



San Francisco Opera's Donizetti's *THE ELIXIR OF LOVE FOR SCHOOLS*

Curriculum Connections

California Content Standards
Kindergarten through Grade 12

LANGUAGE ARTS

WORD ANALYSIS, FLUENCY, AND VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Vocabulary

- Name origins: Adina, Dulcamara, Belcore, Nemorino.
- Idioms: Top of the world; bright as a button, wed in haste, other popular expressions.
- Vocabulary Lists: Ex. *Elixir of Love*, Opera glossary, Music and Composition terms.

Phonics and Phonemic Awareness:

Letter Recognition: Name the letters in a word. Ex. **elixir** = **e-l-i-x-i-r**.

Letter/Sound Association: Name the letters and the beginning and ending sound in a word. Ex. **football** > beginning sound "**F**" = /F/ > ending sound "**L**" = /L/

Match and list words with the same beginning or ending sounds. Ex. **love** and **lose** have the same beginning letter "**L**" and sound /L/; but **love** and **lose** end with different letters and ending sounds.

Syllables: Count the syllables in a word. Patter singing of Dulcamara. (Ex.: "Good for pimples, for carbuncles, for dispatching wealthy uncles...")

Match and list words with the same number of syllables. Clap out syllables as beats.

Ex.: sweet (sweet) 1 syllable tasty (tas-ty) 2 syllables elixir (e-lix-ir) 3 syllables

Phoneme Substitution: Play with the beginning sounds to make silly words. What would a "boprano" sound like? (Also substitute middle and ending sounds.) Ex. **soprano**, **boprano**, **toprano**, **koprano**.

Phoneme Counting: How many sounds in a word? Ex. **elixir** = 6.

Phoneme Segmentation: Which sounds do you hear in a word? Ex. **elixir**. e//i/x/i/r.

Use of alliteration, particularly with Dulcamara's patter song. "Come, **p**urchase youth and beauty for the **p**ittance that you **p**ay!"

Parts of speech: Noun, verb, adjective, adverb, prepositions.

Reading Skills: Build skills using the subtitles on the video and related educator documents.

Concepts of Print: Sentence structure, punctuation, directionality.



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READING COMPREHENSION

Story Development: Character desires and motivation; Cause and effect: What made this happen?

Explore the different ways of narrating a story.

Creative writing: Interpret the story and create a new version. Create your own characters. Ex. Adina > School librarian.

Types of text: Poetry, lists, fairy tale, song text, libretto, script for media arts, biography, etc.

Read: [Source material for *The Elixir of Love*](#), *The Elixir of Love for Schools* libretto, letter from Donizetti, biographies, etc.

LITERARY RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS

Elements of a Story: Character, plot, setting, conflict.

Character:

- Archetypes/Stock characters/Commedia dell arte: Hero, heroine, trickster, pompous powerful man.
- What are characters' defining traits?
- Character Development: Growth & depth beyond expected roles. Adina grows from imaginary love to real love.

Themes:

- Romance, love vs. desire, sincerity vs. bravado, love triumphs over all challenges
- What is a man? What kind of men do Nemorino and Belcore and Dulcamara represent? What is a romantic hero vs. a warrior hero?

Genres:

- Fantasy vs. Reality, Myths, Legends. Tristan and Isolde.
- Is *The Elixir of Love* a straight comedy, or is it a romance? Talk about Donizetti's ability to mix drama and comedy.

Sequence of Events: Cause and effect: Nemorino's need for elixir, choice to join army.

Vocabulary: Reading for understanding using the subtitles on the video and related educator documents.

Where do we find lists? Grocery lists, list poems.

Point of View: Identify first, second and third person speeches. Define fourth wall (asides).

Place: The setting of an opera can be changed (example: Italian village > Napa Valley)

Alliteration: Recognize the similarities of sounds and rhythmic patterns. Ex. Dulcamara's patter song.

Figurative Language: Simile, Metaphor, Hyperbole, Personification, Allegory.



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WRITING

Creative Writing

- Writing letters between characters. Choose a moment in the story to write a letter about.
- Create a diary for a character.
- Create backstories for characters.
- Write character resumés or curricula vitae.
- Write about story from point of view of town observer.

Create a list of ingredients or write the directions for how to make an ice cream sundae or an elixir. Make up your own potions, like Dulcamara's elixir.

Persuasive writing

- Write and design your own recruitment poster. Write the contract Nemorino signs to join army.
- Write and design your own flyers for library and ice cream stand.
- Write and design advertisements for Dulcamara's elixir. What does your elixir do?
- Create your own pamphlet for your own brand of ice cream or elixir.
- Write pick-up lines for Belcore.
- Letter writing, copywriting, advertising, fundraising, press release for the opera.

Analysis and Interpretation:

- Expository writing, critiques/reviews.
- Poetry, fairy tale, song text, libretto, script for media arts, biography, program article, synopsis, etc.

WRITTEN AND ORAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

Spelling: Spell the names of the characters in *The Elixir of Love*.

Metaphors, symbolism. Double entendres (crush queen).

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Explore the rhythm of speech. Try to speak quickly and still be understood. (ex. Dulcamara's enunciation in his patter song.)

Oral Speaking: Connection between the written words and oral interpretation (recitative and sung), the phrasing and musicality of speech.

Create a persuasive speech like Dulcamara's or Belcore's.

Reflection: What did you see, think, hear and feel? (ex. Verbal & written responses to *The Elixir of Love*.)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Gaetano Donizetti, Composer: [Biography](#), [timeline of works](#).



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ACTIVITIES

Create a character sketch. Introduce character to classmates.

Write a character's curriculum vitae, backstory.

Bragging exercise (use your body as well).

Libretto writing: Adapt *The Elixir of Love* or create a new story/characters.

Story writing: Adapt existing source material; create story/characters.

Write a letter from one character to another; choose a moment in the story.

Write a character's diary; fake Facebook page, fake Twitters.

Create written copy: program, poster design, advertising, biography, etc.

Read and report on Feature Articles.