



SAN FRANCISCO  
OPERA

## The Marriage of Figaro

Lesson Plan: Droit de seigneur and #MeToo

<b>GRADE LEVELS</b>	High School, 9 - 12
<b>TIMING</b>	Two or three 50-minute lessons
<b>PRIOR KNOWLEDGE</b>	N/A
<b>LESSON OBJECTIVES</b>	Students will be introduced to <i>The Marriage of Figaro</i> . Students will be able to discuss the #MeToo movement, power and sexual abuse that happens in the world
<b>CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS</b>	English Language Arts Civics/Social Studies Health/Sex Education
<b>MATERIALS/ LINKS</b>	<i>Class set of Computers, Teacher computer with Screen, Speakers, Projector Whiteboard &amp; whiteboard markers or chart paper</i>
<b>NATIONAL STANDARDS / STATE STANDARDS</b>	<u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7</u> Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.  <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C</u> Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.  <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4</u> Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

**INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES**

**STEP ONE.** Introduction

Let students know that this lesson will explore topics such as sexual harassment, consent, and power abuse. Acknowledge that these are very sensitive topics and may trigger different interactions. Allow students to opt out. Please create a safe space.

**STEP TWO.** Ask students what they know about consent. What is consent and how do you get or give consent? Is it consent if the other person doesn't say anything? Is it consent if someone threatened someone else to say yes? Why might this be a difficult topic to discuss in class?

**STEP THREE.** Show one or more of the following videos.

Charlie Coleman talks about rape culture (Trigger Warning):  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzC\\_Ss5oO4Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzC_Ss5oO4Q) (2:42)

How To Get High Schoolers To Rethink Sexual Consent And Assault  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4BxuG5xMD0> (7:11)

Founder of "Me Too", movement Tarana Burke speaks out  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSbFFwHDzQo> (8:13)

Teen's poem about sexual assault is a powerful one  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6ONugTPF6s> (2:58)

Ask the students to pair- or group-share or write down their thoughts after viewing this video. How does the video resonate with them?

To prompt their thinking, you might start by asking (SHARING IS OPTIONAL):

- What have you heard or learned about sexual harassment?
- What do you know about the #MeToo movement, and what are your thoughts about it?
- What questions do you have about this movement and the many issues it has raised over the past several months?
- What do you want to know or better understand?

After students have had time to reflect, discuss all but the last question as a class. If students wrote anonymously, you might read aloud from some of the submissions to get the discussion started. As the class talks, highlight patterns in their feelings and observations and write down student questions on a poster paper so you can continue to address them over the course of the unit.

**STEP FOUR.** Introduce *The Marriage of Figaro* (10 minutes).

Choose one of the following videos to share:

Opera Cheats: Le nozze di figaro  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3DkZ8pkio> (4:03)

Santa Barbara's Opera Company, 10 second summary of opera  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6UVaJ3JXTo> (2:07)

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>The Marriage of Figaro</i> is a 4 act opera, libretto by da Ponte, based on a comedy by Beaumarchais and composed by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and was first produced in Vienna, 1786.</li> <li>2. This opera is a continuation of the opera by Rossini, <i>Barber of Seville</i>. (An one hour abbreviated version DVD of <i>Barber of Seville</i> is available upon request.) A central concept of the opera is the "droit de seigneur," which is the alleged right of a medieval feudal lord to have sexual intercourse with a vassal's bride on her wedding night.</li> <li>3. Mozart's opera, <i>The Marriage of Figaro</i>, tells the story of a wealthy Count Almaviva, who believes it's his right to bed (droit de seigneur) with a female servant on the night of her marriage. She has not given <b>consent</b>. <b>Figaro</b>, servant to Count Almaviva, is about to <b>marry</b> Susanna, the Countess's maid. The servants, Figaro and Susanna, succeed in their efforts to fend off the count. In the meantime, Marcellina is angry at Susanna for stealing <b>Figaro</b> away from her, while Bartolo is angry at <b>Figaro</b> for making a fool of him in the past.</li> </ol> <p><b>STEP FIVE.</b> Students will research one of ten possible themes related to the #MeToo Movement and report back to the class.</p> <p><b>DAY TWO OF LESSON</b></p> <p>Assemble class into groups of no more than 4. Each group will do Internet research on the following topics, emphasizing that abuse can take any form, and anyone can be a victim:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Power abuse in the music world</li> <li>2. #MeToo movement in Hollywood</li> <li>3. Metook12</li> <li>4. Abuse in the US military</li> <li>5. Sexism in operas</li> <li>6. Power abuse in the tech industry (Silicon Valley)</li> <li>7. Male abuse in the fashion world</li> <li>8. Abuse in universities</li> <li>9. Women who sexually abuse</li> <li>10. Sexual harassments in Ubers and Lyft</li> <li>11. Female teachers and sexual abuse</li> <li>12. Abused men in the #MeToo movement</li> </ol> <p>Each group will report back their findings to the class. The report can be written, a poem, oral, in the form of art, i.e. theatre, poster, paintings, a song (rap music, etc.).</p>
<b>CLOSURE</b>	<p>Have the students brainstorm the ways in which people who have been the victim of sexual assault or abuse might heal and find peace.</p> <p>Turn their Responses into a handout for students!</p>