

A DOLL'S HOUSE ESSAY KCSE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

After looking at [easy ways to analyze A Doll's House](#) for Kenyan secondary schools, let us now have some practice questions for students and teachers.

Before answering the questions it's important to learn some [simple ways of writing essays](#) based on *A Doll's House*.

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A DOLL'S HOUSE ESSAY QUESTION 1

1. **Self sacrifice must be rewarded. Write an essay to validate this claim basing your illustration on Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*.**

In Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House, most women are portrayed as being selfless. They give up their valuable time, comfort and possessions in order to help other people. This does not go unrewarded. Anne, the nanny, halfheartedly leaves her own child in order to help Nora and her three little children. By so doing she gets an income and a good place to live.

Nora, a character in A Doll's House, is selfless. She borrows 250 pounds from Nils Krogstad in order to save her ailing husband's life.

When they get married, Torvald Helmer leaves his job because there is no prospect of promotion. He then works early and late to provide for his family. He overworks himself and falls dreadfully ill. The doctors tell Nora that the only thing to save his life is to live in the south. Nora makes a great sacrifice when she borrows a tremendous amount of money in order to facilitate the trip. A woman is not allowed to borrow money without her husband's consent. Since her husband would not allow her to borrow the money, she is forced to forge her father's name in order to get the money. She takes this risk for the sake of love. After a year of staying in Italy, they come back and Torvald is well and sound as a bell. Indeed, women sacrifice themselves for those they love.

Moreover, Nora also sacrifices for the sake of her three little children when she leaves her home fearing that she may corrupt her children. Due to the societal expectations, she is convinced that she is a corrupt person as a result of her lies and pretentious nature of her marriage. Her marriage to Torvald is full of deception. She lies about trivial things like eating macaroons to serious issues like borrowing money from Krogstad and telling her husband that she got it from her father. Torvald convinces her that such an atmosphere of lies infects and poisons the whole life of a home. Fearing to deprave her own children and poison her home, Nora chooses to leave. Leaving her children is an unbelievable act of self sacrifice. She does it for their sake. Ultimately, she achieves independence from a suffocating male-dominated marriage and gains freedom to try and understand her role in society. What a big sacrifice!

*Mrs. Linde also plays a sacrificial role in the lives of her mother and her siblings as seen in **A Doll's House**. She abandons Nils Krogstad the man she loves, and marries a rich man whom she does not love for the sake of her family. Her mother is bedridden and helpless and her brothers depend on her so she has no choice but to abandon her true but penniless love and marry a man of means who she does not love. She is glad that she makes the end of her mother's life almost free from care. She is also proud of what she does for her brothers for they are*

*since independent. This is a big sacrifice on her side and a reflection of how women in the society in *A Doll's house* are selfless.*

Lastly, Anne is also portrayed as a selfless woman. She sacrifices her happiness for the sake of Nora and her three little children when she leaves her child out among strangers. Nora wonders how she could abandon her own child. Anne says she was obliged to, if she wanted to be Nora's nurse since Nora had no mother. She is depicted as an affectionate woman. Nora Helmer says Anne was a good mother to her when she was little. As a result of her selflessness, Anne gets a salary and a good place to live.

*In conclusion, it's true to say that most women are selfless and thus play sacrificial roles in the societies in which they live. Their acts of sacrifice never go unrewarded as seen in *A Doll's House*.*

A DOLL'S HOUSE ESSAY QUESTION 2

2. Things are not always as they seem. Write a composition based on *A Doll's House* to validate this assertion (20 Marks)

We live in a world of illusions where what you see is not always what you get. Truly, all that glitters is not gold. Nora's marriage to Torvald seems like a perfect, happy marriage but it turns out to be a suffocating prison for Nora.

