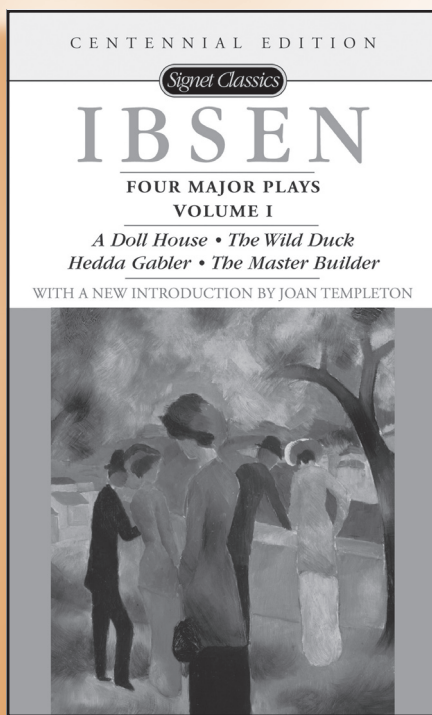




A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO THE SIGNET CLASSICS EDITION OF
HENRIK IBSEN'S
A DOLL'S HOUSE



BY **LAURA REIS MAYER**

SERIES EDITORS:

JEANNE M. McGLINN and **JAMES E. McGLINN**

BOTH AT UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT ASHEVILLE

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AN INTRODUCTION

To a generation of students raised on liberated dolls such as Barbies and Bratz, Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* uncovers a shocking secret: some dolls don't get to play the roles they really want. Ibsen's Nora Helmer is a doll trapped in her house, a condition underscored by the fact that all the play's action takes place in her own living room. Repressed by a husband who expects her to fulfill her wifely and motherly roles under strict guidelines of morality and appearance, Nora discovers she has a will of her own. Ultimately, Nora realizes there is only one path that leads to her true identity, and that path begins outside the doll house.

As a genre study, *A Doll's House* is a realistic drama that highlights the cultural conflicts of the nineteenth century. With its shocking and controversial conclusion, it marks a monumental, historic shift in the role of theater. Yet Ibsen's masterpiece remains a celebration of the art of theater. With its emphasis on individual characters, costumes, and personal props such as Nora's macaroons and tarantella dress, Ibsen's play transforms common stage conventions into a prophetic vision of a new society, one where individuals, both men and women, are free from the restraint of playing pre-determined roles.

Today's teachers are in a unique position to share the historic, theatrical, and cultural significance of *A Doll's House*. Proving the adage that "everything old is new again," FOX Broadcasting has announced a new television series scheduled to premiere in January 2009. Its central character is a woman whose job requires her to play a new personality every week. In between roles, her memory is erased. But her blossoming self-awareness and search for true identity soon mark her as subversive. The series is titled . . . "Dollhouse."

This guide is designed to assist teachers in planning a unit accessible to readers of various levels and learning styles. Ideas include opportunities for listening, speaking, writing, and creating. Pre-reading activities are provided to prepare students for reading a nineteenth century reality play, and to challenge students to think about Ibsen's themes. During-reading activities ask students to read more critically. And post-reading activities encourage students to evaluate the significance of *A Doll's House* by analyzing Ibsen's style and comparing the play to other works, including Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*, *Hedda Gabler*, and *The Master Builder*. The scope and variety of activities offered in this guide can be used selectively by teachers in focusing on the objectives of their course and the goals for their students.

LIST OF CHARACTERS

Major Characters	TORVALD HELMER	A lawyer
	NORA HELMER	Torvald's wife
	DR. RANK	Torvald's closest friend
	MRS LINDE	Nora's childhood friend
	NILS KROGSTAD	A bank clerk
Minor Characters	IVAR, EMMY, BOB	The Helmers' three small children
	ANNE-MARIE	Their nurse
	HELENE	A maid
	DELIVERY BOY	

SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY

ACT ONE

Nora Helmer enters her lovely living room laden with packages and a Christmas tree, humming a happy tune and sneaking a macaroon. Her husband, Torvald, greets her with questions about her spending, calling Nora his “little lark,” “squirrel,” spendthrift,” and “sweet tooth.” Nora reminds him that they have no worries since Torvald has just been offered a bank managerial position, but her husband opts for caution. When Torvald inquires what she desires for Christmas, Nora asks for money. Two visitors enter the house: Dr. Rank accompanies Torvald to his study, and Mrs. Linde, an old friend who has been out of touch, joins Nora. The two women share confidences, and Nora reveals that she has hidden more than macaroons from her husband. Due to Torvald’s serious illness several years prior, Nora explains, she had to finance a year of recovery in Italy. While she told Torvald that her father had left them the money, Nora actually forged her father’s signature and borrowed the money from a lawyer named Krogstad. Justifying her dishonesty by saving Torvald’s health and pride, Nora explains that she has been secretly working to pay off the loan, and she is almost free of her debt. Krogstad enters next, hoping to salvage his position at the bank by speaking to Torvald. After Krogstad leaves, Nora is able to talk Torvald into giving Mrs. Linde a position at the bank. Torvald, Dr. Rank, and Mrs. Linde leave, and Nora visits with her three children. Krogstad returns with a threat: Nora must get Torvald to keep Krogstad’s position at the bank, or Krogstad will reveal Nora’s deception and forgery. Upon Torvald’s return, Nora questions him about Krogstad’s past, and Torvald explains that Krogstad lost his own reputation due to forgery. Declaring that such a lie “infects the whole life of a home,” Helmer returns to his study, leaving Nora anxious but determined.

ACT TWO

The curtain rises on the same room the next day, which is Christmas. Nora paces frantically, anxious that Krogstad will return to reveal her forgery to Torvald. The nurse enters with a box of masquerade clothes for the next evening’s festivities, and Nora questions her about children who grow up without mothers. Kristine Linde enters, and as she helps Nora repair her masquerade dress, Nora confides in her friend once again. Assuring Kristine that she did not get the money from Dr. Rank, Nora asks Mrs. Linde to play with the children while she speaks to Torvald. Promising “to scamper about and do tricks” if only Torvald would give in, Nora asks her husband to keep Krogstad at the bank. Reminding her that rumors would spread about his wife’s influence, Torvald denies Nora’s request. When she says his concerns about propriety are “petty,” Torvald becomes incensed and sends Krogstad’s termination letter to his home. Dr. Rank confides to Nora that he is dying and that he has loved her for years. Unable to ask the doctor for help after his admission, Nora asks for a lamp to be brought in. Krogstad, having received his termination, returns to threaten Nora again, and the two admit that though they have both considered suicide, neither can brave it. Krogstad leaves, but his letter revealing all is clearly heard entering the mail slot. Nora keeps Torvald from reading the letter by begging his help with the tarantella dance she will perform at the masquerade. Dancing frenetically as though her “life were at stake,” Nora keeps Torvald occupied re-teaching her the dance. But tomorrow night, she promises him, “then you’ll be free.”

