

*An Enemy of the People* Discussion Questions

1. Is the conflict in the play a struggle between a wrong majority and a right minority, or is it really between a manipulated majority and a slandered minority? Does this change the social implications of the play?
2. Dr. Stockman never calls their maid by her name. He refers to her as “what’s-her-name.” Does this reflect Miller’s portrayal of women in the play? If so, how? If Tom loves people so much, why doesn’t he know her name? What does that mean?
3. One critic says that the gap between the two conflicting sides is “unbridgeable.” Is this a problem of personality differences or principles?
4. Another critic asserts that it is not in Dr. Stockman’s personality to alienate himself because of his love for humanity. In what ways does loving humanity estrange you from actual people?
5. Under what circumstances does a government have a right to withhold information from the public?
6. Hovstad is said to be a “radical” but also a “newspaperman.” To what extent is it ok for the press to view their opinions? What are the benefits of unbiased reporting?

EVERYONE ANSWERS:

7. Newspapers today pride themselves on their willingness to print the truth. But does the news media today always print/speak the truth? Or are they swayed by the same pressures that Hovstad faced in the play?