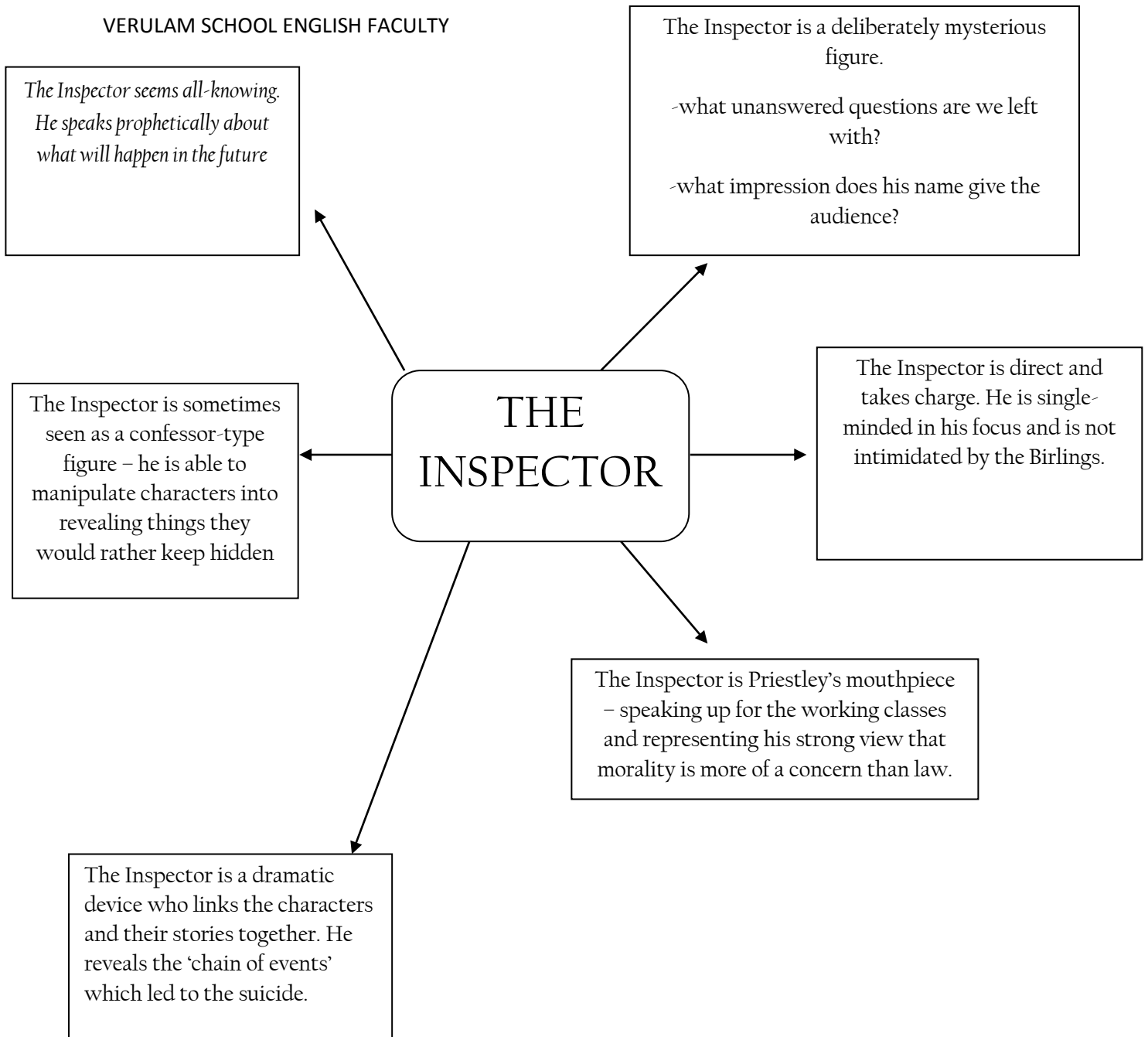


CHARACTER MIND-MAPS

Use the mind-maps below as the basis for practice essay questions. Each 'arm' of the mind-map could be a PEE paragraph but you will need to find appropriate quotations and discuss the effect of these.







