**Big Ideas**

**Macbeth**

1. The dangers of excessive ambition
2. The dangers of witches and witchcraft
3. The conflict between appearance and reality
4. The corrupting influence of power
5. The consequences of moral transgressions
6. The importance of honour and morality
7. The nature of kingship

* **Shakespeare explores what it means to be both a good and a bad king**

**Language and Style**

1. Macbeth is a tragic hero who both suffers and causes others to suffer
2. A number of images recur throughout the play with connections to darkness, sleep and blood
3. The witches are presented as grotesque and otherworldly figures
4. The play contains a number of soliloquies that provide the audience with important insights

* **The suffering of Macbeth elicits a range of strong emptions from the audience**

**Context**

1. James I conveniently believed that monarchs derived their power from God
2. Catholic plotters attempted to blow-up the Houses of Parliament in 1605
3. There was a widespread belief that witches existed and were harmful
4. James I felt strongly about the threat posed by witches and he wrote a book called Daemonologie

* **England was divided both politically and religiously at the time the play was first performed**

**Vocabulary**

1. Supernatural Forces that operate beyond the accepted laws of nature
2. Prophecy A mysterious prediction about the future
3. Regicide The murder of a monarch
4. Soliloquy A monologue in which a character speaks privately to themselves
5. Tragedy The story of a main character who acts in a way that proves disastrous
6. Hubris Excessive pride that results in punishment
7. Hamartia A fatal error of judgement
8. Anagnorisis A turning point where the main character recognises the true state of affairs

**Big Ideas**

**A Christmas Carol**

1. The inequalities of Victorian society
2. The struggles of the poor
3. The consequences of greed
4. The need for social reform
5. The importance of love and friendship
6. The importance of kindness and generosity
7. The influence of past events
8. The possibility of redemption

* **Scrooge’s transformation reflects the wider social transformation Dickens wanted to see**

**Language and Style**

1. The best and worst qualities of the main characters are purposefully exaggerated
2. Moments of seriousness are blended with moments of humour
3. There are several elements that are recognisably gothic
4. The narrative is non-chronological because it switches between time-periods

* **Dickens carefully crafted the novel to both entertain and gently provoke his readers**

**Context**

1. The majority of Londoners lived in poverty when the novel was written in 1843
2. London was rapidly expanding and overcrowding was a serious problem
3. The economist Thomas Malthus argued that the population would grow too large to be sustained
4. People who encountered financial problems were required to enter a workhouse

* **Dickens contradicts the popular notion that poverty was the result of moral failure**

**Vocabulary**

1. Allegory An element that reveals an important message or wider meaning
2. Bildungsroman A text that focuses on the psychological and moral growth of a character
3. Didactic A text that is intended to teach a moral lesson
4. Gothic A genre characterised by darkness, mystery, conflict and the supernatural
5. Stave Five parallel lines on which musical notes are written
6. Symbolism The use of images or objects to convey wider meanings

**Big Ideas**

**An Inspector Calls**

1. The inequalities of society in 1912
2. The struggles of the poor
3. The importance of respect and empathy
4. The importance of individual responsibility
5. The misuse of power and authority
6. The consequences of greed
7. The superficial nature of respectability
8. The interconnectedness of society
9. The conflict between tradition and change

* **Priestley emphasises the importance of working together for greater social change**

**Language and Style**

1. Dramatic irony is used to emphasise the flaws of the characters on stage
2. There is a contrast between the presentation of the ‘older’ and ‘younger’ Birlings
3. Sharp sounds and changes in stage lighting signal important moments of transition
4. The names of some of the characters have significant connotations

* **A clear generational divide emerges between the Birling family as the play progresses**

**Context**

1. There was a large gap between the rich and poor in 1912 and society was deeply divided
2. Society was becoming more equal in 1945 and there was a widespread desire for further change
3. Priestley was a socialist and the Inspector conveys his views about the importance of equality
4. Birling represents ‘hard-headed’ capitalism because he prioritises the accumulation of wealth

* **Priestley provides the audience with a stark reminder of the inequalities in 1912**

**Vocabulary**

1. Dramatic irony The knowledge of the audience is greater than that of the characters on stage
2. Capitalism A system based on private ownership and personal profit
3. Socialism A system based on shared ownership and the equal distribution of profit
4. Class Division of society based on wealth and status
5. Inequality Unequal and unfair access to benefits and resources
6. Privilege Special rights and advantages granted to individuals