

Name: _____

Honors English 12

Date: ____

Period ____

A Doll's House

Script Writing Activity

Step into the playwright's shoes by writing a monologue, dialogue, or scene. Through this activity, you will demonstrate your understanding of Ibsen's writing style, characterization, and dramatic purpose. You may write in either formal language as used in the 19th century or modern, contemporary language. Speeches can illustrate characters' internal or external struggles, elaborate on one of their thoughts, or depict their objectives. Your group will perform this for the rest of the class.

Ideas for script writing:

1. Pretend you are Nora in Act One. Explain to Torvald why he would be wise in hiring Mrs. Linde at the bank. Instead of playing on Torvald's ego with "she's terribly eager to come under a capable man's supervision," depict Nora as honest and straightforward.
2. Put yourself in Krogstad's shoes in Act Two. Elaborate on what you mean when you tell Nora "You can drop those thoughts. . . . Most of us think about that at first. I thought about it, too, but I discovered I hadn't the courage."
3. Take on the role of Helmer in Act Three. Instead of letting Nora slam the door and leave, verbalize your sudden hope as she refers to "the greatest miracle."

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End of Play Discussion

1. *A Doll's House* is full of references to dolls, puppets, and playthings. Trace these references throughout the play while summarizing Ibsen's ideas about gender and societal roles.
2. When Nora submits to Torvald, telling him, "Whatever you do is always right," Torvald replies, "Now my little lark's talking like a human being." But later, Nora says, "Before all else, I'm a human being." Compare and contrast Torvald's and Nora's definitions of "human being."
3. Ibsen infuses his play with vivid dramatic devices such as the many artificial lights, the letter hitting the mailbox, and the slamming door. How does the dramatic genre help tell the playwright's story in a manner unparalleled by the novel form?
4. Consider the character of Torvald Helmer. Is Torvald an antagonist? Could Torvald be just as much a victim of nineteenth century societal norms as Nora? Discuss.
5. Many Ibsen critics argue that *A Doll's House* is not a feminist play, and is more about asserting self, regardless of gender. Yet Joan Templeton, in her afterword to the Signet Classics edition of *Ibsen: Four Major Plays Volume I*, disagrees, asserting that "Make (Nora) a man, and the play becomes not only ludicrous, but impossible." What do you think? Is *A Doll's House* a play about feminism or humanism? Explain.
6. Why are there so many references to sickness and fever in *A Doll's House*? Trace these references throughout the play. What broader concern for society might Ibsen be expressing?
7. Mrs. Linde tells Krogstad, "I've learned to be realistic. Life and hard, bitter necessity have taught me that." How is *A Doll's House* a realistic play? What sets it apart from other nineteenth century dramas we've read? How does *A Doll's House* help define the realistic movement in drama?
8. At the end of the play, Nora slams the door to the "doll house" and walks away. Yet she leaves Torvald with hope for "the greatest miracle." Why did Ibsen write an ambiguous ending? Cite evidence from Nora's and Torvald's closing speeches to indicate what you believe to be the ultimate ending to this drama.