

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

A Doll's House

by Henrik Ibsen

Copyright © 2004 by Prestwick House, Inc., P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938.
1-800-932-4593. www.prestwickhouse.com Permission to copy this unit for
classroom use is extended to purchaser for his or her personal use. *This material,
in whole or part, may not be copied for resale.*

ISBN: 978-1-60389-537-8

Item No. 202182

A Doll's House

Act I

1. Nora is quite happy at the prospect of Torvald's big new salary. Suppose you suddenly come into a large sum of money. Write a paragraph describing how you got the money, how you will spend it, and how it will change your life.
2. Nora's character is portrayed as a spendthrift. A spendthrift is someone who wastes money. Describe a time when you spent money unwisely. Was it worth it? If you had to do it all over again, would you make the same expenditure? Did you learn any lessons from the experience?
3. Act I takes place on Christmas Eve, and we see Nora decorating their Christmas tree. Apparently, the Helmer's tradition is to hide the tree from the children until Christmas Eve when it is completely decorated. Choose your favorite holiday and write a paragraph describing the traditions your own family observes to make it special. Try to include various elements, such as, the history, the foods that are eaten, the activities performed, and the relatives or friends who attend.
4. Nora is very happy to see her old school friend, Christine Linde, after many years. Choose a close friend of yours and make up a conversation you might have in 10 years. Consider all the events that might have happened in that 10-year period.
5. Like Nora and Christine Linde, most people will have friends they like more than other people they know. There may be numerous reasons for this: similar interests, closeness in location, social status, etc. Compose a poem about friendship focusing on *why* people are friends.

Response Journal

6. Mrs. Linde admits to Nora that she has never loved her husband. In her reason for marrying him, she says, “My mother was alive then and was bedridden and helpless, and I had to provide for my two younger brothers; so I did not think I was justified in refusing his offer.” In light of the options available to women in that era, do you agree with her decision? Would it be as acceptable an option today? Pretend you have a friend marrying for less-than-ideal reasons. Write a letter to that friend, giving advice.

7. Mrs. Linde is very proud that she was able to care for her sick mother and young brothers. Nora is very proud that she was able to save Torvald’s life by procuring the money for their trip to Italy. Describe, in detail, an accomplishment in your own life of which you are very proud.

8. Although he speaks lovingly and teasingly, Torvald often implies Nora’s thoughts are silly and insignificant, and that she doesn’t have enough sense to handle her money. How do you think this might make Nora feel? Write a diary entry where Nora expresses her feelings.

9. Torvald has many pet names for Nora, such as “little lark” and “little squirrel.” Pet names, or nicknames, are usually forms of affection. What are some nicknames used in your family or with friends? Do you have a nickname? In what sense does the nickname describe your character or that of a friend or family member?

10. Dr. Rank says Krogstad has a diseased moral character. What do you think he means by that? List 5 character flaws that might be considered “diseased.” Then, think of one character flaw that you possess and write down what you can do to improve yourself.

A Doll's House

11. In response to Dr. Rank's position on people with diseased moral character, Mrs. Linde says, "the sick are those who most need taking care of." This statement indicates that Mrs. Linde is probably a caring person. Write a short story featuring a character that performs a caring act, and the effect it has on others.

12. Nora brags to Krogstad about her influence with her husband in getting Mrs. Linde a job. How does this get Nora in trouble? List three negative results that can occur when someone brags. Describe a personal experience that involves bragging. The bragger may be you or someone else.

13. Nora is surprised to learn that forging her father's signature on the loan document would be considered a crime, even though her motives were good and she has nearly repaid the money. Pretend you are her lawyer arguing her case in court. Write the closing statement you will present to the jury defending her actions. Remember, a closing statement is a lawyer's last chance to summarize his case, and try to convince the jury that his client is not guilty.

14. Krogstad reveals to Nora that what she has done is no more or no less than what he did to ruin his reputation. Nora says, "You? Do you ask me to believe that you were brave enough to run a risk to save your wife's life?" Do you agree that Nora acted bravely in obtaining the loan, or do you think she acted imprudently as Mrs. Linde suggests? Please explain your reason.

Response Journal

15. By obtaining the money for the trip in secret, Nora felt she did what was necessary to save Torvald's life, and also to preserve his "manly independence." She also felt that forging her father's signature on loan papers was necessary to spare her dying father anxiety and care. What do you think about her decisions? What would you have done if you were in Nora's situation? What would you have done differently?

16. Bearing in mind that honesty is the best policy, write a letter from Nora to Torvald explaining what she has done, and why. Use the information from the text, but you may add creative details.

17. Early in Act I, we see Nora as a loving mother, playing with her children and buying them Christmas gifts. However, by the end of Act I she is aghast to learn that she has unknowingly caused her little children to become depraved, and poisoned their home with her deceit. Do you think this is true? Explain why or why not.

A Doll's House, Act II

18. In the beginning of Act II, we see Nora beginning to separate herself from her children so as to avoid “poisoning” them further with her deceit. We also discover that Nurse Anne gave up a child for adoption when she was young. Make a list briefly describing the circumstances that make it acceptable for a mother to give up a child. Then, imagine that your friend is in the position where she must give up her child. In a letter to this friend, summarize her circumstances and offer her advice.
19. Nora is very agitated as she waits to see what Krogstad will do about her secret loan and the forgery. She tries to put the thoughts from her head by staying busy. She ends up brushing her muff, which is a mitten-like item. In a journal entry, explain how you handle stress. Describe the things you do when you feel stressed out and worried?
20. Dr. Rank was sickly from childhood because his father was “a horrible man who committed all sorts of excesses.” Today we have made great advances in healthcare. Research prenatal care and list 5 things pregnant women can do to increase their chances of having healthy babies.
21. Nora tells Torvald that Krogstad writes for the most scurrilous newspapers, and can do them an unspeakable amount of harm. Using the information you have from the play, write a “scurrilous” gossip column for the newspaper about Nora and Torvald, as if Nora’s secret were discovered.
22. Torvald ends up sending Krogstad’s dismissal letter because he is angered by Nora’s claim that he is narrow-minded. Think of a time when you, or someone you know, acted out of anger. Describe what happened, as well as the end result. Then, construct a more productive way you could have handled the situation.