

Mrs birling



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

She is described at the start as " about fifty, a rather cold woman and her husband's social superior. " • She is a snob, very aware of the differences between social classes. She is irritated when Mr Birling makes the social gaffe of praising the cook in front of Gerald and later is very dismissive of Eva, saying " Girls of that class. " • She has the least respect for the Inspector of all the characters.

She tries - unsuccessfully - to intimidate him and force him to leave, then lies to him when she claims that she does not recognise the photograph that he shows her. She sees Sheila and Eric still as " children" and speaks patronisingly to them. • She tries to deny things that she doesn't want to believe: Eric's drinking, Gerald's affair with Eva, and the fact that a working class girl would refuse money even if it was stolen, claiming " She was giving herself ridiculous airs. " • She admits she was " prejudiced" against the girl who applied to her committee for help and saw it as her " duty" to refuse to help her.

Her narrow sense of morality dictates that the father of a child should be responsible for its welfare, regardless of circumstances. • At the end of the play, she has had to come to terms that her son is a heavy drinker who got a girl pregnant and stole money to support her, her daughter will not marry a good social 'catch' and that her own reputation within the town will be sullied. Yet, like her husband, she refuses to believe that she did anything wrong and doesn't accept responsibility for her part in Eva's death.