

## *An Inspector Calls* – quotations

### Themes:

- Wealth, power and influence - WPI
- Responsibility and blame – R & B
- Public vs Private - P & P
- Class and politics - C & P
- Morality - M



Read these quotations and write in the left margin the letter/s to the theme you think they relate. Some quotations can relate to more than one theme.

- WPI  
C & P
1. **Mr Birling:** There's a good deal of silly talk about these days—but—and I speak as a hard-headed business man, who has to take risks and know what he's about—I say, you can ignore all this silly pessimistic talk.
  2. **Mr Birling:** I tell you, by that time you'll be living in a world that'll have forgotten all these Capital versus Labour agitations... There'll be peace and prosperity and rapid progress everywhere.
  3. **Mr Birling:** A man has to make his own way—has to look after himself—and his family, too, of course... But the way some of these cranks talk and write now, you'd think everybody has to look after everybody else, as if we were all mixed up together like bees in a hive.
  4. **Mr Birling:** If we are all responsible for everything that happened to everybody we'd had anything to do with, it would be very awkward, wouldn't it?
  5. **Inspector:** It's the way I like to go to work. One person and one line of inquiry at a time. Otherwise, there's a muddle.
  6. **Mr Birling:** It's a free country, I told them.  
**Eric:** It isn't if you can't go and work somewhere else.
  7. **Sheila:** I can't help thinking about this girl—destroying herself so horribly—and I've been so happy tonight.  
**Inspector:** There are a lot of young women living that sort of existence, Miss Birling, in every city and big town in this country.
  8. **Sheila:** But these girls aren't cheap labour. They're people.
  9. **Gerald:** We're respectable citizens and not dangerous criminals.  
**Inspector:** Sometimes there isn't as much difference as you think.
  10. **Inspector:** Miss Birling has just been made to understand what she did to this girl. She feels responsible.
  11. **Inspector:** If there's nothing else, we'll have to share our guilt.
  12. **Mrs Birling:** You know, of course, that my husband was Lord Mayor only two years ago and that he's still a magistrate?
  13. **Sheila:** I don't dislike you as I did half an hour ago, Gerald. In fact, in some odd way, I rather respect you more than I've ever done before.
  14. **Sheila:** We've no excuse now for putting on airs.

- 15. Mr Birling:** I've got to cover this up as soon as I can.
- 16. Inspector:** You've had children. You must have known what she was feeling. And you slammed the door in her face.
- 17. Inspector:** This girl killed herself—and died a horrible death. But each of you helped to kill her. Remember that. Never forget it. But then I don't think you ever will.
- 18. Inspector:** There are millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths still left with us, with their lives, their hopes and fears, their suffering and chance of happiness, all intertwined with our lives, with what we think and do. We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other.
- 19. Mrs Birling:** I'm sorry she should have come to such a horrible end. But I accept no blame for it at all.
- 20. Sheila:** If all that's come out tonight is true, then it doesn't much matter who it was who made us confess.
- 21. Eric:** Whoever that chap was, the fact remains that I did what I did. And Mother did what she did. And the rest of you did what you did to her. It's still the same rotten story whether it's been told to a police inspector or to somebody else.
- 22. Mrs Birling:** 'I blame the young man who was the father of the child she was going to have. If, as she said, he didn't belong to her class, and was some drunken young idler, then that's all the more reason why he shouldn't escape. He should be made an example of. If the girl's death is due to anybody, then it's due to him.'
- 23. Sheila:** Everything we said had happened really had happened. If it didn't end tragically, then that's lucky for us. But it might have done.
- 24. Mr Birling:** The famous younger generation who know it all. And they can't even take a joke.
- 25. Inspector:** And I tell you that the time will soon come when, if men will not learn that lesson, when they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish.

**Glue this sheet into your books. You will be tested on these quotations and should try to learn as many of them as you can.**