ACT THREE

The act opens, once again, in the Helmer's living room, where Kristine Linde awaits the Helmers' return from the party upstairs. Nora has just danced the tarantella. As Mrs. Linde waits, Krogstad arrives at her request. Kristine asks Krogstad to give them a second chance at a relationship. Krogstad agrees, promising to retrieve his letter of revelation, but Kristine convinces him to let the truth come to light for the good of both Nora and Torvald. The Helmers arrive from the party, Kristine leaves, and Torvald's amorous mood is interrupted by a visit from Dr. Rank, who leaves his calling card marked by the black cross that announces his impending death. Helmer tells Nora that he has often wished for some danger to befall her so that he can rescue her, and Nora seizes this opportunity to encourage Torvald to read Krogstad's letter. Torvald reads it and immediately chastises Nora, claiming she has wrecked his happiness and ruined his future. Torvald explains that Nora can stay in the house but will be unfit to raise the children. "From now on," Torvald claims, "happiness doesn't matter; all that matters is . . . the appearance." When a letter arrives including Nora's cancelled debt, Torvald is happy again. But Nora is forever changed by her husband's reaction, and after removing her masquerade costume, she sits down with Torvald to share the first serious conversation of their eight year marriage. Declaring she has been "wronged greatly" by both her father and her husband, Nora compares her existence in their homes to a doll in a doll house. When Torvald declares his wife cannot leave because her husband and children are her "most sacred duties," Nora responds with "I have other duties equally sacred. . . . Before all else, I'm a human being." Nora is determined to remain strangers unless "the greatest miracle of all" could happen – the ability to live together in a "true marriage." Nora departs, and the audience is left with the sound of a door slamming shut.

PREREADING ACTIVITIES

These activities are designed to deepen students' background knowledge of literary symbols and traditions, and to introduce them to the play's major themes. (Note: Consult other Teacher's Guides to Signet Classics; they contain ideas that can be adapted to prepare students to read and enjoy this play).

I. BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE IN LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION TO *A DOLL'S HOUSE*

TREASURE HUNT

One way to arouse students' interest in studying any play is to have them bring or draw objects which are connected to the plot, characters, or theme of the play. You can provide students with a list if you want to do this activity before they read the play OR they can brainstorm a list after they read different parts of the play or as a post-reading activity. Students can gather or create a range of objects, from easy to difficult, to bring to class to organize displays. Here are a few suggestions for a class reading *A Doll's House*:

1. **SETTING:** a dollhouse, a masquerade mask, a peasant costume, a box of macaroons, a map of Norway, an audio tape with the sound of a slamming door or gypsy music suitable for the tarentella.

2. CHARACTERS: a mommy doll, three children dolls, a lawyer's name plate, a business card with a black cross, a forged letter.
3. THEME: objects which symbolize individualism, deception, identity, and reality vs. appearance (prior to the scavenger hunt allow students to brainstorm ideas of objects which suggest these abstract qualities).

PROBABLE PASSAGES

To encourage student predictions, generate a list of ten to fifteen words related to *A Doll's House*. Ask students to write a "probable passage" paragraph that predicts the content of the play by using all the words from the list. After the play is read, students can return to the passage and make corrections to their summaries. Possible words might include: dollhouse, black cross, tarantella, masquerade, forgery, bank, mailbox, door, blackmail, husband, wife, reputation, morality.

CIRCLE MAP

To build anticipation and to make connections by studying the play's title, ask students to draw a circle map at their desks as you model one on the board. In the middle of the circle, write "A Doll's House." Ask students to predict what the play will be about by filling in the circle with words and ideas associated with a doll house. Model how to draw a frame around the circle map. Ask students to fill in the frame of reference with sources for their associations. For example, if students wrote "toy" in the circle, they might write "my childhood" in the frame of reference. Encourage abstract associations such as "playing parts" or "fantasy role-play."

METAPHORIC CONNECTIONS

A Doll's House utilizes the traditional metaphor of role-playing or masking to represent a character's repressed identity. Ask students to research other works of literature that incorporate masking and to create bibliographic entries and short summaries for each source they find. Arrange for a class period in the computer lab or media center and provide students with links or titles in order to initiate their searches. Either on the computer or in written form, individual students or teams can summarize the plot of their selection(s) and add "works cited" type entries with source information. Afterwards, summaries and bibliographic information can be compiled and shared in class to demonstrate the pervasiveness of the masking/role-playing metaphor in literature. Titles for research might include:

1. *As You Like It*
2. *Cinderella*
3. *Much Ado About Nothing*
4. *Pinocchio*
5. *Pygmalion*
6. *Romeo and Juliet*
7. *Sleeping Beauty*

GENRE STUDY

CRITICAL READING

While Ibsen is classified as a realistic dramatist, his theatrical career is often divided into three distinct periods that define the styles of his individual plays. The foreword to the Signet Classics Centennial Edition of *Ibsen: Four Major Plays* discusses Ibsen's developing style with particular emphasis on *A Doll's House*. Ask students to read Rolf Fjelde's Foreword and choose an appropriate comprehension strategy for note taking. Students might take Cornell Notes, double-column notes, or use post-its. To process their thinking, allow students to "turn and talk" after they have completed the reading.

REALITY TELEVISION

In order to encourage students to think about the choices a playwright must make when creating a play with "the look and feel of real life," ask students to develop a new reality T.V. show. Explain to students, however, that unlike the current television offerings, these reality shows must actually attempt to appear "real." Like the realistic dramatists of the 19th and 20th centuries, students must discard lofty or overblown theatrics and storylines in exchange for the actual and the "everyday." Their characters must be unable to arrive easily at answers to their predicaments. Students or teams must create a proposal for their show that answers the following questions:

1. On what everyday situation or dilemma will your show focus?
2. What everyday characters will your show include?
3. What physical or philosophical problems of daily living, either social, philosophical, or psychological, will your show examine?

II. BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE IN HISTORY AND CULTURE

WOMEN'S RIGHTS TIMELINE

Ask students to create a digital or hard copy timeline that details the growth and development of women's rights from as far back as the Anglo-Saxon period in Europe through the current day. Both historical and literary items may be included. Highlights might include Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), Sojourner Truth's *Ain't I A Woman?* (1851), Lydia Chapin, Susan B. Anthony and the 19th Century Women's Suffrage Movement, and the still elusive Equal Rights Amendment (ERA).

