

Circle words that apply to Mr Birling

Capitalist Charitable Selfish

Rich Socialist Argumentative

Kind Naïve/innocent Loving

 Feels Responsible Fatherly

 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 Mr Birling?
- ✓ How did Mr Birling react when he found out the Inspector was not real? Why did he react in this way?
- ✓ Why does he care so much about what Gerald think about him?
- ✓ Describe Mr Birling's view on money and status.

Medium

- ✓ How far do you agree that Mr Birling is to blame for Eva's death?
- ✓ How does Mr Birling treat Sheila? Why does he in this way?
- ✓ What is the most important moment in the play for Arthur Birling? Justify this.
- ✓ How would an audience of the time (1940s) react to him? Why?
- ✓ How does Mr Birling represent a rigid class system?

Hard/challenge

- ✓ Judge Mr Birling's value of Capitalism in the play.
- ✓ What are the problems of Mr Birling refusing to take responsibility at the end?
- ✓ Compare the audience reactions to the character of a modern and 1940s audience.
- ✓ Mr Birling states, 'That was the police. A girl has just died – on her way to the infirmary.' Why does the writer use short sentences in this quotation and why does this end the play?

Mr Birling – Character Analysis

Key Quotations

Act One

'I'm talking as a hard-headed, practical man of business. And I say there isn't a chance of war.'

'The titanic- she sails next week'- 'Unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable'

'She was one of my employees and then I discharged her.'

'I can't accept any responsibility. If we were all responsible for everything that happened to everybody we'd had anything to do with, it would be very awkward'

"If you don't come down hard on these people they'd soon be asking for the earth."

Act Two

'(to Mrs Birling) What's the matter with that child?'

'A young unmarried girl is being dragged into this-'

'(angrily, to Inspector) Look here, I'm not going to have this, Inspector. You'll apologise at once.'

Act Three

'I've got to cover this up as soon as I can'

'(unhappily) Look, Inspector - I'd give thousands - yes, thousands -'

'You! You don't seem to care about anything. But I care. I was almost certain for a knighthood in the next Honours List'

'Nonsense! You'll have a good laugh over it yet! Look, you'd better ask Gerald for that ring you gave back to him, hadn't you? Then you'll feel better'

'We've been had, that's all.'

'The famous younger generation who know it all. And they can't even take a joke.'

'That was the police. A girl has just died – on her way to the infirmary.'

Character Development

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

Act One



Act Two



Act Three