First, Nora seems like a silly, childish woman that is extravagant, hardly self-reliant and only good for housekeeping. However, her actions prove that she is wise, mature and strong willed. Her husband refers to her as a little squirrel and a little spendthrift. Torvald overworks himself and falls dreadfully ill. She borrows a loan of 250 pounds when her husband falls sick in order to facilitate a year long vacation in Italy for him to get some rest as recommended by the doctors. She does needle work and crocheting to pay off the loan herself. She also saves the money she gets from her husband so she's not a spendthrift after all. This is great sacrifice. When her husband rebukes her for borrowing the money, she

leaves him. This shows her strong will and independence. It turns out that she was never happy after all. Indeed, things are not always as they seem.

Also, Torvald seems like a loving, strong, benevolent husband. Later we realize that he is petty, selfish and cowardly. He is a vain man who only cares about his reputation and what others think of him. The reason he gives for wanting to dismiss Krogstad is that he assumes an overly familiar tone with him when others are around. Even his wife finds this narrow-minded. He is too weak to deliver the promise to risk his life's blood and everything for Nora's sake. When he gets wind of Krogstad's impending blackmail, he calls Nora a criminal and a miserable creature and forbids her from raising the children. He is fearful of being exposed. All that glitters is not gold.

At first, Krogstad seems to be a bitter, vengeful extortionist but we later realize that he is actually merciful and sympathetic. Nora borrows a loan of 250 pounds from him and forges her father's signature in the process. Torvald Helmer plans to dismiss Krogstad from his position at the bank after he is made manager. Krogstad is forced to blackmail Nora in order to keep his job and clean his reputation. He writes a letter to Torvald with the details of his secret transactions with Nora. He does all this for his two sons. When he gets reunited with Mrs. Linde his old flame, he recalls the later revealing his merciful side. Krogstad is an earnest lover. Things are not always as they seem.

Doctor Rank is introduced to us as a very good friend to the Helmer's. Nora says that he is Torvald's best friend. He visits them on a daily basis. Little did we know that he is secretly attracted to his best friend's wife. He even confesses this to her. His true motive for the daily visits is his love for Nora.

Lastly, the Helmer's marriage appears loving but it is not. It is full of lies, pretence, play-acting and an unequal relationship. At first Torvald seems like an affectionate caring husband calling her pet names and giving her money and Nora appears happy, flirting with him and playing

with the children. Cracks appear when we come to know of the deception. She lies about trivial things like eating macaroons to serious stuff like borrowing a loan without her husband's knowledge. She says she got the money from her father. Torvald is also seen as a selfish man who does not love Nora but only cares about public reputation. Nora acts childishly but hides her true nature from her husband. Eventually she is forced to leave Torvald. She says that she was not happy at all. Surely, things are not always as they seem.

In brief, appearance can be deceptive. It is true to say that things are not always as they seem.

A DOLL'S HOUSE ESSAY QUESTION 3

- 3. Selfish individuals who only care about their own reputation cause pain to themselves and others. Write an essay based on *A Doll's House* to validate this statement. (20 Marks)**

Some people only think about their own advantage and opinions that other people have of them. Such selfish people always bring misery to themselves as well as those around them. One such person is Torvald Helmer. He protects his reputation so much causing suffering to Nora his wife.

Torvald causes pain to Nora when he treats her like a child and a play object instead of a wife and an equal partner. He calls her silly names like squirrel, skylark, and little spendthrift. He forbids her from eating macaroons because he wants her to look beautiful for him. He only thinks about his public reputation even at the expense of his wife's happiness. He does not want to keep Krogstad at his job, even after his wife begs him to, because says people will think that he's influenced by a woman. When he finds out about Krogstad's betrayal, he rebukes his wife even after promising to do anything for her sake. All this causes

pain to Nora who says she was never happy. She leaves Torvald and her own children with a quest to rediscover herself.

Torvald also causes pain to Krogstad when he dismisses him from his job for trivial reasons. When Torvald is made manager at the bank where Krogstad works he plans to fire him. Krogstad committed an indiscretion-forgery, and this has made society to view him in ill repute. However, this is not the reason why Torvald wants to fire him. He wants to fire him because he assumes an overly familiar tone with him even when other people are around. When his wife asks him to keep Krogstad at his job he refuses because of what people will say. Krogstad was trying to win back as much respect as he could for the sake of his children. When Torvald dismisses him, he is distraught.

