

How do stage directions present the Inspector?

Learning Outcome

To explore the Inspector's three stage entrance and the impact that this has on the characters and the plot.

Analyse how Priestley uses language to present the Inspector.

"The Inspector enters, and Edna goes, closing door after her. The Inspector need not be a big man but he creates at once an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness."

How do these stage directions present the Inspector?

Task 1- The Inspector's entrance – Read from pg. 11 – 12.

What is happening immediately before the doorbell?

What does Mr Birling assume when Edna comes to say there is an Inspector to see him?

What is the effect of the Inspector looking hard at the person he addresses before actually speaking?

Timing

In live theatre, timing creates tension and suspense and by prolonging the Inspector's entrance Priestley is able to emphasise the importance of his character.

1. Doorbell rings-attention is drawn towards the person at the door and the silence has been broken by the sound.
2. The parlour maid arrives to explain that there is an Inspector at the door. Mr Birling explains that he doesn't know him but she should show him in anyway.
3. The Inspector looks at the characters and takes a moment before speaking to them to make them stop and think about why he is there.

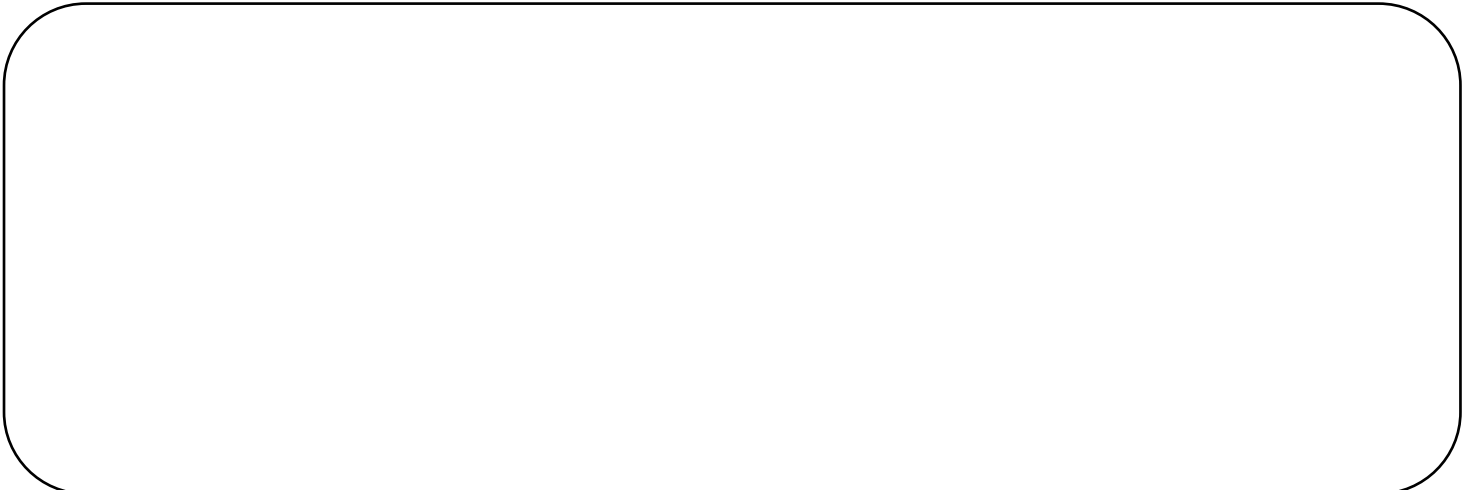
These three things add to the drama and suspense that the Inspector brings with him and this makes the audience suspicious of this mysterious character.

"The Inspector enters, and Edna goes, closing door after her. The Inspector need not be a big man but **he creates at once an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness.**"

Annotate the language used in the first set of stage directions to describe the Inspector.



What sort of man is the Inspector? How do you think he comes across in this first set of stage directions?



Task 2- The Inspector in Act 1 – Read the rest of Act 1.

How does Mr Birling first react to the Inspector?

What does the Inspector do that annoys Mr Birling?

How does Eric react to Mr Birling's treatment of Eva Smith?

How does Gerald react to Mr Birling's treatment of Eva Smith?

Why does Mr Birling mention that he knows the Chief Inspector?

How does Sheila react to the news that Mr Birling had sacked Eva Smith?

How does Mr Birling feel about his treatment of Eva Smith at the end of his interview?

Why might the inspector only show the photograph to one person at a time?

How does Sheila react to the news that she was involved in the death of the girl?

Does she try and conceal what she did?

What were some of the reasons why Sheila got so annoyed?

How does Gerald react to Eva's new name of Daisy Renton?

How does Act 1 end? What is this dramatic device called? Why doesn't it feature in the TV production?