Interpreting the ending

An Inspector Calls by J.B. Priestley

Task one

Read the Inspector’s last speech in the play (from ‘But just remember this’ to ‘Good night.’) What is Priestley’s message at the end of the play? How far do you agree with this message? Has your experience of studying the play so far altered your ideas about social responsibility?

Task two

Now that we understand Priestley’s message, consider the mystery created by the Inspector. Of those listed below, who do you think he could be?

- J.B. Priestley
- God
- the voice of conscience
- a dream
- a con-man/imposter
- a time traveller
- a real police Inspector
- the physical embodiment of collective social conscience.

Support your choice with evidence from the text.

Task three

Now plan an essay response to this question:

How does Priestley use the character of the Inspector to explore responsibility in An Inspector Calls?

Include some of your ideas from the tasks above, as well as how Priestley uses the Inspector as a character to present the theme of responsibility in the play.