19TH CENTURY BACKGROUND MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATION

Using Inspiration! or another multi-media program, ask students to research and produce a 1-3 minute audio-story or podcast introducing the class to one of the following topics:

1. Henrik Ibsen
 2. 19th century Norway
 3. realistic drama
 4. tarentella dance
 5. 19th century women's roles in the West
-

All students need is a microphone and an audio-editing software program like Audacity, which can be downloaded for free. Students create an MP3 file with their information and include transitional commentary. Next, students upload the podcast to a free site such as iTunes, or ask the local webmaster to post it to the school website. Classmates, parents, and other community members can listen to the recordings online or download them to their iPods.

III. BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE THROUGH INITIAL EXPLORATION OF THEMES

INDIVIDUALISM VERSUS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

WALKABOUT SURVEY

To activate prior knowledge and connections to the play's themes, have students perform a survey. Using a survey question that generates thought, provide students with a nine block (3 X 3) handout ready for responses. On the left side of the blocks going down, create blanks for three "Informers." On the top of the blocks going left to right, create blanks for "Detail #1," "Detail #2," and "Detail #3." Students then walk around and ask three different "Informers" to answer the survey question, giving three facts each. Students record their Informers' facts in the blocks. After returning to their seats, students summarize in writing what they have learned from their classmates. Sample questions to generate a walkabout survey for *A Doll's House* include:

- What is the definition of freedom?
- Does social responsibility impede the rights of the individual?
- What are society's expectations for mothers?
- What are society's expectations for fathers?
- Can a person contradict these expectations and still be a good mother or father?
- Do society's expectations prevent a parent's individual growth?
- Are society's expectations of parents outdated in today's world?

GENDER ROLES AND MARRIAGE

GENDER ROLES DISCUSSION

As a class, read "The Story of an Hour," the short story written by American realist Kate Chopin in 1894. Discuss as a class:

1. How does Chopin depict a high-class marriage at the turn of the nineteenth century?
 2. How does Chopin illustrate the role of women in nineteenth century Western Civilization?
 3. To what does Mrs. Mallard refer when she thinks to herself, "Free! Body and soul free!"?
 4. Discuss the irony in the story's last line: "She had died of heart disease—of joy that kills."
-

THE ART OF ADVERTISEMENT

Provide groups of students with magazine, Internet, and television ads that can be perceived as gender specific or sexist. Consider commercials for cleaning products, food, cars, and alcohol. Ask students to analyze the following:

1. Describe your advertisement in one paragraph. If print, start from the most obvious image and move to the details. If video, describe in sequential order.
2. What, if anything, about the advertisement makes it gender specific or sexist?
3. Is the ad appealing? Why or why not? What is your group's reaction?
4. What is the intended effect of the advertisement on the consumer?
5. Is the company justified in portraying its product in this fashion? Why or why not?

MARRIAGE DEBATE

Play an audio recording of Ani DiFranco's song, "Wishin' and Hopin'." Provide students with the lyrics, including:

*Show him that you care, just for him
Do the things that he likes to do.
Wear your hair just for him, 'cause
You won't get him, thinkin' and a prayin'
Wishin' and hopin'.*

Divide the class into two groups. One group will argue that such gender roles of dominance and submission still exist in today's society; the other will argue that today our society no longer desires such gender specific behaviors, and that true love and marriage is based on mutual respect. Ask each side to prepare supporting points, as well as predict what the opposing side will say. Challenge them to make connections to their own lives. Hold a class debate, complete with cross examinations and rebuttals.

THINK-PAIR-SHARE

In *A Doll's House*, Nora is referred to by a number of nicknames such as, "little lark," "squirrel," "spendthrift," and "sweet tooth." Nora refers to her husband as "darling" and "dear." Ask students to consider the language that will be used in the play to represent gender stereotypes. On a sheet of paper, students work independently to brainstorm nicknames or pet names currently used when talking about men and women. After they write their thinking down, students pair up and compare lists. Partners should note any commonalities, trends or patterns they see. For instance, are the nicknames used for one gender more condescending than the other? Is one set more physically oriented? Is one more comparable to children? Or are both sets equal? After partners discuss their observations, the class can share as a whole.

COMPLICATIONS AND DECEPTIONS

SHARED READING

In partners, read the Greek myth of Arachne, a skilled female weaver who is turned into a spider by the goddess Athena for daring to challenge her defined role as a lower class,

mortal woman. Discuss as a pair:

1. In what “web” of her own design does Arachne ensnare herself? Examine the question literally and symbolically.
2. Why does Athena choose the spider for Arachne’s new form? How is this choice appropriate on more than one level?

RESPONSE JOURNALS

In response journals, ask students to examine Sir Walter Scott’s line from *Marmion*:

“Oh what a tangled web we weave, When first we practice to deceive!”

Respond to the following:

1. How is the metaphor of a web effective for the topic of deceit?
2. Write about a time you found yourself spinning such a web. What were the results?

Another quotation on which students may journal is from Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*:

“All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players.”

1. Is human existence simply a matter of playing parts? Explain.
2. The world’s stage is Shakespeare’s metaphor. Can you think of another appropriate metaphor for life today? Elaborate.

PROBLEM SITUATION: ALLIGATOR RIVER

Ask students to read the following story and rank the characters as explained in the instructions below. Students may work independently or in pairs and share as a class afterwards.

There lived a woman named Abigail who was in love with a socially important man named Gregory. Gregory lived on the shore of a river. Abigail lived on the opposite shore of the same river. The river that separated the two lovers was teeming with dangerous alligators. Abigail wanted to cross the river to be with Gregory.

Unfortunately, the bridge had been washed out by a heavy flood the previous week. So she went to ask Sinbad, a riverboat captain, to take her across. He said he would be glad to if she would consent to deliver illegal drugs to a teenage dealer on the other side. She promptly refused and went to a friend named Ivan to explain her plight. Ivan did not want to get involved at all in the situation. Abigail felt her only alternative was to accept Sinbad’s terms and deliver the drugs. Sinbad fulfilled his promise to Abigail and delivered her into the arms of Gregory.

When Abigail told Gregory about her illegal escapade in order to cross the river, Gregory cast her aside because he thought that his reputation would be damaged when people heard what his fiancé had done. Heartsick and rejected, Abigail turned to Slug with her tale of woe. Slug, feeling compassion for Abigail, sought out Gregory and beat him brutally. Abigail was happy at the sight of Gregory getting his due. As the sun set on the horizon, people could hear Abigail laughing at Gregory.

*Source of original story Simon, S. B, Howe, L. W., & Kirschenbaum, H.

(1972). *Values Clarification*. NY: Warner Books.

