

# Henrik Ibsen “An Enemy of the People”

## Discussion Handout

---

Please use specific details and page numbers from the text.

- 1) Please describe each character in relation to the general plot of the play.

### **ACT 1**

- 2) Describe each of the Stockman brothers and their relationship to each other.
- 3) What problem has Dr. Stockman found? How does his brother react?
- 4) What issues arise around “truth” and “falsity” and the reliability of knowledge?

### **ACT 2**

- 5) Describe the conversation between Dr. Stockman and the newspaper staff. Why won't they help him?
- 6) Dr. Stockman and his brother have another debate about the problem Dr. Stockman has found, and they also discuss truth, freedom, community needs, and justice. Discuss the arguments of each character. Who has the stronger arguments and why?

### **ACT 3**

- 7) How does the newspaper staff react to Dr. Stockman?
- 8) What issues and arguments do they use against Dr. Stockman?
- 9) Describe the conversation between Dr. Stockman and his wife. What is at issue here?

### **ACT 4 & 5**

- 10) Dr. Stockman calls a town meeting. Describe in detail what happens at the town meeting. What does Dr. Stockman's speech consist of? Does Dr. Stockman's speech change as he goes on? What criticisms does he make?
- 11) What does Dr. Stockman has to say about “truth,” especially in relation to society?
- 12) What is the town's reaction? What is his brother's reaction? Who agrees or disagrees with him and why?
- 13) What happens to Dr. Stockman and his family? Is justice done, and if not, will it ever get done?
- 14) Who is the assumed and/or real “enemy of the people?” Defend your interpretation with specific textual evidence.