Doors That Slam: Unit Overview

ENG4U, Grade 12 English (University), Unit 4. 10 classes of 75 minutes (about two weeks).

The big question

Who gets to decide how a life is lived?

Students read two landmark plays, both public domain and included in full in a Play Reader: Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House (1879) and Susan Glaspell's Trifles (1916). They map power in the Helmer household, build Nora's ledger of debts and secrets, stage the letter-box and the tarantella, chart Helmer's reversal on a temperature graph, debate Nora's exit and Ibsen's forced alternative ending, and rewrite the ending for three decades. In Trifles, they run a kitchen-table investigation of the clues the men dismiss and hold a jury room on the women's choice. The unit ends with rehearsal, a missing-scene writing workshop and staged readings.

Lessons

#	Lesson	Classes	Question	Expectations	What's inside
1	**Larks and Squirrels**	1	What do pet names reveal?	R 2.1, R 1.4, OC 1.5	Ibsen; realism; the opening; power map
2	**A Secret Loan**	1	Love or law?	R 1.4, R 1.6, R 1.8	Nora's secret; Krogstad; Nora's ledger
3	**The Tarantella**	1	How does Nora try to stop the truth?	R 1.6, R 2.2, OC 2.5	Rank; the letter-box; the dance; staging tension
4	**The Letter**	1	Who is Helmer really?	R 1.6, R 1.4, OC 1.5	Two couples; temperature graph
5	**The Door Slams**	1	Is Nora right to leave?	R 1.8, R 1.7, OC 2.2	The final argument; two endings; three decades
6	**A Kitchen Investigation**	1	What do the men miss?	R 1.4, R 2.1, R 1.8	Glaspell; Trifles; clue board
7	**A Jury of Her Peers**	1	Justice, loyalty or a crime?	R 1.6, R 1.8, OC 1.5	The bird and the box; jury room; two plays
8	**Rehearsal Studio**	1	How does performance interpret?	OC 2.5, OC 2.2, R 2.2	Beats, objectives, subtext; director's note
9	**The Missing Scene**	1	What did the playwright leave out?	W 2.2, W 2.5, W 2.1	Script format; model scene; drafting
10	**Staged Readings**	1	What does performance reveal?	OC 2.5, OC 2.6, OC 2.2	Staged readings (summative); reflection

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Assessment

Type	In this unit
Assessment for learning	Opening scene clues, power map, Nora's ledger, love or law, staging tension, two couples, temperature graph, final argument, clue board, jury room, scene score
Assessment as learning	Peer director's notes, audience response, unit reflection
Assessment of learning	Staged reading with director's note (Lesson 10) and a missing scene or epilogue with rationale, with rubrics in the Summative Tasks file

Texts

Included in the Start Here folder:

- **Play Reader:** A Doll's House (public domain English translation) and Trifles, complete
- **Original texts:** a model missing scene and a model director's note

A Doll's House includes a character who considers ending her life; Trifles involves a husband's murder and suggests domestic abuse. Lessons name these with care and include support resources (Kids Help Phone; the Assaulted Women's Helpline). Some students may have experienced a parent leaving; keep the debate about Nora's exit focused on the play.

What's in each lesson

- Teacher lesson plan with expectations, timed sequence, differentiation, look-fors and answer guides
- Slides with speaker notes
- Student handouts and organizers
- Editable Word and PowerPoint files, plus PDFs

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