Instructions: After reading the story, rank the five (5) characters in the story beginning with the one whom you consider as the “most morally offensive” and end with the one whom you consider the “least objectionable.” That is, the character who seems to be the most dishonorable to you should be entered first in the list following the story, then the second most dishonorable, and so on, with the least dishonorable or objectionable being entered fifth. Very briefly note why you rank them in the order that you do.

Characters: Abigail, Gregory, Ivan, Sinbad, Slug

1. _____ (most dishonorable)
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____ (least dishonorable)

In small groups or with the whole class, have the students compare their choices for most dishonorable and least dishonorable.

Discuss:

- On what basis did you judge the morality or immorality of the characters?
- Is it ever right to do something wrong to achieve a good end?
- What is virtue? How do we judge it?
- Is there absolute good or evil? Or are there degrees of good and evil?

DURING READING ACTIVITIES

These activities encourage students to utilize research-based comprehension strategies such as predicting, connecting, summarizing, and determining main ideas while reading *A Doll's House*. Whether the play is read aloud in class or silently at home, teachers can choose appropriate assignments from the ideas below.

I. ANALYZING THROUGH GROUP RESPONSE

READER'S THEATRE

Assign roles for a particular act and ask students to sit in a row of chairs at the front of the classroom. Students may use their scripts, but they should utilize vocal and facial expression to bring the play alive for the class.

Alternatively, clear a space in the middle or front of the classroom and ask students to stand and follow stage directions as they read the play. Provide macaroons for Nora and a pen and wallet for Torvald, and watch students “get into character.”

After the reading, hold a “Meet the Cast” Session, where actors discuss their characterization choices with the rest of the class. Alternatively, students can journal or write a critical response to explain their interpretations.

To prepare for dramatic reading activities, teachers might choose one or more of the following activities.

1. **Character Sketch** – If the reading will be done after the class has discussed or read part of the play already, ask students to write a one page, first-person point of view description of the character whose lines they will read. For instance, a student reading Torvald Helmer might write, “My name is Torvald Helmer. I am in my mid thirties, I believe in maintaining appearances, and I despise any type of deception or dishonesty. I am of the firm belief that character is directly defined by a mother’s morals.” For minor characters, students can fill in the blanks, creating appropriate backgrounds for characters whose description is minimal.
2. **Modeling** – If the reading will be done without prior discussion or research, the teacher can model proper interpretive form for students. Pick a monologue from the assigned reading and read once with no vocal inflection or facial expression, and then follow up with an animated reading of the same passage. Ask students to point out specific qualities that made the second reading more interesting and informative. Make a list on the board of those qualities students should reflect as they read, such as volume, enthusiasm, facial expression, and word-emphasis.
3. **Line Rehearsal** – This is a variation of teacher modeling. Choose several lines from *A Doll's House* and ask one or more students to read them one at a time, first with no emphasis, inflection, or expression, and then with energy and meaning. Ask readers to explain their interpretive choices.
4. **Role Study** – Show students a video clip from *A Doll's House* and ask them to take notes on the actor who portrays the part they will be reading. How does the character speak? Describe his accent. Is the character loud or soft spoken? Does he use any hand gestures? How does his vocal and physical portrayal help define his character? Do you like the actor’s choices? Why or why not? Students can choose to fashion their characterization on the film, or they may create their own interpretations. In any case, ask students to be ready to defend their choices.

RECIPROCAL READING

In order to teach inferencing and self-regulation of comprehension, assign small groups of students individual strategies to use as they read an act aloud:

- **Questioner:** poses questions that focus on main ideas and themes.
- **Summarizer:** summarizes the action.
- **Clarifier:** clarifies difficulties in understanding.
- **Predictor:** makes a prediction about future content.

Students may keep their roles for the entire act, or they may alternate. An alternative is the ReQuest strategy, where the teacher models questioning after a segment of the act is read, and then students imitate such questioning after the next segment.

FREEZE-FRAME

Divide the class into small groups of 5 students. Have the group choose a scene and prepare a “still photograph” of their favorite or most significant part of a particular scene. All

members of the group must appear in the still life—even though some will be inanimate objects. You can follow up this activity by asking students to write about their choices.

DRAMATIC BOOK COVERS

In this activity, groups create and portray a living book cover for an illustrated edition of the play. In picking a quotation from the play and in portraying an illustration that depicts the quotation's meaning, students take on the role of the bookseller or publishing house, who must decide how best to get across the point of the play to an audience who has not yet read it. Ask groups to follow this process:

1. Pick one quotation from the play that is particularly significant, one that seems to speak to one of the playwright's major themes or intents, one that would make good sense on the cover of the play.
2. Write out the quotation on a long, narrow piece of paper, in large enough print to be seen from the back of the classroom.
3. Decide how to portray the quotation in a frozen tableau. Rather than presenting a scene from the play, create a picture that illustrates the quotation. For instance, the struggle between Nora's role as a wife and her duty to herself might be portrayed as a tug of war. This activity requires you to illustrate comprehension and synthesis by turning your understanding into performance art.
4. In front of the class, arrange yourselves into the frozen tableau, and either hold or post your quotation so that it is part of the "book cover." Hold the scene for thirty seconds, so that the rest of the class can read and appreciate your "illustrated classic."

MODERN SCENE REWRITES

To illustrate the point that period plays have relevant meaning and messages for all eras, groups can re-write, re-interpret and re-enact scenes for new settings. While these scenes are fun to create and enjoyable to watch, challenge students to keep the playwright's objectives, tone, and themes intact. Students might be asked to re-write Nora's revelation scene set in the 1950's era, or to re-interpret the tarantella as a modern dance.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Discussion questions encourage students to deepen their individual analysis of the play by sharing their reactions with classmates. Students generally feel more comfortable sharing their ideas with a small group of peers first. When group discussions are complete, student spokespersons can discuss their findings with the class as a whole.

Discussion questions on *A Doll's House* ask students to analyze playwright's purpose, theme, social commentary, and literary techniques. Below are some thought-provoking questions from each act.

Act I

1. From the beginning of Act I, Torvald calls Nora several pet names. What do these names suggest about Torvald's perception of his wife and his marriage?
 2. Compare Nora's and Kristine's lives since marriage. Who is better off? Explain.
-

3. What might be the link between Nora's "contraband" macaroons and her "huge desire to say – to hell and be damned?"
4. What crime has Nora committed?
5. Do Nora's motives for committing the crime excuse her in some way?
6. What does Nora's tree decorating and chattering at the end of Act I reveal about her character?

