

# AQA English Literature GCSE

An Inspector Calls

Glossary of Key Terms



## An Inspector Calls Glossary - AQA English Literature GCSE

### Techniques - Language

**Alliteration** - the repetition of the same sound or letter at the beginning of words in close succession.

**Allusion** - an indirect reference to a concept or theme without explicit mention.

**Antithesis** - the direct opposite of a concept or person.

**Archetype** - a person or thing who is a typical example of something, usually a personality type, with clear, recognisable characteristics.

**Caricature** - an imitation where particular notable characteristics are exaggerated to a comic or grotesque effect.

**Colloquialism** - an informal word or phrase used in normal or familiar conversation.

**Connotation** - an impression, idea, or feeling associated with a word or phrase beyond its literal meaning.

**Dramatic Irony** - when the audience knows more about a situation than the characters discussing or experiencing it, meaning they know whether a character's prediction or statement is correct.

**Dichotomy** - a division or contrast between two opposed things.

**Epithet** - referring to a person or thing with an adjective or phrase that describes a defining characteristic (e.g. "the blue-eyed boy" or "the Once and Future King").

**Epitome** - a perfect example or embodiment of a concept.

**Euphemism** - replacement of a crude or offensive expression with a more vague, mild expression (e.g. "water closet").

**Foreshadowing** - giving a hint or warning of a future event, either explicitly or implicitly.

**Grotesque** - ugly and distorted, physically or figuratively, in a way that is comic or repulsive.

**Hyperbole** - exaggerating in a way that should not be taken literally.

**Imagery** - using language to create a visual picture.

#### EXAM TIP

You do not need to include every single technique listed here in your responses. Don't try to force them in. Use whichever techniques come naturally in your response, as it is more important that you have something interesting to say about the text.



**Innuendo** - an implicit remark or hint, particularly one that is supposed to be suggestive or inappropriate.

**Interjection** - a sudden remark, used often as an interruption or aside in a text.

**Juxtaposition** - two contrasting concepts or characters placed close together in a text.

**Manifestation** - a physical expression or realisation of an abstract idea through a character, object, place, or event.

**Metaphor** - describing a person, object, or concept as something it cannot literally be, but that has recognisable and defining implications for it (e.g. “the sky was a stormy sea”).

**Oxymoron** - a figure of speech where two contradictory terms are used in succession (e.g. “deafening quiet”).

**Parody** - imitating a particular style, genre, or piece of work with deliberate exaggeration to create a comic effect.

**Sarcasm** - saying the opposite of what one means or something that is obviously not true or reasonable, in order to mock or show contempt

**Satire** - using irony, exaggeration, humour, or ridicule to criticise someone’s stupidity or cruel behaviour, particularly in a political context

**Semantic Field** - using words that are linked by a particular concept, context, or connotation throughout a text or a section of a text (e.g. “fire”, “smoke”, “devils”, and “demons” could be a semantic field of Hell).

**Sibilance** - the repetition of an “s” sound in a word, sentence, or section of text.

**Simile** - comparing something to something else in a nonliteral way, in order to convey a particular idea or quality about the original thing.

**Situational Irony** - when the outcome of an event is different than what was expected by the characters and the audience.

**Symbolism** - using a character, object, or event to represent something else, particularly an abstract idea.

#### EXAM TIP

Avoid feature spotting. This is where you identify what technique an author or playwright is using for the sake of it. Make sure you have something to say about every feature you identify. A good way to do this is by including the name of the technique when you give your evidence or analysis.

For example:

- ‘The Inspector uses the allusion “Fire and blood and anguish”...’
- ‘The stage direction “pink and intimate” connotes...’



## Techniques - Structure

**Book-ending** - starting and ending a piece of literature with the same word, sentence, event, or idea.

**Chinese Box Narrative/Frame Narrative** - when a story is told within a story, often through different perspectives and forms (e.g. letters, diary entries, or word of mouth).

**Chronological** - when events are told in the order they occurred

**Cyclical** - when the same sequence of events repeats throughout a story.

**Exposition** - information provided through stage directions, narration, dialogue, or description, used to introduce the audience to crucial background information.

**In Media Res** - starting in the middle of the action.

**Parallelism** - using components that are similar in grammar, structure, or meaning within a sentence or multiple sentences, or throughout the text as a whole (e.g. "He came, he saw, he conquered").

**Refrain** - a word, phrase, or sentence that is repeated throughout a text.

**Tricolon** - three parallel clauses, words, or phrases in quick succession (e.g. "Eye it, try it, buy it").

## Techniques - Form & Genre

**Allegory** - a story, character, place, or event is used to convey a hidden meaning, typically moral or political, about real-world events or issues (e.g. Eva Smith's death is an allegory for the mistreatment of the lower classes).

