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 **Prestwick House**
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A Doll's House

BY HENRIK IBSEN



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All references come from the Dover Thrift Edition of *A Doll's House*, copyright 1992.

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: _____

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: _____

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

Characterization and Monologue

Objective: Analyzing and relaying a character's thoughts and feelings

Activity

A character's opinion is not always directly stated in literature. Attentive reading, however, often gives insight into a character's thoughts and feelings about another character or a particular situation.

Below is a list containing a variety of situations for characters in the play. Choose a situation to use as a topic for a three-minute monologue to the class. To prepare for your presentation, re-read the area of Act III that is pertinent to your monologue. The character's opinion may or may not be openly stated; pay attention to the character's comments, behavior, and insinuations to determine his or her viewpoint.

Present your monologue as the character you have chosen. Be sure to talk in first person, and speak in a manner fitting to the character.

Situations:

- Mrs. Linde about her life experiences
- Mrs. Linde about her impressions of Nora
- Nora about her life with Torvald
- Nora about her deception to Torvald
- Torvald about his opinion of Nora
- Torvald about what is important to him in life
- Krogstad about Nora's deception to Torvald
- Krogstad about how he views himself and his actions