Act II

1. When Nora sees the box of masquerade clothes, she wants to "rip them in a million pieces!" What does Ibsen symbolize with this characterization?
2. Discuss the foreshadowing in Nora's conversation with Anne-Marie.
3. Why does Torvald make such a decisive show of mailing the letter firing Krogstad against Nora's pleas?
4. After Dr. Rank professes his love, Nora demands the lamp be brought in. Why? Is this light real or artificial? What might Ibsen be suggesting about truth and light in the Helmer's household?
5. Some histories of the tarantella dance explain that it is used to fight off the venomous effects of a spider bite. Other interpretations suggest it represents a woman's frustration in oppression. Which of these explanations best fits Nora's violent practice at the end of Act II? Might both apply? Explain.

Act III

1. Why is Kristine willing to "risk everything" for Krogstad?
2. Why does Kristine encourage Krogstad to let Torvald read the letter revealing Nora's deception?
3. Dr. Rank suggests Nora should go to the next masquerade dressed as "Charmed Life," and that she should dress "just as she looks every day." What is the implication about Nora's daily life? Is it charmed? Or is the charm a masquerade? Explain.
4. Discuss the irony in Torvald's accusation that Nora has played with him "like a puppet."
5. Helmer's pronouncement that "before all else, (Nora is) a wife and mother" is contradicted by Nora's "before all else, I'm a human being." Is this issue significant today, or is it only a sign of Ibsen's time? Explain.
6. Discuss Nora's decision to leave her family. Is it truly the only way she can reclaim her identity and humanity?
7. The last sound the audience hears is the door slamming shut after Nora's departure. Examine the theatrical, literary, and historical significance of this stage device.

ONLINE DISCUSSION BOARD

Using an online teaching assistant such as Blackboard or Moodle, create a discussion topic or use the discussion questions for student responses outside of class. Give students a deadline to respond, and ask them to discuss not only the initial topic, but their

classmates' responses as well. You may wish to extend the discussion in class.

ELECTRONIC CHAT ROOM

The difference in the discussion board and the online chat is that discussion boards take place over a period of days, whereas the chat occurs in “real time,” while the teacher is present and monitoring. Using a program such as Blackboard or Moodle, students register under fake screen names in order to participate in an online discussion board. The teacher can post two or three open-ended discussion questions designed to elicit a broad range of answers with the capacity for complex and controversial responses. In a computer lab or lap-top classroom, students read and respond to each other's posts in silence. Because online postings allow multiple responses simultaneously, questions that normally receive five or six verbal responses in the classroom elicit hundreds of responses online. And due to the screen names' anonymity, students who usually are too reticent to share out loud are encouraged to respond without fear of appearing foolish or hurting classmates' feelings. The teacher's job is to ensure posts are on-task and analytical. Assessments can be completed later when the teacher pulls up the discussion as a whole.

Sample chat room prompts might include:

1. Is Nora the only “doll” in *A Doll's House*?
2. Defend or support Torvald's beliefs about moral corruption and heredity.
3. Is Nora's decision to leave her husband and children acceptable? Explain.

OPINION-PROOF TEAMS

Assign one half of the class to one team, the second half to another team. Each team is given an opinion derived from major themes in *A Doll's House*. Students must work together to create a list of “proofs” for their opinion regardless of whether they agree with it or not. For example, one team might be assigned the opinion, “Torvald has the right to be angry that Nora forged the promissory note.” Their proof list might include, “Torvald could be arrested for his wife's forgery,” and “Married couples shouldn't lie to one another.” The opposite team would be assigned the opinion “Torvald has no right to be angry that Nora forged the promissory note.” Their proof list might include, “Nora had no choice – she did it to save Torvald's life,” and “Women were not allowed to get a loan by themselves in this era.” After teams compose their proofs, they can share them in the form of a discussion, a debate, a speech, or an essay.

GIVE ONE-GET ONE

In this interactive strategy, students set up a barter system to demonstrate their comprehension of major themes in the play and to exchange ideas with peers. Prepare a grid for students with six to twelve empty boxes on a sheet of paper. Label the boxes with response prompts, such as, “I believe. . .” or “I think the most important action was. . .” or “One thing I like about Mrs. Linde is. . .” Ask students to choose three of the prompts and record their personal opinions or knowledge. Next, students mingle and ask their peers to provide opinions and knowledge to fill in the remainder of the boxes. For each box they “get,” students must “give” one as well. Once students have completed the boxes, ask them to share ideas that are unique, helpful, interesting, or profound. If students did not get all boxes filled in, they may do so during the group discussion.

II. ANALYZING THROUGH INDIVIDUAL RESPONSE

FLOW-CHART

Flow charts help students differentiate between main action versus supporting action while keeping up with the play's storyline. Ask students to create a box and arrow flow-chart in which only main action is recorded in the boxes. To practice predicting, students can stop the flow and create two or three new boxes that predict the next possible action. When reading resumes, students continue with the prediction box that was correct, or create a new one for the correct action, and the flow chart continues. The result is a better understanding of how each action in the drama impacts the next.

CHARACTER-FOIL DOUBLE-BUBBLE MAP

Like Venn-Diagrams, Double-Bubble Maps help students compare and contrast. Ask students to fill in the two main bubbles with the names of two character foils, such as Nora and Kristine, or Torvald and Dr. Rank. In the bubbles shared by the foils, students record similarities, such as "female in a male-dominated society." In the bubbles specific to each of the characters, students record parallel differences, such as "has nothing to lose" and "will lose home and children." After students fill in their double-bubble maps, they might turn and share with a classmate or the class, adding to their maps as the discussion ensues.

DOUBLE-COLUMN NOTES

Double-Column Notes encourage students to take a second look while reading, and to read for analysis, not simply plot. The best notes are composed as the student reads, not after the reading is completed. In this way, students prove to themselves and their teachers that they are thinking as they read. Whether handwritten or electronic notes that students submit via email, teachers can add comments throughout, responding personally to ideas students may not be willing to verbalize in class.

Ask students to find one or more significant events or quotations from each act in *A Doll's House*, and record them on the left side of a double-columned sheet of paper. On the right side column, students record their thinking about the event or quotation. They might comment on patterns they see developing, themes they see evolving, social or historical commentary they see being made, or connections they believe tie the play to modern society. As the double-column notes progress, students should see their responses falling into categories that illustrate their comprehension of Ibsen's significant themes and issues.

Later, double-column notes can be used to initiate student-led discussions in class. Ask students: "Who would like to share a response from Act Two?" After a student answers, the teacher can invite responses, and the discussion is off and running.

CORNELL-NOTES

Cornell Notes teach students to summarize by separating main and supporting ideas. For each act of the play, ask students to draw a capital letter "I" that takes up an entire sheet of notebook paper. The vertical line will be off-center to the left. On the left side of the vertical line, students record major themes. On the right side of the vertical line, students record supporting details or actions from the play that illustrate these main themes. Below the

bottom horizontal line, ask students to summarize the act's themes in a sentence or two.

