General character questions

Answer the questions with the following characters in mind:

Birling, Mrs Birling, Sheila Birling, Eric Birling, Gerald Croft

1. How is he/she involved in the death of Eva Smith?
2. What themes of the play are demonstrated by what he/she says and does?
3. Think of five words to describe him/her as a person.
4. What positive attributes does he/she have?
5. How does he/she view the Inspector? How does he/she deal with being questioned by a policeman?
6. Does he/she change during the play? If so, how?
7. Is he/she a truthful person?
8. How might he/she have avoided being regarded as partly responsible for Eva Smith’s death?
9. How much responsibility do you think he/she must take for the death of Eva Smith?

Character specific questions

Mr Birling
- How does Mr Birling make his money?
- Think of five words to describe Mr Birling as a father.

Mrs Birling
- Mrs Birling does not work. How do you think she spends her time?
- Think of five words to describe Mrs Birling as a mother.

Sheila Birling
- How does Sheila spend her days?
- How does Sheila view her parents?
- How does Sheila view her fiancé Gerald at the beginning and end of the play?

Eric Birling
- Where does Eric work?
- What does Eric need to change in his life?

Gerald Croft
- What is the ‘class difference’ between Gerald and the Birlings?
- Do you think that Gerald will make a good husband for Sheila?
### Eva Smith

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>What actually happened?</th>
<th>Which member of the family should take responsibility?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eva sacked by Birling &amp; Co.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eva employed by Milwards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eva sacked by Milwards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eva becomes a mistress</td>
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<td>Eva is abandoned by her lover</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eva finds she is pregnant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eva's application for help is turned down</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eva's suicide</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Although we never meet Eva we end up knowing a great deal about her. Write down five words that describe Eva:

What might Eva have done so that she did not feel suicide was her only option?

Do you think that Eva contributed to her own death?
**Inspector Goole**

The Inspector is an enigma. We are not sure who or what he is. In fact, how we perceive him changes during the play. In this play he is a catalyst, i.e. he speeds up change. The Inspector changes members of the Birling family but he does not alter himself.

‘Inspector Goole’ - what overtones does his name have for you? What does it make you think of?

The Inspector asks a great many questions. Think about the kinds of questions a policeman might ask a suspect. Do all the questions the Inspector asks fit into this category or does he ask some surprising questions?

Who do you think the Inspector is? Where do you think he has come from? How has he obtained so much information about Eva Smith so quickly? When do you become aware that he might not be what he says he is?

Why do you think the Inspector is so concerned about time? He mentions several times ‘I haven’t much time’?

Think of five words to describe the Inspector.

The Inspector hopes that people will learn from his visit, and that they will change. Has he been successful?

What is the Inspector trying to make us all appreciate? What message does Priestley hope that the audience will take from the play?