1) Some critics have suggested that *A Doll's House* can be compared to *Alcestis*, a play by the Greek dramatist Euripides and first performed in 438 BC. In Euripides' drama, King Admetus' wife Alcestis proves her wifely devotion by agreeing to die in place of her husband in an act of atonement for his misdemeanours. In a similar way, Nora 'dies' figuratively when she considers suicide in Act 2. At the end of Euripides' play, Alcestis is saved by Heracles and escapes Death.

**Look up a fuller plot summary of *Alcestis***.
- Do you recognise any echoes from *Alcestis* in *A Doll's House*?
- What might the fact that Nora and Torvald's dramatic situation reflects that of Alcestis and Admetus in Greek theatre suggest about:
  (a) the status of marriage partners
  (b) the expectations attaching to wifehood
  (c) the moral integrity of husbands
  (d) the ideas that for Ibsen remained relevant in the late nineteenth century?

2) What objections were raised by contemporaneous critics to the ending of *A Doll's House*?

3) Ibsen spoke of the rewritten ending as a 'barbaric outrage.' What is your view of the alternative ending (does it undermine or enhance the drama of the original, is it 'weaker' or more conventional than the original)?
- What (social, religious, theatrical and/or commercial) pressures might have persuaded Ibsen to commit what he considered a 'barbaric' act in rewriting the ending?
- Why do you think that the German ending is no longer performed?
- What does this suggest about society, marriage, the relative status of men and women and the attitudes of modern audiences?

4) In October 1878, Ibsen sketched some ideas for what he called a modern day 'tragedy.' He noted that there were two kinds of moral law and two kinds of conscience, and that the genders did not understand each other's versions. He goes on to assert that society judges women according to 'man's' law. Bearing in mind the literary definition of 'tragedy,' would you agree that the expectation that women should be subject to laws framed, imposed and adjudicated by men is sufficiently profound as to be categorised as tragedy?

Using quotes, give reasons for your response.

5) Nearly twenty years after completing *A Doll's House*, Ibsen was invited to speak to the Norwegian League for Women's Rights. What does this invitation suggest about the way Ibsen's political views and his play were interpreted by the women of the Norwegian League at this time?
- Do you think that *A Doll's House* is a feminist drama?
- What did Ibsen have to say about the 'women's cause' and his relation to it?