POST-IT NOTES

To help students make personal, literary, and cultural connections to Ibsen's play, ask them to record on post-it notes any connections they see as they read *A Doll's House*. To emphasize the idea that connections should "count," remind students to think about how these observations help them better understand the play, and to discard the post-its that do not aid in comprehension. At the end of each act, students can collaborate and categorize their connections, and stick their post-its on labeled posters throughout the room, allowing the class to move and observe each other's ideas.

EXIT SLIPS

As students complete the day's reading, ask them to write a five-minute response on an index card that they will submit as they exit. Prompts might be specific, such as "Describe Nora's inner-conflict," or they might be general, such as, "Write down anything you remember about the play's main themes." Exit slips can also take the form of 1-2-3 cards, where students write down three characters, two themes, and one dramatic device used in the day's reading. Exit slips are formative assessments that allow students to self assess their comprehension and teachers to check the impact of their lesson.

SCRIPT WRITING

Ask students to step into the playwright's shoes by writing a monologue, dialogue, or scene. When students write script, they demonstrate their understanding of Ibsen's writing style, characterization, and dramatic purpose. Students can 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. Scripts can be assessed as written assignments, or students can perform them before the class, as well.

Ideas for script writing include:

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."

THEATRICAL DEVICE T-CHART

To focus on the theatrical devices such as costumes, sounds, and props, ask students to keep a record of the devices used in *A Doll's House* and the effects the devices have on the audience. Students write a large capital "T" on a piece of notebook paper. On top of the horizontal line, students record the act or scene number. To the left of the vertical line,

they write the theatrical device, such as “Nora’s macaroons.” To the right of the vertical line, students write the effect of the device on the audience. An example might read, “The macaroons reveal Nora’s secret rebellion to the audience.” As each scene or act is completed, students can share their devices with small groups or the class as a whole.

ADVICE COLUMN

To examine point of view, ask students to write a “Dear Abby” type response. Advise Nora or Torvald how to repair her/his life at the end of the play. Students can post their responses on a bulletin board for all to see and discuss.

CHARACTER SKETCHES

Character sketches are often used in drama classes to encourage actors’ understanding of the parts they portray. However, character sketches are very useful in literature classes, too, as an examination of a character’s history, motivation, and thinking. In the character sketch, students answer simple questions about the character they choose or are assigned. Afterwards, the assignment can be extended when students write their own monologues or deliver a monologue from the text.

The Character Sketch asks:

1. What does this character look like? How does he/she carry himself/herself? How does he/she dress?
2. How does this character speak? Does he/she have any identifiable speech patterns?
3. Where was this character born? How was he/she raised?
4. Describe the time period in which this character lives. How do the times affect this character’s thinking and actions?
5. What is this character’s main motivation? Why?
6. Describe any redeeming qualities this character may have.
7. Analyze the character’s personality flaws. From what do they stem? How do they affect the choices he/she makes?
8. Choose an object this character holds or would hold dear. Explain the connection.
9. Does this character have any secrets? If so, explain.
10. Who would be this character’s contemporary counterpart? Explain your choice.

CLOSING ARGUMENTS SPEECHES

In this activity, students take the role of attorneys presenting their “closing arguments” at the end of a criminal trial. In this case Nora is on trial. Her crime can be varied: forgery, desertion, breach of contract. Ask students to choose whether to defend or prosecute Nora. To prepare their case, they list all the possible arguments from both sides. For example, if they plan to defend Nora, they list not only all the arguments they plan to use but also as many arguments as they can think of that will be used by the prosecution. Then, they’ll list possible responses to the opposition’s points. In this way, students not only consider both points of view but also illustrate their skills in persuasive writing and

speaking. Students should be encouraged to incorporate their original thinking but should also be required to cite the play whenever possible to encourage close reading. Prior to preparing their arguments, students might watch a closing argument on video, such as the scene at the end of John Grisham's *A Time to Kill*. Such a model provides ideas for rhetorical strategies such as repetition, storytelling, and gestures. Students present arguments orally to the class.

AFTER READING ACTIVITIES

These activities encourage students to deepen their interpretation of *A Doll's House* by helping them make connections between themes and issues in the play, in other works, and in the outside world.

I. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND ESSAYS

Now that students have read the entire play, they can return to the text for a deeper understanding of its significant themes. The following topics and questions can be used for whole class and small group discussion or as essay topics.

1. Revisit one of the pre-reading activities such as the walkabout survey, the probable passage, or the circle map. Now that you have completed the play, what further commentary can you add? Do you and your classmates see your topic differently now? Why or why not?
2. *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.
3. 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."
4. 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?
5. Consider the character of Torvald Helmer. Is Torvald an antagonist? A misogynist? Or could Torvald be just as much a victim of nineteenth century societal norms as Nora? Discuss.
6. 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.
7. 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?

8. What is the role of Dr. Rank in *A Doll's House*? Is he simply a friend and admirer? Or is he more? Explain.
9. 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?
10. 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.

II. CONNECTING TO *THE WILD DUCK*, *HEDDA GABLER*, AND *THE MASTER BUILDER*

The following activities can be used for enrichment as Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* is compared to three of his other major plays.

SCRIPT STUDY

As a class, re-read the scene in *A Doll's House*, Act II, where Nora dances wildly during her tarantella practice. Next, read the last scene in *Hedda Gabler*, where Hedda plays a "wild dance melody" on the piano shortly before her tragic "exit" at the play's end. Discuss with students: Why does Ibsen utilize the dramatic device of dance in both plays? What statement is the playwright making about women in nineteenth century marriages?

TITLE SEARCH

Ask students to examine the intriguing titles of two of Ibsen's plays: *A Doll's House* and *The Wild Duck*. For Nora in her house, and for the Ekdals in their sky lighted attic with the wild duck, the titles represent a place of refuge from the real world. Give students the following prompt for a journal response: What is the reality both Nora and the Ekdals avoid? Explain Ibsen's vision of nineteenth century society. After writing, students can share journal responses individually with the teacher, or collectively with the class.

VENN DIAGRAM

On the board, draw a Venn diagram (two side-by-side, overlapping circles) and lead students through a brainstorm activity comparing Torvald in *A Doll's House* and Solness in *The Master Builder*. Ask students to list all the ways Torvald has "built" his achievements by using Nora. Record their answers in the left circle. In the right circle, ask students to provide ways Solness has "built" his life using women, as well. Student responses that apply to both Torvald and Solness should be written in the area where the circles overlap, thus illustrating Ibsen's repetitive themes of male mastery and dominance. To extend the discussion, choose a different color board marker and ask students to consider the closing scenes of both *A Doll's House* and *The Master Builder*. Discuss each man's character at play's end. Are there lessons either one or both have learned? Add these responses to the appropriate sections of the Venn diagram.