Torvald causes pain to his children. He does not love his family. He only cares about other people's opinion of him. When Nora borrows a loan from Krogstad without his permission, he thoughtlessly admonishes her and even forbids her from raising her children. He calls her a criminal and a miserable creature. When she could not take it anymore, she decides to leave, leaving the children under the care of a maid, Anne. The children suffer the pain of growing up without a mother.

Lastly, he causes pain to himself as a result of his own selfishness. He suffers when his wife decides to leave him. Torvald is a conceited man who only thinks about himself. He dismisses Krogstad from his job for selfish reasons. He also mistreats his own wife just to appear strong before the world. He restricts her from doing what she wants and treats her like a doll-an object to be played with. The marriage is hinged on deception and pretence. When he shows his true colours of a man who only cares about himself, Nora decides to leave. As a chauvinistic control freak, Torvald is shocked. What will society think of him! Thus he brings suffering upon himself.

In conclusion, a selfish man who only cares about other people's opinions of him based on his action causes misery to himself and others.

A DOLL'S HOUSE ESSAY QUESTION 4

- 4. The society in *A Doll's house* is portrayed as a repressive influence on an individual. Write a composition to validate this claim basing your answers on Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. (20 Marks)**

*The society in **A Doll's House** is one that has conventional codes that have a controlling effect on what individuals. People are prevented from expressing what they feel. One has to conform to societal expectations or suffer the backlash. Such a suffocating atmosphere creates misery.*

Torvald only cares about what the society finds acceptable and respectable. He is concerned about the appearance of his wife and his home more than her happiness. He forbids her from eating macaroons because they will ruin her teeth. She tries to convince him to keep Krogstad at the bank but he only thinks about what the bank employees will say-that he is easily swayed by his wife. He fires Krogstad not because of the indiscretion or being bad at his work but because of being overly familiar with him when other people are around. He forbids Nora from raising the children, but wants her to stay under his roof because he wants the marriage to appear perfect in the eyes of the world. His life is controlled by society's influence.

Krogstad spends much of his life in disgrace because of society's moral standards. He committed an indiscretion-forging a name. He tries to win back respect by keeping his job at the bank. He is even forced to blackmail Nora. His blackmail works because society cares about certain repressive moral values.

Nora plays the role prescribed for women in this society. She plays with her children, dresses fancily and dances for her husband. Her husband treats her like a doll. She is not allowed to borrow money without her husband's consent. When her husband falls ill she is forced to secretly borrow two hundred and fifty pounds from Nils Krogstad. She even forges a name in order to get the loan. The society's moral values completely ignore an individual's personal identity. Nora behaves in a

childish manner at first but she is obviously mature, wise and strong-willed. She decides to leave Torvald and the children. He asks what the world will think of that. Indeed, the society has a repressive effect on her life.

Anne's life is ruined because of one youthful mistake-she gets pregnant out of wedlock. The society frowns down upon this. She is forced to leave her own child out among strangers and to work as a nanny to get a decent place to live and a source of livelihood. The man who got her in the family way is not interested in taking up the responsibility.

To sum up, the society in A Doll's House is controlling on an individual and this results in negative consequences for most of the individuals.

A DOLL'S HOUSE ESSAY QUESTION 5

- 5. Both parents and children have an obligation to take care of each other. Write a composition in support of this statement basing your argument on events in A Doll's House. (20 Marks)**

Parents are tasked with the obligation of raising their children in a morally upright nature; this is because children are impressionable and they ape what they see. On the other hand, children have an obligation to care for and protect their parents as well. Nora plays with her children. She also does not tell her father about Helmer's illness because she does not want him to worry when he is ill himself.

