 Resource 8

Close reading act 3

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 13 pages into Act three. The maid has entered and handed a letter to Nora. From here forward there is a conversation between Helmer and Nora that highlights her serious concerns and the distance between the two is now abundantly clear.

The conversation between Helmer and Nora is the focus.

Close reading questions

1. Why do you think Torvald reacts the way he does to Nora’s realisation that she has never been happy in their marriage?
2. How does Ibsen demonstrate that the power dynamic has shifted in Nora’s favour in this Act?
3. Nora compares Torvald and her father, how does this reflect the treatment of females in Ibsen’s context?
4. How can the audience see that Nora has grown through the conflict that she has experienced? How can this be seen as the resolution to the conflicts in the play?
5. Why is Nora still a character who continues to have value in our contemporary society? Use examples from this scene to support your answer.
6. How does this scene develop the social critique Ibsen makes through his drama?