 Resource 7

Close reading act 1

You can find the extract from the NESA (New South Wales Education Standards Authority) approved version:

Ibsen, Henrik, A Doll’s House, Nick Hern Books, 1994, ISBN: 9781854592361

It is the first 5 pages of Act 1. The conversation between Helmer and Nora is the focus.

Close reading questions:

1. What is the significance of Nora’s opening line and actions in the context of her characterisation?
2. Describe, using examples, the tone Torvald uses when he addresses Nora. Ensure you discuss the use of imperative language. Contrast this to Nora’s tone when she responds.
3. Why does Torvald address Nora as a ‘lark’, ‘featherbrain’ and ‘squirrel’? Consider how this reflects the beliefs about women in the 1800s.
4. The scene takes place in the domestic (private) sphere. How does Ibsen use elements of realism to characterise this as Nora’s domain, and demonstrate that Torvald exists in the public sphere?
5. How does the exchange between Nora and Torvald about the macaroons characterise their relationship? Consider the fast-paced dialogue as well as the pauses.
6. In the context of the play as a whole, how does the opening scene establishing the central conflict and ideas of the drama?