Birling: As if you'd nothing to do with us. Just remember your own position, young man. If anybody's up to the neck in this business, you are, so you'd better take some interest in it.

Eric: I do take some interest in it. I take too much, that's my trouble.

Sheila: It's mine too.

Birling: Now listen, you two. If you're still feeling on edge, then the least you can do is to keep quiet. Leave this to us. I'll admit that fellow's antics rattled us a bit. But we've found him out – and all we have to do is to keep our heads. Now it's our turn.

Sheila: Our turn to do – what?

Mrs Birling: ( *sharply*) To behave sensibly, Sheila – which is more than you're doing.

Eric: ( *bursting out*) What's the use of talking about behaving sensibly. You're beginning to pretend now that nothing's really happened at all. And I can't see it like that. This girl's still dead, isn't she? Nobody's brought her to life, have they?

Sheila: (*eagerly*) That's just what I feel, Eric. And it's what they don't seem to understand.

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. According to you, I ought to feel a lot better - ( *To* Gerald.) I stole some money, Gerald, you might as well know - ( *As* Birling *tries to interrupt*.) I don't care, let him know. The money's not the important thing. It's what happened to the girl and what we all did to her that matters. And I still feel the same about it, and that's why I don't feel like sitting down and having a nice cosy talk.

Sheila: And Eric's absolutely right. And it's the best thing any one of us has said tonight and it makes me feel a bit less ashamed of us. You're just beginning to pretend all over again.

Birling: Look – for God's sake!

Mrs Birling: ( *protesting* ) Arthur!

Birling: Well, my dear, they're so damned exasperating. They just won't try to understand our position or to see the difference between a lot of stuff like this coming out in a private and a downright public scandal.

Eric: (*shouting*) And I say the girl's dead and we all helped to kill her – and that's what matters -

Birling: ( *also shouting, threatening* Eric) And I say – either stop shouting or get out. (*Glaring at him but in quiet tone*.) Some fathers I know would have kicked you out of the house anyhow by this time. So hold your tongue if you want to stay here.

Eric: (*quietly, bitterly*) I don't give a damn now whether I stay here or not.

Using the extract overleaf, answer these questions in your book.

1. ***‘Just remember your own position, young man.’*** Write a short paragraph explaining why Birling is so keen to shift the responsibility onto Eric. What does this suggest about his own sense of responsibility?
2. What evidence can you find to suggest Birling’s own attitudes have remained unchanged since the start of the play?
3. What do you think Mrs Birling means by, ***‘behaving badly’***?
4. How does Eric’s attitude change when the Inspector’s authenticity is called into question?
5. Sheila says, ***‘And it’s what they don’t seem to understand.’*** Why is her use of the word ***‘they’*** significant?
6. Sheila says, ***‘And it’s the best thing any one of us has said tonight.’*** What does she mean by this?
7. What evidence can you find in the extract to suggest that Eric’s ideas and perspectives have been changed by what happened?
8. Find two quotations to suggest what has happened to Mrs Birling’s attitudes in the course of the play.