**The Inspector’s Methods – how does Priestley use the Inspector to create/control conflict?**

***“somehow he makes you”***

**- Sheila**

Despite the importance in the local community of people like Gerald and the Birlings, the Inspector controls the development of events: who will speak and when; who may or may not leave; who will or will not see the photograph. He even seems to control what people say. He uses this control to create a sense of conflict between himself and those he interviews.

**1. Looking at the extracts you have been given (the interviews with Sheila and Mrs Birling), make notes on the following:**

**The Inspector’s Methods:**

1. What questions does he ask? (open/closed, tone etc.)

2. What is the effect of these questions?

3. What type of language does he use?

4. How does he respond to what is said by Sheila/Mrs Birling?

* Harsh/kind?
* Rude?
* Disregards social conventions?
* Does he focus on what is moral or what is legal?

5. Does the way he responds change at all? Why?

**The Birlings:**

1. How does Sheila/Mrs Birling respond to the Inspector?

2. What emotions does she display (e.g. anger, guilt, remorse...)

3. How does this add to/resolve the conflict?

4. How does this affect the Inspector’s methods?

**Staging:**

1. How do stage directions and props add to the sense of conflict?

Think about:

* the Inspector’s use of the photograph
* doors slamming
* entrances and exits
* other stage directions in the text

**2. How does the Inspector respond differently to Sheila and Mrs Birling? Why?**

* How has the Inspector treated Mrs Birling and Sheila differently? Why?
* How has Sheila’s response to the Inspector made her different to her mother?
* Why is this important when considering Priestley’s attitudes and ideas? What is he saying? [**Hint:** think about age and society.]

*“You began to learn something. And now you’ve stopped. You’re ready to go on in the same old way.”*

**3. Why is it important for the play that Sheila and Mrs Birling respond differently to the Inspector’s questioning? Think about:**

* The effect on audience
* The way it creates tension/drama
* JB Priestley’s own views: what was he trying to say?