KEY QUOTATION CHALLENGE

Complete the table below to develop your understanding of key quotations in the play:

Quote	Who says? To whom?	What does it show about the speaker?
Arthur, you're not supposed to say such things -		
I was awfully busy at the works all that time		
You're squiffy		
We hard-headed practical business men must say something sometime		
You seem to be a nice well-behaved family -		
A man has to make his own way - has to look after himself...		
Yes, she was in great agony.		
It's the way I like to work. One person and one line of enquiry at a time.		
If we were all responsible for everything that happened to everybody we'd had anything to do with, it would be very awkward...		
It isn't as if you can't go and work somewhere else		
I don't play golf		
But these girls aren't cheap labour - they're <i>people</i>		
A nice little promising life there, I thought...		
You've been through it - and now you want to see somebody else put through it		
You see, we have to share something. If there's nothing else, we'll have to share our guilt		

Girls of that class -		
The girl...gave me a glance that was nothing less than a cry for help		
You were the wonderful Fairy Prince. You must have adored it..		
I'm very sorry. But I think she only had herself to blame.		
I didn't even remember - that's the hellish thing		
I've got to cover this up as soon as I can		
You don't understand anything. You never did. You never even tried...		
We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other		
I suppose we're all nice people now		
And I say the girl's dead and we all helped to kill her - and that's what matters -		
You'll have a good laugh over it yet		

WHAT IS PRIESTLEY SAYING ABOUT *RESPONSIBILITY*?

Complete the table below with quotations and explanations to help you understand this key theme.

	What is their involvement with the girl?	How do they respond to the challenge of the Inspector? Do they take responsibility for their actions?
Birling		
Mrs Birling		
Gerald		
Sheila		
Eric		
Goole		

CLASS, STATUS, POWER

Complete the table below with quotations and explanations to help you understand these key themes.

	CLASS <i>What hints are we given about their social class?</i>	STATUS <i>Is this character concerned about their status and reputation? How do you know?</i>	POWER <i>What power does this character hold over other characters? Do they use their power well or do they abuse it?</i>
Birling			
Mrs Birling			
Gerald			
Sheila			
Eric			
Eva Smith			

BATTLE OF THE SEXES?

Find quotations to illustrate how Priestley illustrates the different attitudes towards gender in the play.

	How does this character (speech and action) contribute to the theme of <i>gender</i> ?	Quotations
Birling	Takes a traditional view on the roles of men and women. Treats his daughter like a little girl.	
Mrs Birling	Tells Sheila that wives must accept coming second place to their husband's work. Expects her husband to take command.	
Gerald	Gerald has exploited Eva, even if it was unintentional.	
Sheila	Unlike her mother, Sheila does not take her mother's deferent attitude to men. She asserts herself.	
Eric	Eric admits he has exploited Eva but feels guilty about it. Has not lived up to his father's expectations of what a man should be/do	
Eva Smith	Her gender made her vulnerable and a victim	

A central conflict in the play is the difference between the older and the younger generations. Use the points below to find quotations to help plan an essay about the contrast between the generations in the play.

THE GENERATIONS SPECTRUM

YOUNGER GENERATION

- Goole suggests the younger generation are more open to moral growth
- Eric feels misunderstood and overlooked by the older generation
- Eric objects to the older generations' view that they can return to normal if Goole was a hoax
- Sheila has behaved thoughtlessly and immaturely, but learns from the fright over Eva

GERALD CROFT

- In what ways is Gerald similar to the younger generation?
- In what ways is Gerald similar to the older generation?