Mrs. Linde is portrayed as a caring and affectionate daughter. She makes a sacrifice for her mother. When her mother was bedridden and helpless, she breaks off her relationship with Nils Krogstad, a man she loved and marries a rich man whom she does not love. She needed to provide for her ailing mother. Her selflessness pays off when she manages to make the end of her mother's life almost free from care. She is proud of herself for this.

Nora is also a caring daughter. Although she feels like her father, just like her husband, mistreated her, she still loved and cared for him. When Torvald falls ill, she is forced to forge her father's name in order to incur a loan of two hundred and fifty pounds from Nils Krogstad. She reveals that the reason she did not simply ask her father to sign the bond is that she did not want to bother her father since he was sick. Thus she plays her filial role of protecting her father from disagreeable news in order to spare him anxiety.

On the other hand, Nora's father was tasked with the role of raising her daughter well but due to societal norms, that does not seem to be the case. She says that she has been greatly wronged by her father. He forced her to have the same opinions as him. He called her his doll-child and played with her like a doll and she grew up and made nothing of her life. All she does is perform tricks for her husband. She reckons that her father committed a great sin against her.

Parents have a duty to live responsibly or risk harming their children inadvertently. Dr. Rank is ailing and even eyeing imminent death. He inherited a deadly disease-consumption of the spine, from his father. His father is famous for his youthful amusements. His reckless lifestyle negatively affects his poor son. Rank sends a card with two black crosses to the Helmers hinting that he succumbs to the illness.

In conclusion, it is indeed true to say that both children and parents have an obligation to take care of each other.

A DOLL'S HOUSE ESSAY QUESTION 6

- 6. The society in *A Doll's House* is one full of deception. Write an essay based on *A Doll's House* to validate this statement.**

We live in a world full of lies, pretence and falsehood. The society in A Doll's House is no different. The Helmers marriage is not a happy one

as it seems and Dr. Rank's visits to the Helmers have more to it than meets the eye.

First, Nora lies to her husband Torvald concerning several things. She lies about eating macaroons and about Krogstad's visit. She acts childishly when she is not. She makes Torvald and Mrs. Linde believe that she is a shallow minded individual who is incapable of any serious transactions. She even borrows a hefty loan from Krogstad and lies that she got it from her father. Further, she forges her father's name in order to incur the loan. She is not allowed as a woman to borrow and her obstinate husband would not accept help from a woman. When her husband finds out about this deception, her marriage is wrecked since she chooses to leave her husband and children in pursuit of independence and personal fulfillment.

Also, when we meet Dr. Rank, we regard him as Torvald's best friend. He visits the Helmers on a daily basis. He seems like a close friend to Torvald Helmer. Nora tells Mrs. Linde that he is Torvald's best friend. However, there is an ulterior motive behind his daily visits. He reveals to Nora that he is secretly in love with her. Thus we see him as a pretentious man. He uses his close ties with the family to visit Nora everyday yet his motive is not clearly known.

Nora's marriage to Torvald is enough proof that things are not always as they seem. It seems like the Helmers enjoy a happy, enviable marriage. On the contrary the marriage is riddled with deception. On many occasions Nora lies to Torvald. She acts childishly and performs tricks for Torvald in order to please him yet behind his back she is a wise, mature woman. She understands financial transactions including borrowing and repayment. She makes works secretly in order to repay the loan. Torvald is also deceptive. He says that he's willing to put his life on the line for Nora's sake. Instead, he admonishes her bitterly when he finds out about her secret. Surely, this is a society full of deceptions.

Lastly, Torvald is also portrayed as a deceitful character. He pretends to be a loving, generous husband. He gives his wife money and calls her

pet names regularly like a caring man. In real sense he is a conceited man who only cares about his reputation. He dismisses Krogstad from his job even after his wife begged him not to do so. He does not truly love his wife as we first thought. He treats her like a play-object. Surely, it's a world full of deception.

*In conclusion, it is true to say that the society in **A Doll's House**, as well as the world we live, in is full of deception.*

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