



Educator Materials: Curriculum Connections

Preliminary Information	
Title of Opera:	Composer:
Librettist:	Date and Location of Premiere:

Language Arts:

Characters

List the main characters of the opera and give a brief description of each of them.

Extension: List one positive personality trait of each character and one negative one. Describe how personality traits affect the behavior of the characters.

What can you infer about the characters by the way they dress? What evidence do you have to support your answer?

Which character do you believe is the most powerful? Why? Where does their power come from (money, social status, etc.)?

Setting

In what time period does the production take place? How do you know?

Where does the story take place? In what ways does the setting affect the action?

If this particular staging is set in a different time period or place than the original opera, why do you think the director made this choice?

How does the lighting play a role in communicating the time of day, season or passage of time?

Can you think of another play, opera or story that takes place in the same place and/or time period?

Make a KWL (What we know, what we want to know, what we will learn) chart based on the place in which this story is set.

Story

Did you encounter any new vocabulary terms while reading the synopsis or viewing the opera? List them here, along with their definitions.

What are three major themes of the story?

What is the main conflict of the story?

What is the original source material or inspiration for the libretto (if there is any)?

Extension: How does the story of the opera differ from the source material or inspiration?

Outline the story. What happens at the beginning, middle and end?

Expansion: Include a worksheet that has students map out the exposition.

Math, Science and Health:

Math

Does money/wealth play a major role in the action of the opera? How so?

Extension: What would the monetary values in the opera amount to in the present, in USD?

If the story of the opera takes place in several different places, calculate the distance between them. Remember to show your work!

If available, view production designs of set and assess the scale of set design to actual stage set.

Find out how many seats are in the War Memorial Opera House. Calculate number of seats based on various percentages of tickets sold.

Introduce basic time signatures.

Extension: Compare time signatures to fractions.

How many people are in the production? How many orchestra musicians are in the pit?

Research how many performances are in the entire run of the opera. Find out the timing of one full performance. How many total hours of performance are there?

Science and Technology

Research the life expectancy or general health of people during the time in which the opera is set. How is it different from today?

Are there special effects in the opera? How does the Production staff create those effects?

Health

How does health play a role in performance practice? Find someone (a singer, instrumentalist, etc.) to interview.

Think about the characters and their conflicts. Brainstorm ways they could resolve their conflicts differently.

Do the main characters exhibit negative behaviors? How do these behaviors affect their relationships with other characters or their own well-being?

Extension: If you've experienced something similar, what advice would you give to this character about how to resolve this issue?

How do external and internal forces affect the main character? What changes could they have made to their lives?

History and Social Studies:

When and where does the opera take place?

On a map, put a star on each location the characters travel in the opera.

What political and social movements were in motion when the composer was writing the opera?

What political and social movements are in motion during the opera?

How have politics changed in the country in which opera is set?

Are the politics of the opera influenced by the political leanings or ideology of the composer? How so?

Visual and Performing Arts:

List the voice types of each of the main characters.

What is the opera's instrumentation (hint: find the program book online!)?

What is the era or genre of this opera? What operatic genres preceded it and what comes after?

Who or what influenced the composer?

How does the set design change the opera (if at all)?

How does movement/dance play a role in this opera?

Do specific colors, shapes, textures, etc. play a role in this opera?

What does the costuming of this opera tell us about the characters and story?

Where would you set this opera, if you could set it anywhere? Why?

Can you think of any works of art that may have influenced the creation of this opera or this specific production? Can you think of any works of art that were inspired by this particular opera?

List three other works by the composer of the opera.

Research a similar work by a contemporary of the composer. Write a paragraph comparing and contrasting this work and the opera.

Career Preparation:

Check out internships listed at sfopera.com/employment and discuss these roles with a mentor.

Research jobs at the opera company. Brainstorm additional positions. Write a paragraph about the job you are interested in.

How does the opera company affect the functioning of its home city (think transportation, food service, family services, etc.)?

Foreign Language:

What language is the opera sung in? Are the characters singing the language of the place the opera is set in?

Research the influences of the librettist, such as: training, teachers, upbringing, social circles, politics, etc.

If you're able, read the source material in its original language. Compare and contrast it to the English version, or the opera version.