



 Prestwick House

Activity Pack

A DOLL'S HOUSE

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Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading

History

Objective: Evaluating the historical change in social norms for women

Activity

Written in 1879, *A Doll's House* was produced during a time of changing social customs. In his play, Ibsen addresses the issues of changing marital roles and the dawning of women's self-awareness.

In the first column of the **Social Norms Chart**, provide five common social practices for late nineteenth-century women that are no longer customary in today's society. The group may need to use the library or the Internet to research the time period. In the second column, show how the custom has changed by briefly explaining the modern convention. After comparing five issues, each individual in the group must complete the last column by listing whether the change is an advantage or disadvantage for women.

When each group is finished, discuss the results with the class.

One example is provided.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading

Creative Writing and Acting

Objective: Writing and acting out a scene to a retrospective play

Activity

The plot of *A Doll's House* is described as “retrospective,” which means it is modeled after a style popular with Greek playwrights. A retrospective play begins after the main event has already occurred. The play deals with the characters’ reactions to the past event and how the issue is resolved.

Each group will write and produce a single scene for a retrospective play. As a group, come up with a plot for the play, and keep in mind that the scene will commence after the main incident has occurred. Choose a person to record information as the group develops the setting and the characters’ lines. Be sure to create a character for each member of the group. Include stage directions and a description of the setting.

When the scene is complete, assign character roles to the group members. Rehearse the scene before performing for the class. Include props and costumes to enhance the production, if possible. An example is started for you.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act I**Inference****Objective:** Inferring the meaning of a passage**Activity**

A Doll's House opens with a conversation between Nora and Torvald that reveals the kind of relationship they share. Thorough understanding of their marital state is important for establishing the premise of the play.

Following are relevant marital issues that are addressed in the beginning of the first act. For each topic, cite a passage to support both Torvald's and Nora's attitude on the matter. Then write a brief statement summarizing the character's position. An example is provided.

Example:**Topic:** Household management

Torvald's quote: "There you are. [*Gives her some money.*] Do you think I don't know what a lot is wanted for housekeeping at Christmas time?"

Summary: Torvald distributes housekeeping funds for Nora to handle.

Nora's quote: "Ten shillings—a pound—two pounds! Thank you, thank you, Torvald; that will keep me going for a long time."

Summary: Nora is responsible for running the household using the money Torvald gives her.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act I**Realism**

Objective: Recognizing and citing Realist characteristics in the play

Activity

Upon its debut, *A Doll's House* caused a sensation with audiences for its uncharted context. Certain characteristics of the play help to classify it as a forerunner of Realism.

Divide the class into groups for the purpose of completing the **Realism Chart**. As a group, look for evidence in the play that supports each characteristic. Cite and briefly explain the example in the chart. Select the most accurate example if more than one is available. The first example is complete.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act II**Emotions**

Objective: Analyzing the text to locate quotes that express emotions

Activity

Tension builds as Nora anticipates her secret being revealed. She experiences a torrent of emotions, some of which she must suppress. Nora, however, is not the only character who expresses strong feelings. Nora's dilemma also enhances the emotions of her companions.

The chart below contains a list of emotions that arise in Act II. Each emotion is experienced at least once in the act. Locate and quote from the text an example of each emotion, and include the page number of the quote. An example is provided.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Acts I – II**Dialogue****Objective:** Clarifying the meaning of dialogue**Activity**

Sometimes a conversation is not clearly defined. Individuals may be unaware that they are discussing different things, or words have double meaning to one of the individuals. *A Doll's House* exhibits several instances of this loaded dialogue.

The **Dialogue Chart** contains occasions when the dialogue has more than one meaning. Read each passage and, if necessary, review the section in the book. The pages are noted for reference. In the space allotted, explain what each character is talking about or what words carry two meanings for a character.

The following is an example:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act III**Irony****Objective:** Identifying and depicting irony in the play**Activity**

Most newspapers contain at least one editorial cartoon that depicts an artist's opinion about people or events in a humorous way. The cartoonist identifies an ironic situation in politics or economics, and then draws a cartoon that demonstrates the irony of the situation. Although they are based on actual people or events, these caricatures are located on the opinion page because they are biased exaggerations. The end product is humorous yet usually controversial.

Suppose that you are the cartoonist for the *Norwegian Post*, and you wish to create an editorial cartoon based on the events in *A Doll's House*. Review Act III to locate a situation that you find humorous or ironic. In the box below, create a sketch that portrays the humorous situation through exaggeration. Include a caption if necessary.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-Up

Sequence of Events

Objective: Identifying the sequence of events in the play

Activity

Divide the class into groups. Review the **Sequence Chart**, which contains major events that occur or are referred to in *A Doll's House*. As a group, place the events in proper order by numbering them in the box provided.

Example:

- 2 Nora and Torvald are married.
- 1 Nora and Torvald meet.
- 3 Nora and Torvald have children.

As the numbers indicate, the order of events is that Torvald and Nora meet each other, marry, and have children.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-Up

Theme

Objective: Locating evidence that supports a specific theme

Activity

Appearance versus reality is a major theme in *A Doll's House*. As the play progresses, readers learn that many characters and conditions are not as they appear.

The **Theme Chart** contains instances in which things are not what they seem to be. Provide a quote from the play that demonstrates either the false appearance or the reality of each situation. Be sure to cite the page number for each quote. An example is given.