**Dialogue** - a conversation between two or more people.

**Microcosm** - using a place, group of people, or event in the small-scale to represent something much larger (e.g. The Birlings are a microcosm for upper class, Capitalist society.)

**Monologue** - a long speech by one character.

**Morality Play** - a form of theatre from the Medieval era designed to teach the audience a lesson about good behaviour.

**Mouthpiece** - when the playwright places a character in the play who acts as a spokesman for their own views and beliefs.

**Parable** - a story used to teach a moral or spiritual lesson, typically told in the Bible by Jesus.



**Realism** - a form of theatre that focuses on everyday, middle-class life in order to create an illusion of reality, and suggests that individuals have the power to choose what they do.

**Real Time** - when the events in the play are happening at the same time as they would in real life, meaning there are no time jumps or periods of sped-up or slowed-down time.

**Set** - the stage, scenery, and props used to represent the setting of the play.

**Stage Direction** - an instruction given in the script of a play to indicate how a line is given, what a character should do, or how the sound effects and lighting should be used.

**Transition** - how a playwright changes between scenes or acts of a play.

**Well-Made Play** - a form of play where the plot follows a strict structure and depends on reversals of fortune, and the climax comes towards the end of the play. The story is based on a piece of information that is kept from some characters, but is known to others.

#### EXAM TIP

Remember you can discuss a quote or word without knowing the name for the technique. The quality of your analysis is ultimately more important than a wide, pointlessly complex vocabulary when talking about literature.

**Whodunit** - a murder mystery where the identity of the murderer is revealed at the end after a process of investigation and revelations.

### Key Vocabulary - Concepts

**Abuse of Power** - using your position of power to commit a crime or take advantage of someone without facing consequences.

**Accountability** - being answerable for your actions or decisions, giving an explanation for them and being totally responsible for them.

**Autonomy** - the right and ability to be able to govern yourself, including your actions and decisions.

**Bigotry** - treating those who are different or have different views from yourself with intolerance or unfairness.

**Callous** - ignoring others and their needs in a cruel and insensitive way.

**Commercialisation** - managing something or someone in a way to make them available on the market and make a profit from them.

**Commodity** - a useful or valuable object, often a raw material, that can be bought or sold in trade.



**Complacency** - a smug, confident satisfaction in yourself or your achievements.

**Conscience** - a moral sense of right and wrong that guides your behaviour.

**Convention** - the traditional way of doing things.

**Culpable** - taking responsibility and blame for a wrongdoing.

**Decadence** - a decline in morals or culture due to allowing yourself excessive pleasure or luxury.

**Degrade** - disrespecting someone and presenting them as less than they are.

**Dehumanise** - denying someone their humanity, including their emotions and independent thought.

**Didactic** - intending to teach, particularly to teach a moral lesson.

**Disillusionment** - a feeling of disappointment or dissatisfaction with something after discovering that it is not as good as you believed it was, particularly in politics and government.

**Duty** - a moral or legal responsibility or obligation.

**Ethical** - morally right.

**Exploitation** - treating someone unfairly and taking advantage of them to benefit from their work.

**Façade** - a front or mask that is put up to disguise something or someone's true character.

**Farce** - something that is a travesty or a sham to a comical degree.

**Hypocrisy** - claiming to have a certain standard or belief but acting against this standard or belief.

**Ideology** - a system of beliefs and ideals, typically forming a framework for a political policy.

**Infallible** - never failing, incapable of making mistakes.

**Infidelity** - being unfaithful to your partner.

#### EXAM TIP

To get in the highest band in the mark scheme, you need to have a **conceptual** response. This means you should recognise the wider ideas and issues that Priestley is engaging with through the text. Try to include this in your point at the start of each paragraph, and in your introduction if you can.

An easy way to ensure you do this is to consider Priestley's main intention with each point - which of these 'concepts' (e.g. social responsibility, bigotry) is he trying to address? The best responses will also focus their response on one of these concepts, and explore how it is presented by Priestley in different ways through the text.

*For example, if you had a question about Eva Smith, you could focus your response on misogyny, and in your response you might show how she was treated differently by each man in the play as a result of misogyny.*



**Ignominy** - public shame or disgrace.

**Indoctrination** - teaching someone or a group of people to accept a set of beliefs without question.

**Inherent** - being a permanent, essential part of someone or something.

**Institution** - an established law or practice, or an organisation founded for a social purpose.

**Justice** - the idea that people should be treated, rewarded, and punished fairly.

**Justified** - being reasonable or right.

**Misogyny** - hatred, contempt, or prejudice towards women for no reason other than their gender.

**Morality** - principles, either personal or social, concerning the difference between right and wrong, going beyond legality and often religion.

**Objectify** - treating someone, often a woman, as an object rather than a human being.

**Oppression** - prolonged mistreatment of a person or group by an authority or government.

**Ostracised** - being isolated or excluded from a group or society by everyone within it.

**Privilege** - the special rights or advantages an individual has, typically not because of their personal qualities or achievements, but because of their race, class, gender, sexuality, etc.

