



San Francisco Opera's Charest's *THE TRIPLETS OF BELLEVILLE*

Curriculum Connections California Content Standards Kindergarten through Grade 12

SOCIAL STUDIES

PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

Self-Identity.

Family: Immediate & Extended. Caring brother and sister relationship.

Roles of family members in your life and the choices you make.

Time: Past, Present, Future.

Place: Neighborhood, City, State, Continent, World, Universe.

Value of personal mementos and found objects.

CIVICS

Social Hierarchy: Class, Status. Gender Roles

What are the relationships between the heroes and villains in this story?

How are the members of the Mafia depicted by the illustrators?

How is illegal activity - corruption, gambling - dealt with in Belleville? Discuss the economic empire of the Mafia's impact on the social structure of Belleville.

What was Prohibition? Look for references in *The Triplets of Belleville*.

Reusing and recycling objects out of necessity vs. over-consumption and needless waste by the rich.

GEOGRAPHY

The Triplets of Belleville's setting: Where is Belleville? What evidence do you have to support your answer?

Examine where you live; how does your neighborhood influence your lifestyle or personality?

Research the places where director Sylvain Chomet and composer Benoît Charest were born. Where in the world have they worked?

Map the route of the 1964 Tour de France.

Map the distance that Madame Souza travels on her ocean journey to rescue Champion.

Research ocean travel by ship, routes and the time that it took to for passengers to travel by ship from Paris to New York or Paris to Montreal.

Explore the surrounds of the town of Belleville, Paris today via Google Maps. How does this place compare with the Triplet's Belleville, an imagined city that is a mash up of Paris, New York and Montreal. Research these cities. Create a map showing places important to the history of animated film, from the Lumiere Brothers to Hollywood. Review the cast list for this production of the cine-concert; where do the musicians come from?

HISTORY

During what time period is *The Triplets of Belleville* set? What hints are provided in the film?

Create a timeline of the story – which decades do the different periods of the film happen and what evidence do you have to support your answers?

How old are the characters during the different parts of the film?

Research the history of standard time – the need for synchronization of clocks with travel by railroad.

The impact of Radio, Television and Film on global communication on the speed and spread of communication. American culture being transmitted to other cultures via records, television and film.

Capitalism/urbanization and progress - more airplanes, more electricity, train comes right by house – How does the film portraying these themes? Positively or negatively?

Charles de Gaulle is on TV talking about Tour de France. Who is de Gaulle? What was his role in France's history?

What is the Tour de France? What is its history and traditions? Why did the Tour de France begin in 1903?

What was happening in the US and Paris when the film was set? What were the social structures at the time?

Examine city living in New York City, Paris and Montreal. What is similar about life in the three cities? Different?

What was the relationship between US and France at the time of the story? What about now?

Examine the use of bicycles as a mode of transportation throughout time.

Example of consumerism: all the vehicles have branding as they ride with bikers. Make a list of the corporate sponsorship and advertising in your surrounds.

How is historical information reflected in the viewpoints of the characters?

History of animation – Compare and contrast different styles of animation. European vs Japanese vs American.

Chomet cites Betty Boop as an inspiration to his animation work. Who was Betty Boop and what is the story and history of her character?

History of visual effects and sound effects in film.

Research the history of Gypsy Jazz and the influence of guitarist Django Reinhardt.

Learn about the career of Josephine Baker and the sensation created by her topless “danse sauvage” at the Folies Bergère. Jazz was popular in France in the 1920's and black entertainers received a warm welcome in Paris, in contrast to discriminatory treatment in the United States.

The Introduction – explore the movie's references to film history. What was popular at the time – what falls out of style, and what remains? The Triplets are placed with familiar entertainers and characters from the US and France. Where do you think the film's opening number “Belleville Rendez Vous” is taking place?

How might the film be interpreted differently by the French vs, the Americans audiences?

HISTORY OF OPERA

- How Opera began, history of San Francisco Opera, history of the Adler Fellow Program.
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*Examples: Applying the History-Social Science Standards to Charest's *THE TRIPLETS OF BELLEVILLE*

GRADE 2

History/Social Sciences

2.5 Students understand the importance of individual action and character
Lesson: explain how Madame Souza's actions affected Champion's life

GRADE 3

History/Social Sciences

1.2 Uses maps and globes to identify locations and physical environments
Lesson: Students are asked to find Paris, New York City, and Montreal on a map.(continued)

GRADE 10

History/Social Sciences: Industrial Revolution

10.3 Students analyze the effects of the Industrial Revolution in England, France, Germany, Japan, and the United States.
Lesson: In *The Triplets of Belleville*, the mafia boss drugs the kidnapped cyclists and employs a mechanic to build a stationary cycling machine for the racers to race on — to create their own mini Tour de France for gambling. One of the racers falls off his bicycle from exhaustion, at which point the bookmaker shoots him as one would an injured horse. Think about *The Industrial Revolution* and some of its effects on modern society. Can you draw a parallel to the corrupted use of the cycling machine?

ACTIVITIES

Assign different topics from the time of the opera to small groups, and have them present to each other: money and trade, social structures, military, the arts, etc.

Create a timeline of the story of *The Triplets of Belleville*; include events that were happening elsewhere in the world at the same time.

Create a Venn diagram: What was true about the time of *The Triplets of Belleville*, what is true about our time, and what overlaps?

Research development of *The Triplets of Belleville*. What is the process of making an animated film?

Research reception of *The Triplets of Belleville*, the film, and the cine-concert.

What kind of social background or class did Champion come from? How does his class affect how the other characters treat him? Examine his relationship with Madame Souza.

What are the class relationships in your school? How do you address different people in the hierarchy based on their relationship to you?

How does clothing indicate what culture, status you belong to?

What can schools and community organizations do to contest stereotypes and the status quo?