FILM CRITICISM

After watching an excerpt or the entirety of one or more of the following films based on Ibsen's works, students write a film critique discussing one or more of the cinematic choices of casting, characterization, special effects, and theme development. If appropriate, critiques should include comparative discussion on watching the film versus reading the script and the effectiveness of those differences. Ask students:

1. Several of Ibsen's plays have been set in modern times on film. Describe the setting of this video production. Where and when does it take place? Does the setting seem authentic? Why or why not? What specific direction and production choices add to the atmosphere? Discuss costuming and prop choices.
2. Discuss the use of special effects. Consider lighting, music, and sound. How do these elements add to your understanding of the play? What differences exist between the film's interpretation and your own while reading? Do these differences add to or change your analysis of Ibsen's work? Explain.
3. Discuss the production's casting. Do the actors provide effective portrayals of Ibsen's characters? Why were these actors cast? Consider the time period in which the film was produced.
4. What were the strengths of this film production? Use specific evidence from the film. Were there any weaknesses? If so, discuss specific issues.
5. What is your overall impression of this film? Would your impression be different had you not read the play first?

A Doll's House. Dir. Patrick Garland. Elkins Productions: 1973.

Hedda Gabler. Dir. Paul Willis. Best Ten Dollar Suit Pictures: 2004.

The Master Builder. Dir. Michael Darlow. UK Television: 1988.

The Wild Duck. Dir. Henri Safran. Film Bancor of Australia: 1983.

III. GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

QAR GRID

In order to develop levels of critical questioning, students will create their own questions on *A Doll's House*. Ask students to create a Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR) Grid by folding a piece of paper in half and then in half again. When the paper is opened, it should have four equal-sized squares. Ask students to label the squares with the following:

- Right There: The answer is in the play, usually very easy to find.
- Think and Search: The answer is in the play, but not directly. You have to put together pieces of information to find it.
- Playwright and You: The answer is *not* in the play. You have to think about what you already know, what Ibsen tells you in the play, and how the two fit together.
- On Your Own: The answer is *not* in the play. You have to use your own experience and prior knowledge to find it.

After creating questions in all four categories, students can trade their QAR grids with each other and answer the questions either individually or in groups.

WRITE A SEQUEL

While *The Doll House* ends with a slamming door, Nora seems to leave a possible opening for Torvald to learn his lesson. Because Ibsen's ending has spurred controversy among audiences and critics alike, ask students to write a sequel, or additional ending scene, making clear whether Nora eventually returns to Torvald or embarks on a life of her own forever. Students can parody Ibsen's language, illustrating their comprehension of style. And because they choose the ending they believe Ibsen intended based on the evidence he included, students will also be utilizing their skills in research and analysis. To extend this assignment, students might be provided a rubric prior to beginning. The rubric indicates components that will be assessed, such as adherence to Ibsen's style, complexity of character and theme, editing, and effort. Upon completion of the scene, writers can move into peer edit groups and grade two other classmates' scenes using the rubric. Editors should make comments on both the scene and the rubric, and discuss their observations with writers. In this way, students practice writing to specific audiences and for specific purposes. Later, writers can share their scenes with the rest of the class.

STAGE A SCENE

Because plays are meant to be staged, encourage your students to bring the text alive. For instance, have small groups pick a scene from *A Doll's House* to act out for the class. Assign extra credit for props and costumes. Assign a director in each group. After the group meets to discuss what themes, emotions, or messages they want their scene to portray, the director helps bring this vision to life, making sure all blocking is planned, practiced, and focused on the intended goal. Remind students to use vocal and facial expression and energy.

LEARN THE TARANTELLA

Interested students might research and learn the steps to the tarantella. Ask them to present the dance, complete with music and costume, in front of the class. Research might include the rich history and motivation behind the dance. Websites of interest include:

<http://www.virtualitalia.com/articles/tarantella.shtml>

<http://www.streetswing.com/histmain/z3tartla.htm>

PAPER DOLLS

To illustrate characterization and to emphasize Ibsen's doll house theme, ask students to create paper dolls of Nora and Torvald. The character's true identity should be evident in the clothes he/she wears closest to the body, and the identities assigned them by others will be illustrated in the doll clothes designed to fit them. For example, the Nora paper doll might wear a t-shirt that reads, "in search of identity" or "I am a human being." But she might have a masquerade dress and mask for the tarantella and an apron and long skirt for daily life, illustrating her "masked" rebellion and repressed role.

DOLL HOUSE

After revisiting the stage directions and descriptions in the script, ask students to design the set for a production of *A Doll's House*. Using materials as simple as a shoe box or as complicated as wood and nails, students will design a set that highlights the play's time period and themes. Ideally, students will create a model doll house complete with wall paper, furniture, and props. Particular attention should be paid to important devices such as the Christmas tree, the mailbox, and the front door.

TRADING CARDS

Students can create trading cards with the picture of each character on the front, and a physical description, character traits, and other information on back. These cards can serve as a review or can be exchanged with classmates to initiate discussion after reading the play.

PRODUCTION PACKETS

Assign teams of four students each to create a "production pack" for a modern film production of *A Doll's House*. This assignment provides practice in cooperative learning, technical writing, and digital storytelling. Production Teams are responsible for creating a dynamic presentation meant to persuade a producer to produce their film. Groups decide on a concept, such as what time period the film will be set in and whether they plan to use Ibsen's music or create an original soundtrack. Groups then cast the film with modern actors. Next, team members assign themselves the individual roles of director, costume designer, set designer, and sound designer. Each position creates both a written as well as a visual proposal analyzing the following considerations:

- Director:** Supervises the team and pulls together all word processed work into a single document. Also creates a promotional product such as a digital movie trailer or movie poster. Justifies the group's casting choices of specific, contemporary actors.
- Costume Designer:** Creates a portfolio of costumes for major characters. Work can be hand-drawn, computer assisted, or cut from magazines. Costume styles must align with the team concept, such as Victorian or contemporary, casual or formal. Research is documented and choices are analyzed in writing.
- Set Designer:** Creates a set plan that fits the team concept. If the film is to be shot on location, the plan details the locations and their appropriateness, and includes pictures. If the film is to be shot on an inside set, the plan describes the stage, explains the design, and includes a hand-drawn or computerized drawing.
- Sound Designer:** Creates a sound design that fits the team concept. If an original soundtrack is to be used, creates a CD complete with insert that analyzes choices.
-

GALLERY WALK

In this cooperative learning activity, divide students into groups of four or five. Assign each group one of the major themes that have been addressed throughout the reading of *A Doll's House*, such as gender roles, social responsibility, the role of the individual, and complication and deception. In front of large sheets of paper posted around the room, groups meet at their base poster, which is the paper pre-labeled with the name of a theme. Students brainstorm and write down all textual evidence and commentary they can think of to support the role of their theme in the play. When the teacher says, "continue your walk," students move to the next base and read what the previous groups have written before adding their own commentary. The gallery walk continues until the groups have seen and contributed to all posters and return to their original place.

