

### Circle words that apply to Sheila 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 Sheila Birling?
- ✓ How did Sheila react when she found out the Inspector was not real? Why did she react in this way?
- ✓ How does her view of her parents change throughout the play?
- ✓ Describe Sheila's change throughout the play.

#### Medium

- ✓ How far do you agree that Sheila is to blame for Eva's death?
- ✓ What is the most important moment in the play for Sheila Birling? Justify this.
- ✓ How would an audience of the time (1940s) react to her? Why?
- ✓ Sheila is highly affected by the Inspector: 'Why – you fool – he knows! Of course he knows.' Why is this?
- ✓ Why does Sheila take responsibility and how does this impact on her and her parents relationship?

#### Hard/challenge

- ✓ Judge Sheila's responsibility in the play.
- ✓ How does Sheila Birling feel about social responsibility?
- ✓ How does Priestley show the tension between the family? Link to the theme of Age.
- ✓ Sheila is the conscience of the family. How far do you agree with this statement?
- ✓ What does the use of stage directions show us about Sheila?
- ✓ Sheila demonstrates Socialism. Link this to the context of the 1940s.

## Sheila Birling – Character Analysis

### Key Quotations

#### Act One

(stage direction) '*a pretty girl in her early twenties, very pleased with life and rather excited*'

'(Half-serious, half-playful) Yes-except for all last summer when you never came near me.'

'(Quiet and serious now) All right then, I drink to you.'

'You talk as if we were responsible-'

'But these girls aren't cheap labour. They're *people*.'

'When I was looking at myself in the mirror I caught sight of her smiling at the salesgirl, and I was furious with her.'

'Were you seeing her last spring and summer...were you?'

'Why – you fool – *he knows!* Of course he knows.'

#### Act Two

'I must obviously be a selfish vindictive creature.'

'And I know I am to blame – and I am desperately sorry...'

'(Rather wildly, with laugh) No, he's giving us rope – so that we'll hang ourselves!'

#### Act Three

'But now you're beginning all over again to pretend that nothing much has happened.'

(To parents) '...it's you two who are being childish – trying not to face the facts.'

'We hardly ever told him anything he didn't know. Did you notice that?'

'(Flaring up) Well, he inspected us, all right! ...Between us we drove that girl to suicide.'

'(Tensely) I want to get out of this. It frightens me the way you talk.'

## Character Development

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

### Act One



### Act Two



### Act Three