RAISING ACHIEVEMENT · AN INSPECTOR CALLS · DRILL 1

Never, never again

Sheila and Eric

Today: how Sheila begins to change in Act 1

25 minutes

Do Now

Know

1. In which city is the play set?
2. What is the family celebrating when the play opens?
3. How many years separate the setting of the play from the year Priestley wrote it?
4. What is the name of the Birlings' maid?
5. What kind of business does Mr Birling own?

Do Now: answers

Know

1. In which city is the play set?
   Brumley, an industrial city in the North Midlands

2. What is the family celebrating when the play opens?
   Sheila's engagement to Gerald Croft

3. How many years separate the setting of the play from the year Priestley wrote it?
   33 years: it is set in 1912 and was written in 1945

4. What is the name of the Birlings' maid?
   Edna

5. What kind of business does Mr Birling own?
   A factory: he is a manufacturer, and Eva worked in one of his machine shops

Focus reminder

Know

What the essay question asks you to do

There is no extract. Plan from memory, using short quotations you know by heart.

Track the change: where they start in Act 1 and where they end in Act 3.

Write “Priestley presents Sheila as…” or “Priestley presents Eric as…”.

Say why: Priestley puts his hope in the young. What does he want his 1945 audience to learn from them?

Act 1: Sheila and the shop girl

Read

J. B. Priestley · Act 1, Sheila's confession about Milwards. Our guide: read it in your own copy.

After Birling sacked her, Eva found work at Milwards, a smart clothes shop. The Inspector shows Sheila the photograph. She recognises the girl and runs out of the room. When she comes back, she tells the story herself. She tried on a dress that suited the shop girl better. She thought the girl smiled at another assistant, so she told the manager to sack her, or her mother would close their account. Eva was sacked at the end of January 1911. Notice how honest Sheila is now. Find the line where she says she "felt rotten about it at the time and now I feel a lot worse". Then find her promise.