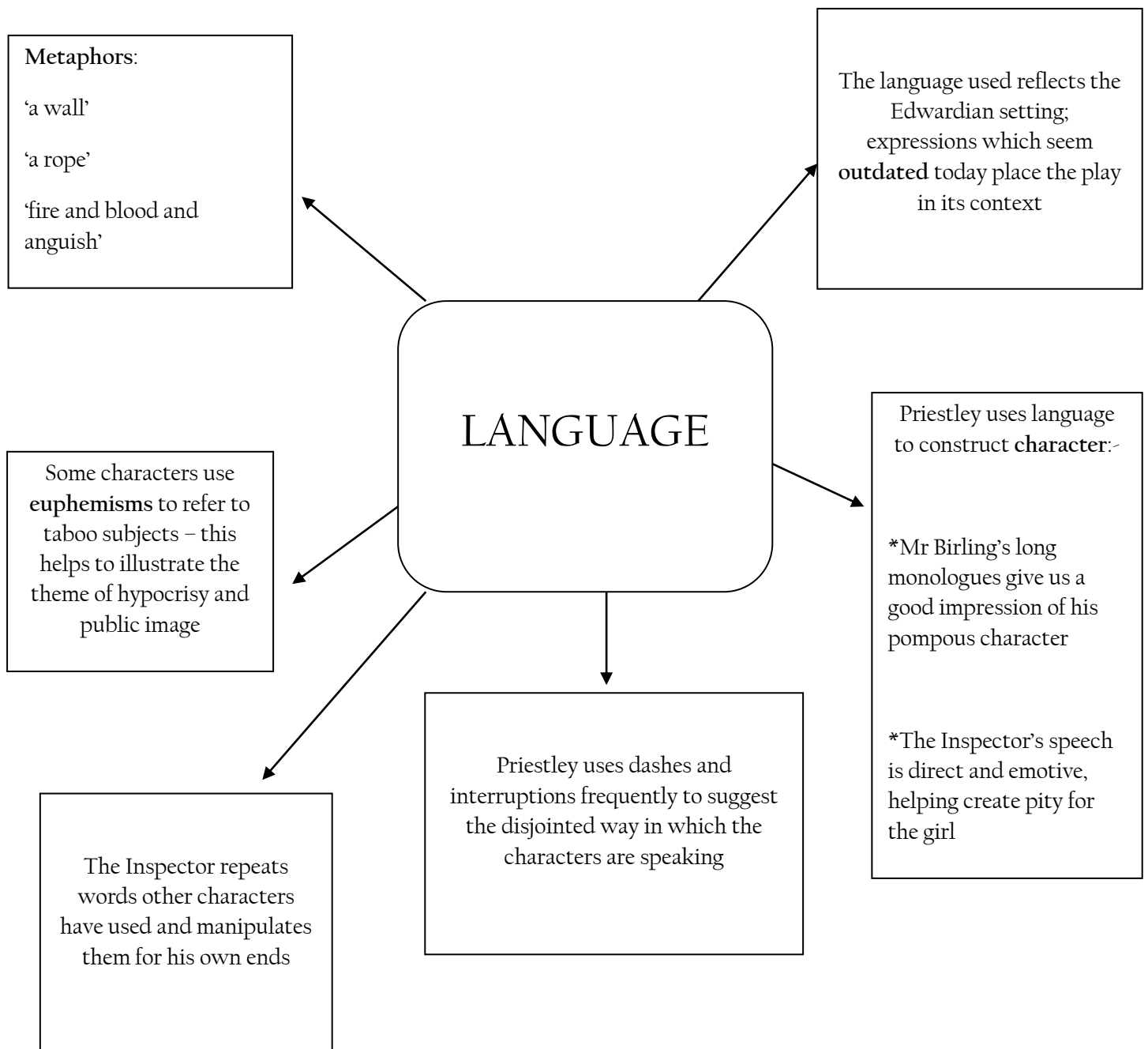
OLDER GENERATION

- Mr Birling feels his experience gives him the right to lecture his children
- Mr Birling does not learn anything at the end of the play – his only concern is avoiding scandal
- Mrs Birling tries to rule Sheila and Eric but this is ineffectual

PRIESTLEY'S USE OF LANGUAGE

Find quotations to support each of the points below. Try to identify the technique being used and comment on the effect on the audience.

Extension: consider how Priestley has used language to reinforce themes and ideas in the play



Concepts of Time in ‘An Inspector Calls’

Time is an important factor in Priestley’s play. He wrote the play for an audience coming out of the horrors of the Second World War, yet he set his play in 1912, two years before the start of the First World War. At the end of the play we are left with a sense that the events are going to start all over again. We wonder whether things will be different and how the characters will behave.

The Inspector has a mystical, almost unworldly, quality. Consider the theories of time detailed below and how they relate to the role of the Inspector.

Theory	How it relates to the play
<p>Ouspensky’s Theory: He suggests that when we die we re-enter our life once more from the beginning. We are born again to the same parents and continue to repeat all the events of our life as before. This cycle of identical lives would go on being repeated if we changed nothing of significance. If, however, we improved in some spiritual way, we convert the circle into a spiral of events that would, if we continued to make significant improvements, eventually open the way for us to escape from the repetitions and into a new life in which we did not repeat our mistakes.</p>	
<p>Dunne’s Theory: He laid out the idea that you could be given the gist of seeing forward in time as well as looking back. This would mean that just as you can look back and see what actions led to your present situation, you could also look forward to see the consequences of your actions. So, if you wished, you could change those actions and so avoid the consequences.</p>	