



San Francisco Opera's Mozart's *DON GIOVANNI*

Curriculum Connections California Content Standards Kindergarten through Grade 12

LANGUAGE ARTS

WORD ANALYSIS, FLUENCY, AND VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Phonics and Phonemic Awareness:

Letter Recognition: Name the letters in a word. Ex. **Leporello = L-e-p-o-r-e-l-l-o.**

Letter/Sound Association: Name the letters and the beginning and ending sound in a word. **G**-iovann-**i**

Match and list words with the same beginning or ending sounds. Ex. **Don** and **Donna** have the same beginning letter “**d**” and sound /**d**/; but end with different letters and ending sounds. Additional examples: Leporello, Ottavio, Masetto; Anna, Elvira, Zerlina.

Syllables: Count the syllables in a word. Ex.: Lep-or-el-lo

Match and list words with the same number of syllables. Clap out syllables as beats. Ex.: 1 syllable 2 syllables 3 syllables **bass = bass tenor = ten-or soprano = so-pra-no**

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. **bell = 3**

Phoneme Segmentation: Which sounds do you hear in a word? Ex. **bell = b/e/l.**

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

Examine contrasting vocabulary.

Find words in *Don Giovanni* that are unfamiliar and find definitions and roots. Revenge, jealousy, treachery.

Translation of source material texts: *El Burlador de Sevilla* and *Don Giovanni* libretto.

Use programs such as Babelfish Translator or Google Translate to translate lines from the Italian libretto; do the supertitles match exactly? If not, why not?

Find analogies in *Don Giovanni*.

Concepts of Print: Sentence structure, punctuation, directionality.

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

Vocabulary Lists: Ex. *Don Giovanni*, Opera glossary, Music and Composition terms

Reading Comprehension:

Story Development (What's the beginning, middle and end?): Character desires and motivation; Cause and effect: What made this happen?

Creative writing: Interpret the story and create a new version. Create your own characters. Ex: Don Giovanni is a business tycoon running one of the largest investment firms in New York City.

The sequencing of events, climax, and resolution.

Read:

Opera source material: Source material for *Don Giovanni*, *Don Giovanni* libretto, letter from Mozart, biographies, etc.

Read sections of the English translation of the libretto. Write a brief synopsis based on the libretto.

Read the original Tirso da Molina play, *El Burlador de Sevilla*.

Creative writing:

Interpret the story and create a new version. Create your own characters or change the opera's time period and setting. Ex. Count = movie star.

Explore different genres of writing: poetry, song text, libretto, script for media arts, biography, autobiography, short story, historical novel, etc.

Explore literary devices such as the use of point of view, internal/external conflict, repetition of phrases and foreshadowing.

CREATIVE WRITING

Reinterpret the story by creating a new version using your own characters, time period and setting.

Explore different genres of writing: poetry, song text, libretto, script for media arts, biography, autobiography, short story, historical novel, etc.

Explore literary devices such as the use of point of view, internal/external conflict, repetition of phrases and foreshadowing.

Analysis and Interpretation: Expository writing, critiques/reviews.

Persuasive Writing: Letter writing, copywriting: advertising, fundraising, press release.

Write about what you would do in Leporello's place, or in Zerlina's place.

Write about what would happen to the characters if the story continued.

Set the story in a different time and place. Update the dialogue.

LITERARY RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS

Elements of a Story:

Character, plot, setting, conflict.

Vocabulary:

Reading for understanding using the subtitles on videos and related educator documents.

Genres:

Comedy: Farce, slapstick. Trace history of Commedia characters to current day.

What is a prologue? Why is the structure of the opera a prologue and two acts rather than three acts?

Play 15-minute segments of the opera; students journal after watching the segments.

Research other versions of the Don Juan story. Compare to *Don Giovanni*.

Compare the format of the libretto to the format of the original play.

Students respond to a letter from Leporello asking them for advice.

Chart out the elements of the plot.

Read a synopsis of Act I; how would you complete this story?

Compare Don Giovanni to other villains from literature, films or other artworks. What other archetypal characters can you find in *Don Giovanni*?

Examine the roots of the story in Commedia dell'Arte tradition. Which characters correspond to which Commedia characters? Can you find Commedia characters in more contemporary entertainment (i.e. Looney Toons or television sitcoms)?

Examine the relationships in the opera, i.e. between Zerlina and Masetto, between Leporello and Don Giovanni. How do they interact? How do they feel about each other?

Analyze the characters in the opera. What motivates their actions? What are their main traits? Do they change over the course of the opera?

Pick your favorite character in the opera and describe him/her. Write a letter from his/her point of view to another character.

Compare *Don Giovanni* to other Mozart operas like *The Magic Flute* and *The Marriage of Figaro*. How are the characters and storylines similar?

Examine the use of subtext in the opera. Are people always saying what they mean, or is their language intended to mask something?

Examine character development: do the characters grow beyond their expected roles? What is status of servants and peasants at the end of the opera? What is the status of the women vs. the men?

How do the characters go about getting what they want in the opera?

Examine the themes of the opera: the use and abuse of power, jealousy, addiction; appetites; vengeance, treachery, redemption, friendship and loyalty, destiny, fate, the "playa".