FOUR CORNERS

Four Corners is a kinesthetic strategy for practicing point-of-view and argumentation techniques.

Assign each corner of the classroom a different opinion, topic, or answer to a question. For example, one corner might be assigned, "Nora is a wife and mother above all else, and she shouldn't have left." Other corners may assert, "Nora is a human and can leave if and when she chooses;" "Nora can leave for a while, but needs to come back when she's found herself;" and "I am undecided." Present the topic or question to the students, allowing them time to choose and move to a corner that matches their opinions. Allow groups to talk amongst themselves to generate support for their opinion, and prompt them to give a summary statement. Now allow students to change corners after hearing each other's explanations. Students should explain why they moved.

FINAL COUNTDOWN

To provide students with a visual framework for reflection and evaluation, provide them with a large triangle divided into six blocks, one box on the row closest to the point, two on the middle row, and three on the base row of the triangle. Ask them to reflect individually on what they have learned about *The Doll House* and record their responses on the rocket-shaped triangle. On the base row, ask students to write the three most important things they have learned about the play. On the middle row, ask students to write two questions they still have. And on the top row, have students write one statement that reflects their new learning.

VANITY PLATES AND BUMPER STICKERS

To help students summarize their learning creatively, invite them to create vanity plates or bumper stickers for cars. Students pretend they are one of the play's characters, and they design an appropriate vanity plate or bumper sticker for that character's car. For instance, Nora might choose a vanity plate that reads "I4G", and Torvald's bumper sticker might say "Appearance is Everything."

EXTENDED READING

Ask students to read one short story or poem, one play or novel, and watch one film that depicts a character's journey from playing a part to asserting identity. Students can make a comparison chart depicting the similarities and differences between the main character and Nora Helmer.

Students can consider the following questions as they read/view:

1. What character traits and dramatic elements depict the protagonist as being on a journey to identity?
2. Does this character illustrate a moral or social code of behavior? If so, describe it.
3. What is the character's greatest desire?
4. What ultimate price is the protagonist willing to pay to reach his/her objective?
5. Detail the outcome of the protagonist's journey.
6. Does the protagonist regret his/her decision? How do you know?
7. Is the protagonist ultimately redeemed or condemned for his/her choices?

The following titles focus on themes of identity, social responsibility, gender roles, and marriage, and are excellent for both independent reading or literature circles where each group of students reads a different work on the same theme. Ask students for their own additions to the list.

Identity

Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*. NY: Knopf, 1984.

Dead Poets Society. Dir. Peter Weir. Touchstone Pictures, 1989.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Self-Reliance*. 1841.

Lowry, Lois. *The Giver*. NY: Random, 2002.

Sachar, Louis. *Holes*. NY: Random, 2000.

Tennyson, Lord Alfred. *The Lady of Shallot*. 1833, 1842.

Whitman, Walt. *Song of Myself*. 1855.

Wright, Richard. *Black Boy*. HarperCollins, 2008.

Social Responsibility

Green, John. *Looking for Alaska*. NY: Penguin, 2006.

Hobbs, Will. *Downriver*. NY: Random, 1995.

Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. NY: Grand Central, 1988.

Le Guin, Ursula. *A Wizard of Earthsea*. NY: Bantam, 2004.

Miller, Arthur. *The Crucible*. NY: Penguin, 2003.

Shaw, George Bernard. *Major Barbara*. NY: Penguin, 2001.

Twain, Mark. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. NY: Norton, 1998.

Zusak, Markus. *I am the Messenger*. NY: Random, 2006.

Gender Roles and Marriage

Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. NY: Penguin, 2005.

Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening*. NY: Bantam, 2003.

Edwards, Kim. *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*. NY: Viking Penguin, 2006.

Levin, Ira. *The Stepford Wives*. NY: Harper, 2002.

Please Don't Eat the Daisies. Dir. Charles Walters, Euterpe, 1960.
Shakespeare, William. *Much Ado About Nothing*. NY: Signet Classics, 1998.
Spinelli, Jerry. *Crash*. NY: Random, 1997.
Williams, Tennessee. *A Streetcar Named Desire*. NY: Penguin, 1986.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS GUIDE

LAURA REIS MAYER is a High School Literacy Coach and a Support Provider for National Board Certified Teachers in Asheville, North Carolina. She taught middle, high school, and college English for sixteen years and has facilitated at state and regional conferences on Senior Project, National Board Certification, literacy strategies, and technology in the English classroom. She is also the author of A Teacher's Guide to The Signet Classics Edition of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* and *My Fair Lady* and A Teacher's Guide to The Signet Classics Edition of Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*.

ABOUT THE EDITORS OF THIS GUIDE

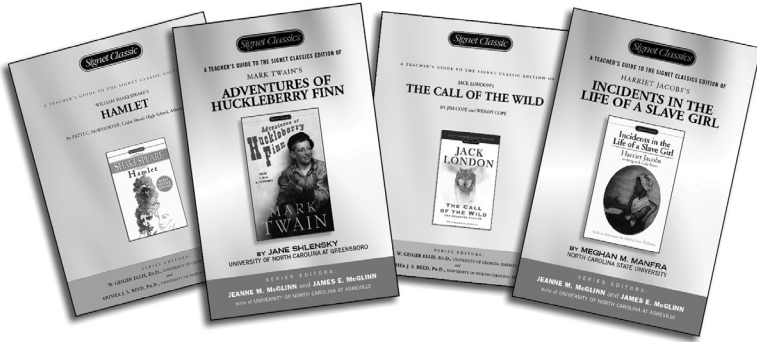
JEANNE M. McGLINN, Professor in the Department of Education at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, teaches Children's and Adolescent Literature and directs the field experiences of 9-12 English licensure candidates. She is a Board member of NC English Teachers Association and the Children's Literature and Reading SIG of the IRA. She has written extensively in the area of adolescent literature, including a critical book on the historical fiction of adolescent writer Ann Rinaldi for Scarecrow Press Young Adult Writers series.

JAMES E. McGLINN, Professor of Education at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, teaches methods of teaching and reading courses. He has taught high school English, and he is Past-President of the College Professors of Reading Special Interest Council of the NC Reading Association. His research interests include study strategies for online text and increasing the reading achievement of students in high school and college.

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