

DIGITAL THEATRE+

LESSON PLAN



A DOLL'S HOUSE

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LESSON PLAN LENGTH: 60 MINUTES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Critically evaluate choices and consequences by engaging in a range of collaborative discussions and activities
- Discuss and evaluate connections between the situation in the play, recent history and contemporary issues
- Students will begin an early stage analysis of the complex characters, situations and themes within the play
- Students will create/devise an original scene or monologue demonstrating an understanding of how character relationships and character choices assist in telling the story

The tasks outlined in this lesson plan are also linked to A-Level Drama and Theatre Assessment Objectives, which can be found at the end of the lesson plan.

To teach this lesson, you will need the following resources found in your toolkit:

- [Video – On Directing: Carrie Cracknell – Facts About the Play](#)
- [Video – On Directing: Carrie Cracknell – Ibsen's World](#)
- [Video – On Acting: Hattie Morahan – The Play](#)
- [Act One Plot Summary: A Doll's House Study Guide](#)

Plus:

- Copies of *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen
- 9 Large sheets of paper
- Pens
- Post-it notes

EXERCISE 1

WHAT WOULD YOU DO? (PART 1)

- Attach the 9 large pieces of paper to the wall of your classroom.
- Write one of the following 8 situations on each page.

SITUATIONS:

1. Your partner has gotten you into debt without telling you
2. You realise you are living a lie
3. You have fallen out of love with the person you were once deeply in love with
4. You have snuck sweets that you aren't supposed to have
5. You have no money to your name and your friend's partner just got a promotion
6. Your reputation has been destroyed by a choice you made
7. You forged someone's name to get something that you needed
8. You are harbouring a secret that no one else can find out about

Then on the 9th page, write the following choices:

CHOICES:

1. Take the blame and say it was you
2. Walk away from everything
3. Lie and say it wasn't you
4. Tell your best friend
5. Confide in someone you trust
6. Tell the truth



ESTIMATED TIME:
10 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is to get students thinking at a deeper level about choices and consequences.

By engaging with the themes and moral choices involved in the play, students will immediately engage with AO1, which requires the creation and development of ideas. Evaluating their own responses to the situations prepares students to make directorial choices later in the study of the text.

7. Get angry

8. Ask for a favor

- Hand students 8 post-it notes each.
- Instruct them to write each choice on a separate post-it note.
- Tell your students that they will have 2 minutes to decide which choice they would make for each situation. Each choice can only be used once, and all situations must have a choice attached to them.
- During the 2 minutes, ask your students to come one by one to place the post-it note onto the situation for which they would make that choice.
- Once time is up – discuss the choices students made and why they made them.
- Guide the discussion and challenge the students to go deeper by contemplating the potential consequences of the choices made.

EXERCISE 2

CONTEXTUALISING THE PLAY: DISCUSSION

- The following video interviews will provide your students with further information on the context in which the play was written.
- Show the video [On Directing: Carrie Cracknell](#), the chapter entitled **Facts About the Play** (47 seconds).
- Open a discussion on the woman's choice and the consequence.
- Contextualise this with the time period in which it happened (1870s). *A Doll's House* is often considered a Feminist play because of Nora's defence of her individualism against the prescriptive social roles of 'wife' and 'mother'. However, Ibsen refused to be called a Feminist.
- Show the chapter **Ibsen's World**, from the same interview (52 seconds).
- Open a brief discussion on her statement "The individual should have the right to live the life they want to." Ask your class, what current events could this relate to?
- Show the chapter **The Play** from the video [On Acting: Hattie Morahan](#) (2 minutes 5 seconds).

If you have more time...

Show your class the short film [Nora Now](#). Directed by Carrie Cracknell, this film brings the themes of Ibsen's play to a contemporary setting. This is an additional 9 minutes long, and would need to be accounted for in the lesson timing.



ESTIMATED TIME:
10 MINUTES

The aim of this discussion is to provide the context in which the play was written and the source material which it is based upon.

