

## ENGLISH LITERATURE

### 50 things you should know..

#### Macbeth

1. Macbeth is described as a brave Scottish general.
2. The witches tell him that he will be King of Scotland
3. Macbeth killed King Duncan to pursue his ambition to become the next King of Scotland.
4. After the murder, Macbeth lives in a state of paranoia and guilt.

#### Themes:

5. The corrupting nature of unchecked ambition;
6. the relationship between cruelty and masculinity;
7. the difference between kingship and tyranny

#### Motifs:

8. The supernatural,
9. hallucinations,
10. violence,
11. prophecy

#### Foreshadowing:

12. The bloody battle in Act 1 foreshadows the bloody murders later on;
13. when Macbeth thinks he hears a voice while killing Duncan, it foreshadows the insomnia that plagues Macbeth
14. Macduff's suspicions of Macbeth after Duncan's murder foreshadow his later opposition to Macbeth;
15. all of the witches' prophecies foreshadow later events.

#### A Christmas Carol:

Three main themes include:

16. Christmas
17. redemption
18. social injustice
19. *A Christmas Carol can be read as a moral tale, showing what can happen to a man who is consistently self-centred and unkind.*

#### Theme of Christmas

20. To highlight Scrooge's transformation from miser to cheerful man.
21. To show the importance of compassion and forgiveness, as represented by Scrooge's nephew.
22. To explore the importance of love and family, as shown through the Cratchits.

#### Theme of redemption

23. Scrooge beginning as miserable and miserly
24. Scrooge seeing the error of his ways
25. Scrooge transforming and redeeming himself

#### Scrooge changes

26. He is upset at the thought that Tiny Tim might die.
27. The Ghost of Christmas Present uses his own cruel words against him.
28. He sees what he is missing in the family scenes of celebration.

## Social injustice

29. Dickens felt strongly that Victorian society ignored the poverty of its underclass. On the one hand were the rich who enjoyed comfort and feasting at Christmas, and on the other were children forced to live in dreadful conditions in workhouses.

## An Inspector Calls

Key Themes:

30. Wealth,
31. Power, and Influence. ...
32. Blame and Responsibility. ...
33. Public versus Private. ...
34. Class Politics. ...
35. Morality and Legality
36. Set in 1912 - first performed 1946
37. **foreshadowing** · Sheila wonders why Gerald was so busy the previous spring and summer, and it is because he was having an affair.
38. Eric's drinking increases over the course of the play and is brought up early on.
39. The Inspector hints at global catastrophe, or world war, that might follow selfish behaviour.
40. J.B Priestley uses Eric and Sheila - to suggest that the young people of a post-war Britain would be the answer to a hopeful future.
41. Priestley uses Gerald to attack the upper-classes of post-war Britain.
42. Inspector Goole sheds a light on all the concerns that Priestley had at the time of writing *An Inspector Calls* around age, gender, class and social responsibility. Priestley uses the Inspector to make the audience question their own behaviour and morality and hopes that they will learn some lessons as the Birlings do. The issues the Inspector highlights are just as relevant to a modern day audience.
43. **"there are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths still left with us"** - repetition of millions emphasises his point that Eva is representative of many others.
44. **"their lives, their hopes and fears, their suffering and chance of happiness, all intertwined with our lives"** - use of emotive words helps us empathise with the victims like Eva Smith.
45. **"We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other"** - three short sentences have enormous impact and sum up his point very simply and clearly.
46. **"fire and blood and anguish"** - almost biblical, a terrifying image. Unlike Mr Birling, Inspector Goole's predictions are correct - Britain experiences two world wars. This makes him a more trustworthy character and also emphasises Priestley's views.
47. **Mr Birling** represents greedy businessmen who only care for themselves. Priestley uses him to show the audience that the Eva Smiths of the world will continue to suffer if people like Birling remain in positions of power.
48. **"my duty to keep labour costs down"** - use of 'my' shows his arrogance, 'duty' suggests he feels an obligation to do this.
49. **"Does that satisfy you? So I refused."** - asks a question and then answers it himself. Not interested in the views of others.
50. **"It's a free country"** - it might be 'free' for someone who has money and power, however, Eva Smith had neither..