GCSE English literature paper 2

JB Priestley wrote ‘An inspector Calls’ in 1945, at the end of the Second World War but the place itself is set in 1912 before the start of the First World War.

This was primarily to highlight the inequalities that were prevalent. In Edwardian 1912 to the post war audience in 1945

By 1945 there had been two world wars and millions of people had died as a result of them. Priestley wanted his audience to see that we need to learn from our mistakes or we might repeat them.

Timeline of key events between 1912 and 1945:

1912 – sinking of the Titanic

1914 – Start of WW1

1916 – Battle of the Somme

1918 – End of WW1 and some women given the vote

1926 – the General Strike

1929 – The Wall Street Crash

1933 – rise of Hitler in Germany

1939 – Start of WW2

1940 – Battle of Britain 1940

1944 – D-Day landings

1945 – End of WW2

1948 – NHS starts

In 1912, 87% of England’s wealth was in the hands of 5% of the population

8 million people had to get by on less than 25 shillings a week and as a result were underfed, lived in inadequate housing and were insufficiently clothed

Working conditions were harsh. A typical working day was 11 hours with few or no breaks

Workers had few rights or protection. They were not entitled to sufficient breaks from work

Women often did the same jobs as men but were paid less than half of what a man would get.