

Circle words that apply to Mrs Birling

Capitalist Charitable Selfish

Rich Socialist Argumentative

Kind Naïve/innocent Loving

Feels Responsible Aware

Pessimistic Optimistic Proud Arrogant

Questions to answer on character

For each one: full sentences, try to prove with a quotation and analysis

Easy

- ✓ What is your personal opinion of Mrs Birling?
- ✓ How did Mrs Birling react when she found out the Inspector was not real? Why did she react in this way?
- ✓ How does she treat her children – Sheila and Eric?
- ✓ Describe Mrs Birling's view on money and status.

Medium

- ✓ How far do you agree that Mrs Birling is to blame for Eva's death?
- ✓ How does Mrs Birling treat Sheila? Why does she in this way?
- ✓ What is the most important moment in the play for Sybil Birling? Justify this.
- ✓ How would an audience of the time (1940s) react to her? Why?
- ✓ How does Mrs Birling represent a rigid class system?
- ✓ Why does Mrs Birling not take the Inspector seriously?

Hard/challenge

- ✓ Judge Mrs Birling's responsibility in the play.
- ✓ How does Sybil Birling feel about social responsibility?
- ✓ How does Priestley show the tension between the family? Link to the theme of Age.
- ✓ What does Mrs Birling value most in life? Think about her anxieties within the play.
- ✓ What does the use of dialogue tags/adverbs used for Sybil convey about her feelings towards the Inspector and his intentions?

Mrs Birling – Character Analysis

Key Quotations

Act One

(stage direction) *'a rather cold woman who is her husband's social superior'*

'When you're married you'll realise that men with important work to do sometimes have to spend nearly all their time and energy on their business.'

Act Two

'You seem to have made a great impression on this child, Inspector.'

'Girls of that class –'

'I'm talking to the Inspector now if you don't mind.'

'Eric? Oh-I'm afraid he may have had too much to drink tonight... He's only a boy.'

'I don't think we want any further details of this disgusting affair.' (about Gerald's affair with Daisy/Eva)

'First she called herself Mrs Birling –'

'I'm very sorry. But I think she only had herself to blame.'

'I've done nothing wrong and you know it.'

'I'll tell you what I told her. Go and look for the father of the child.'

Sheila: 'Mother, I think it was cruel and vile.'

Act Three

'(Triumphantly) Didn't I tell you? Didn't I say I couldn't image a real Police Inspector talking like that to us?'

'I was the only one of you not to give into him.'

'She's overtired. In the morning she'll be as amused as we are.'

Mr Birling: '...a Police Inspector is on his way here...' (*As they stare guiltily and dumbfounded*)

Character Development

Using the quotations, how does the character act/change?

Act One



Act Two



Act Three