**Prejudice** - having a negative view or opinion of someone that is not based on experience or logic.

**Reductive** - presenting or viewing someone in an oversimplified way, typically disrespectful or crude.

**Repression** - forcefully restraining an emotion.

**Reputation** - how someone is viewed by the general population.

**Scapegoat** - a person who is blamed for the faults of others because it is easy to target them.

**Secular** - not linked to religion or spirituality.

**Seven Deadly Sins** - the seven sins believed by the Christian Church to be the worst sins, which lead to further immoral behaviour: the sins of pride, jealousy, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth.

**Socialite** - someone who is well-known and important in high society, and attends many fashionable social events.



**Social Responsibility** - the idea that everyone within a society has an obligation to act for the benefit of the society as a whole, and an obligation to everyone within the society.

**Stereotype** - a view or preconception of a person or thing that is fixed and oversimplified, held by most of a population.

**Stigma** - the bad reputation or view associated with a certain quality, person, or action (e.g. the stigma surrounding parenthood outside marriage).

**Toxic Masculinity** - the concept that traditional male gender roles restrict emotion in men while encouraging negative, often violent traits.

**Willful Ignorance** - choosing to avoid acknowledging or learning about something so that you don't have to make difficult decisions because of it.

**Vice** - a behaviour or trait that is immoral.

**Virtue** - a behaviour or trait that is moral.

## Key Vocabulary - Context

**Bright Young Thing** - a young member of high society in the 1920s and 1930s who was ambitious, fashionable, and infamous for outrageous behaviour.

**Capitalism** - an economic system where trade and industry are owned privately, rather than by the state, where the goal is to make and increase profits.

**Conservative Party** - the main centre-right political party in the United Kingdom, promoting private property and business and the preservation of traditional institutions, who were in power during the Second World War but lost to the Labour Party in 1945.

**Cycle of Poverty** - once an individual falls into poverty, it is impossible to get out of it unless there is outside intervention, because they lack the necessary means, such as money or education.

**Disenfranchisement** - not having the right to vote.

**Generational Divide** - the perceived difference in opinions and views between people of different ages, typically as a result of different life experiences and circumstances.

**Hierarchy** - when members of a society are ranked according to their status and wealth, with the wealthy having more power than the poor.

**Industrial Revolution** - the change from manual to automatic production in manufacturing due to new technologies and processes, leading to a large increase in urban populations. It started in the late eighteenth century and continued throughout the nineteenth century.





**Labour Party** - the main centre-left political party in the United Kingdom, promoting workers' rights and social justice, who won in a landslide victory in the 1945 election.

**Laissez-Faire Government** - an economic system where the government doesn't interfere in economic affairs, but should keep law and order, protecting an individual's rights.

**Liberal Party** - the main central political party in the United Kingdom in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, supporting *laissez-faire* government and free trade, who were in power in 1912.

**Patriarchy** - a form of government or society where power is given to and possessed by men, but kept from women.

**Social Class** - a way to divide society into groups through social status and wealth, often where those in each group are assumed to possess certain characteristics.

**Socialism** - an economic system where the means of production, distribution, and trade are owned and regulated by the whole community, where the goal is to ensure equal distribution of goods and a fairer society.

**Suffragette Movement** - the movement by women to earn the right to vote in public elections, during the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century.

**The Elite** - the richest, most powerful, most successful group in society.

**The Great Depression** - a severe, worldwide economic downturn that lasted from 1929 to 1939, causing poverty and a large drop in standards of living.

**Welfare State** - a system of government where the state protects and promotes individuals' social and economic wellbeing, following the principle that the public have a responsibility to those who cannot provide for themselves.

**Women's Suffrage** - the right of women to vote, gained in 1918 for women who owned property over the age of 30.

**World War I** - the global war between the Triple Entente (France, Russia, and Britain) and the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy), from 1914 to 1918.

#### EXAM TIP

Avoid 'bolt-ons' when discussing context. A 'bolt-on' is where you add on a contextual fact or detail to the end of a sentence or paragraph that doesn't add to the quality of your response, as it appears out of place and forced in.

Make sure you make it clear why a piece of context is relevant. Try to use your context to analyse the text, or to add another interpretation.

*For example, 'As the aim of Capitalists in the 1910s was to make as much profit as possible, Mr Birling's use of "several hundred women" and "wretched girl" to describe his workers could reflect how he was only using them for his own economic gain. This means he didn't view them as people, but as objects.'*



**World War II** - the global war between the Allies (beginning with France, Poland, and United Kingdom) and the Axis (Germany, Japan, and Italy), started by the Allies to stop the fascism and aggression promoted by Nazi Germany, from 1939 to 1945.

