

A Doll House, Act I, by Henrik Ibsen

Literary Analysis: Conflict

The action of a drama is driven by the main character’s conflicts, both external and internal. A **conflict** is a struggle between two opposing forces. In an **external conflict**, a character struggles with another character, society, God, fate, or nature. An **internal conflict**, on the other hand, occurs within the character’s mind as the character struggles with his or her own opposing needs, desires, feelings, or beliefs.

In Act I of *A Doll House*, Nora faces external conflicts with Helmer and Krogstad and with the role society expects a woman to play. These external conflicts, in turn, intensify her internal struggles to resolve her own conflicting desires, needs, values, and feelings.

DIRECTIONS: Complete the following chart by describing Nora’s external conflicts with Helmer, Krogstad, and society in Act I. Then, answer the questions about Nora’s internal conflicts.

Conflict	What Nora Wants From Him or It	How He or It Opposes Her
1. Nora versus Helmer		
2. Nora versus Krogstad		
3. Nora versus society		

4. Which of her own opposing desires, needs, and values does Nora struggle to resolve?

5. How do Nora’s external conflicts with Helmer and Krogstad intensify her internal conflicts?