Students will also explore connections between the play, recent history and contemporary issues in the news.

AO3 is supported by showing the video clips included in this exercise. The knowledge and understanding required to make artistic choices requires a strong understanding of contextual and artistic issues surrounding the play.

EXERCISE 3

WOMEN IN HISTORY

- Split your class into small groups.
- Have the groups take 2 minutes to brainstorm a list of important women in history and what they did to become established historical figures – why do we remember them?
- Ask the groups to share with the rest of the class.
- Ask your class, do you think these women considered the consequences of their actions before making a choice, or did they follow through because they knew it was the right thing to do and dealt with the consequences later?



ESTIMATED TIME:
10 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is to get students to think critically about choices and consequences and exploring connections between prior knowledge and current events.

This exercise supports AO1. In their exploration of the play, reflection and consideration of wider themes and context can support individual and independent responses to the play, enabling students to gain a greater depth of knowledge and understanding (AO3).

EXERCISE 4

CONSEQUENCES

- Ask your students to split into pairs.
- Hand out copies of the [Act One Plot Summary](#) from the *A Doll's House Study Guide*.
- Have the pairs read through the plot summary so they know, or are reminded of, the background of the story.
- Hand out copies of the scene between Nora and Torvald at the end of Act One - beginning from Nora's line "But, tell me, was it really something very bad that this Krogstad was guilty of?" It is during this exchange where Nora begins to realise the potential consequences of her choice.
- Try each of the following lines of Nora's (or the equivalent line from your version of the text):

"Isn't it possible that he was driven to it by necessity?"

"Are you sure of that?"

"Why do you only say – mother?"

in the following ways:

- With a kind of throw-away carelessness, as if it were nothing to her.
- Laden with meaning, trying to get through to him the importance of this to her.
- Her face and body freezing up with shock - her tone of voice becoming thinner and colder.



ESTIMATED TIME:
10 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is for students to practically explore the effects of Nora discovering the potential consequence of her choice and the tension it brings into the story through using the text of the play.

As students explore different methods of delivering lines, they have the opportunity to access AO4, in which they can analyse their own work and that of others. As students develop confidence in developing their own directorial/performance concepts, they can gradually develop confidence in evaluating and adjusting their artistic decisions.

EXERCISE 5

WHAT WOULD YOU DO? (PART 2)

- Refer students back to the situations on the large pieces of paper.
- Ask them each to choose a situation, and create an outline of a monologue or scene where the main character discusses their situation, and ultimately the choice they will make and any potential consequences they may face.
- Allow 10 minutes to create the outline.
- Pair up students, ask them to exchange the pieces of paper where they have outlined their monologue or scene, and provide peer critique.
- Ask for a number of volunteers to improvise their monologue or scene based on their outline.



ESTIMATED TIME:
20 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is for students to create/devise an engaging original scene or monologue demonstrating an understanding of how character relationships and character choices assist in telling the story.

If the activity above is not completed during the lesson, it can be set as homework and revisited at the start of the next class period.

By encouraging students to respond creatively to the dilemmas explored at the beginning of the lesson, you can help students to develop confidence in AO1, creating and developing ideas, without self-censorship – which can be challenging for students when responding creatively and spontaneously. AO4, which asks students to analyse and evaluate their own work and that of others, can also be explored within this task, enabling students to develop the skills of giving, receiving and responding to feedback. Feedback could also be discussed to cover AO2, in which students perform each other's pieces and apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions. As a challenge for very high ability students, more information about characterisation and social conventions/etiquette could help develop these responses even further.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

A-LEVEL DRAMA AND THEATRE

- AO1: Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning as part of the theatre making process, making connections between dramatic theory and practice.
- AO2: Apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance.
- AO3: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed.
- AO4: Analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others.

For further resources to help you teach *A Doll's House*, including our [full-length production](#), [Practical Guide](#) and [Study Guide](#), visit www.digitaltheatreplus.com

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