

Write about Mr Birling and the way in which he is presented within the play [40]

- 1) **'provincial in his speech'** – What does this initial description from Priestley imply about Arthur Birling?
- 2) **'unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable'** – What does this quotation prove to the audience? What do you make of his use of language?
- 3) **'The Germans don't want war'** – How does this quote link to the previous quote? Again, what does this reinforce about his character?
- 4) **'I gather there's a very good chance of a knighthood'** – What can we learn from this quote about Mr Birling?
- 5) **'community and all that nonsense'** – Why is this message so significant within the play? What ideology is Mr Birling promoting here?
- 6) **'Well it's my duty to keep costs down'** – How does Mr Birling react during his questioning? What does this quote show? What does the term 'duty' highlight?
- 7) **'If you don't come down sharply on these people, they'd soon be asking for the earth.'** – How does he feel about his treatment of the lower classes? What do the terms 'sharply' and 'these people' show?
- 8) **'I've half a mind to report you.'** **'What did you say your name was again?'** – How does he respond to the Inspector? Why?
- 9) **'Why didn't you come to me?'** – How would you describe Mr Birling's relationship with his son, Eric? What does this quotation show?
- 10) **'I've got to cover this up as soon as I can'** – As more damning facts are revealed, what is Mr Birling's reaction? What is he keen to do? How is this different from Sheila and Eric?
- 11) **'The fact is, you allowed yourselves to be bluffed'** – Once the hoax is realised, how does Mr Birling behave? Why do you think he does this? Who else acts in this way?
- 12) **'(Raising a glass) Well, here's to us'** – Why is this toast symbolic? Where else in the play do characters toast each other?
- 13) **'You'd better ask Gerald for the ring'** – What does this comment show?
- 14) **'The famous younger generation and they can't even take a joke'** – What does this comment suggest about the state of the family and the end of the play? Why does he use the term 'joke'?
- 15) **Overall, what does Mr Birling symbolise and represent?**

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