Social Drama examining class structures and the relationship between nobility and servants, as depicted in "Upstairs, Downstairs" or nanny movies.

Romantic comedy highlights the relations between men and women.

*Example: Applying the Language Arts Standards to Mozart's *DON GIOVANNI*

GRADE 4

Literary Response and Analysis

- *3.1 Reading Analysis: Identifies and analyzes the structural differences within the genre of fantasies*
Lesson: Read a synopsis of and then watch Don Giovanni DVD. Contrast and compare it to another story with a great villain, such as The Big Bad Wolf, The Wicked Witch, Rumpelstiltskin, Captain Hook, Cinderella's Step-mom.
- *3.2-3.5 Uses knowledge of literary elements to interpret narrative text*
Lesson: Read a synopsis of and then watch *Don Giovanni* DVD. Contrast and compare it to another story with a great villain, such as The Big Bad Wolf, The Wicked Witch, Rumpelstiltskin, Captain Hook, Cinderella's Step-mom.

Themes:

Love and the complexity of the emotion: Happiness/Misery, Jealousy/Trust, Betrayal/Forgiveness

Power struggles and the games people play – gender, age, class

Character Actions and Motives: How do characters' actions move story along? What are characters' real motives? Contrasts of character traits drive story forward. Contrast characters of Donna Elvira and Zerlina as different types of women.

Symbolism/metaphors:

Archetypes: Commedia dell'arte characters such as the trickster, villain, and the young lovers.

Character Development: Examine character development: do the characters grow beyond their expected roles? What is status of servants at the end of the opera? What is the status of the women vs. the men?

Alliteration: Recognize the similarities of sounds and rhythmic patterns in the libretto.

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

Language style and music reflects emotion of characters, and instrumental sounds or musical phrases can be used symbolize character.

WRITING STRATEGIES

Analysis and Interpretation:

Don Giovanni production materials: artist biographies, program and program notes, synopsis, expository writing, critiques/reviews, etc.

Persuasive Writing:

Write a "me" poem for each of the characters: begin the poem with "I am" and list the characteristics of each person in separate phrases.

Write parrot poems from the point of view of the characters. Parrot poems are conversational poems in which partners write each line in turn.

Writing exercise in which feelings are expressed like those in *Don Giovanni's* arias.

Write a passage expressing several characters' inner thoughts at the same time.

Rewrite libretto using today as a setting. Use contemporary characters: Who would be the Don Giovanni today? Leporello?

Create a storyboard of *Don Giovanni* produced in the style of a sitcom episode (Glee) or comic soap opera.

Scenes, letters, diary or blog pages can be written from a particular character's point of view; make sure to take relationships between characters into account. Diary pages could focus on how characters convince themselves to do something (Giovanni and Leporello invite the statue of the Commandatore to dinner with their duet, "Oh, statua gentilissima")—internal debate.

Letter writing, copywriting: advertising, fundraising, press release.

Persuasive writing: create posters, advertisements for one of the characters.

Write persuasive letters from Don Giovanni to Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, etc.

Research different source material for the Don Juan story; how do they differ? What do they share in common?

Write dialogue for two of the characters in the opera. Each character only says one line, but uses different inflections each time he/she says it.

Rewrite libretto using today as a setting. Use contemporary characters: who would be Don Giovanni today? Leporello?

Write a different ending for the opera.

Write or draw a deleted scene for the opera; a scene we hear about, but don't see.

WRITTEN AND ORAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

Debates between characters. Deliver persuasive speeches, identify tactics used.

Write a monologue with two scenes based on the alternate points of view held by a single character.

Spelling: Spell the names of the characters in *Don Giovanni*.

Facial cues, expressions, gestures can sometimes amplify message being delivered, or can sometimes run contrary to meaning of words (subtext).

Watch different versions of the opera on DVD and write reviews. Read example reviews first.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

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

Act out main events of the story, in tableaux or longer scenes. Improvise. Give small groups different scenes, and then act out in succession.

Write dialogue for two of the characters in the opera. Each character only says one line, but uses different inflections each time he/she says it.

Reflection: What did you see, think, hear and feel? Ex. Verbal & written responses to *Don Giovanni*.

Persuasive language: How does Donna Anna distract Don Giovanni to protect Don Ottavio?

Write two speeches about the same thing; write one to be delivered to a friend, and one to be delivered to a person of authority. How does your language differ?

Conduct a debate between two characters in the opera.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (composer): biographies, timelines of work.

Lorenzo da Ponte (librettist): Biography, timeline of works.

ACTIVITIES

Create a character sketch.

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

Write a Dear Abby letter from one of the characters in the opera, and Abby's response.

Using a letter from one character to another in the opera; edit the letter down to a tweet or Facebook post.

Write a persuasive letter from the librettist da Ponte to his patron, asking for the same salary as Mozart (the composer made more).

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

Libretto writing: Adapt *Don Giovanni* (existing source material) or create a new story/characters.

Create a news report about *Don Giovanni* using HyperStudio.

Write a blog post from the point of view of one character.

Write a prequel for the opera about Don Giovanni's and/or Leporello's life.

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

Read and report on feature articles from the opera program for *Don Giovanni*.

Create a board game for the opera, similar to Chutes and Ladders reflecting the characters' ups and downs.