



San Francisco Opera's Rossini's *CINDERELLA*

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. **Cinderella = C-i-n-d-e-r-e-l-l-a.**

Letter/Sound Association: Name the letters and the beginning and ending sound in a word. **C-lorind-a**

Match and list words with the same beginning or ending sounds. Ex. **Don Ramiro** and **Dandini** have the same beginning letter “**D**” and sound /**d**/; but end with different letters and ending sounds. Additional examples: Don Ramiro, Don Magnifico, Alidoro; Cinderella, Clorinda.

Syllables: Count the syllables in a word. Ex.: Cin-der-el-la

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. **sing = 4**

Phoneme Segmentation: Which sounds do you hear in a word? Ex. **sing = s/i/n/g.**

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

Concepts of Print: Sentence structure, punctuation, directionality.

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

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

Examine contrasting vocabulary.

Find words in *Cinderella* that are unfamiliar and find definitions and roots.

Find the definitions of Italian words such as *zito, piano, basta, soto voce, etcetera, presto.*

Find analogies in *Cinderella*.

Examine vocabulary in source material texts: *Cinderella* libretto.

Define words in the story that are unfamiliar: valet, courtier, cinders, pardon.

Opera vocabulary: soprano, mezzo-soprano, bass, contralto.

Visit the website flocabulary.com; create a similar rap for opera vocabulary.

Metaphors: Dandini, disguised as Prince Don Ramiro sings that he has hopped like a bee from "flower" to "flower," but cannot find a woman that he would marry. How do metaphors work? What are some other metaphors in the opera? Can you think of any that apply, even though they're not in the opera?

Reading Comprehension:

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

The sequencing of events, climax, and resolution.

Watch different versions of the opera on DVD; how do they differ and why?

Reflect on your viewing of the opera by sharing your questions about it with the other students.

Read:

Opera source material: Source material for *Cinderella*, *Cinderella* libretto, letter from Rossini, biographies, etc.

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

Creative writing:

Interpret the story and create a new version. Create your own characters or change the opera's time period and setting. Ex. Don Ramiro = movie star. Create your own characters that are missing from the opera.

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.

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

Write about what you would do in Don Ramiro's place, or in Cinderella'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.

Pretend you're Cinderella – write a journal/diary entry while living with Don Magnifico and the step-sisters, right after the ball, after being reunited with Prince Don Ramiro.

Pretend you're Prince Don Ramiro – Write a letter to Cinderella after she has gone missing after the ball.

If you had an 'Alidoro', what would you wish for?

LITERARY RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS

Elements of a Story:

Character, plot, setting, conflict.

Identify the following in the opera: Inciting incident; Rising action; Climax; Descending action

Vocabulary:

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

Genres:

The story of *Cinderella* has many versions. Trace the original (French) and subsequent (German/Brothers Grimm) (Disney) (Sondheim – *Into the Woods*) (Rogers and Hammerstein musical) versions. Can you find any other Cinderella variants? How do they compare and contrast?

In English-language folklore "Cinderella" is a symbolic name for what type of character?

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

Satire – how is it different than comedy? How is it different from just making fun of someone? Give some examples of satire in the opera.

Where do you see satire in TV shows or films today?

Romantic comedies highlight the relations between men and women.

Themes:

Love and the complexity of the emotion: Forgiveness, Humiliation, Anger, Love, Disbelief, Rejection, Vengeance

Truth, Beauty, Hope and Virtue

Hope and Dreams

Power – Gender, age, class, family

Destiny / Fate

Symbolism/metaphors: Matching bracelets, fire and cinders

Why is Cinderella called Cinderella?

How is the metaphor of cinder used in this story?

The characters in the opera often express themselves using metaphor – Find 3 examples of the use of metaphor in the opera.

What does the storm in Act II symbolize? Are there other symbols in the opera?

Archetypes: Commedia dell'arte characters such as the callous father, the sly servant, and the young lovers.

Which of these character types can be found in different stories? Cinderella, Prince Don Ramiro, Baron Don Magnifico, the step-sisters Clorinda and Tisbe

Character Development:

Character Actions and Motives: Analyze the characters in the Opera. What motivates their actions? What are their main traits?

In Act I, Don Magnifico has a dream – what does this show us about his character?

Who is Alidoro? Is he a magician or a fate decider?

How does Alidoro twist the story?

How is Alidoro different from the Disney film?

Compare and contrast Cinderella's character with that of her two step-sisters, Clorinda and Tisbe. What does Cinderella value as a person? What do her sisters value?

How are Don Magnifico and his daughters the same? How are they different?

How do the characters change over course of the opera?

What does the prince value? Love or duty?

A wide variety of human emotions and behaviors are displayed by the characters over the course of the opera (some are listed here). Who displays them and in what scene?

Dandini (as prince) tells the step-sisters that one of them will marry him and one will marry his valet. They are appalled. What does this tell us about them?

Disguises are an important literary device in the story. (Alidoro as beggar, Prince as valet Dandini, Dandini as Prince). Why do the characters disguise themselves and what is the end result? (Alidoro finds out Cinderella is good and sisters are wicked)(Prince and valet switch: sisters are shallow and only love wealth, Cinderella loves Ramiro even if he is a valet)

At the beginning of the ball, Cinderella is veiled. The chorus sings you have broken our hearts even though you are still veiled. What does this mean? Is it believable that the Baron and his daughters don't recognize her? Why and when do people wear veils? What is the impact of her being veiled in this scene?

Cinderella sings *Una Volta*, a ballad about the story of a king, twice in the opera. Why does she sing it twice? What is its meaning and why do Ferretti/Rossini emphasize it?

What role does Alidoro play in the Opera? Is he a magician like the fairy godmother? Decider of fate?

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

How many arias use alliteration?

See how many tongue twisters you can come up with on your own!

At one point they sing "*Tico, tico, piano, piano.*" What does it mean?

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.

Find two more examples of similes in the dialogue of the opera.

Play segments of the opera; students journal after listening to the segments.

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

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

Chart out the elements of the plot.

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

What kind of genre does this story fit into?

Examine the relationships in the opera, i.e. between Cinderella and Don Ramiro, between Cinderella and Don Magnifico. How do they interact? How do they feel about each other?

Watch a scene from the opera and list verbs that describe the action that's happening.

Examine how conflicts escalate in the opera.

What are some emotions or feelings the characters exhibit in the story? How do you feel about how they act upon or express their emotions?

List some transformations or changes that the characters experience in the story. How do they respond to the changes? How do their characters change?

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

Examine the use of farce in the opera.

Who are the characters that drive the action in this opera?

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

Play a particular passage from the opera; list adjectives that the music makes you think of, instrumental and vocal.

Examine character development: do the characters grow beyond their expected roles?

Compare and contrast the behavior of the different characters in the opera.

How do the different characters speak? What does that say about their social status?

Explore the nuances of the characters in the opera.

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

WRITING STRATEGIES

Poetry, fairy tale, song text, libretto, script for media arts, biography, program, program article, synopsis, etc.

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

Analysis and Interpretation:

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

Why is this one of the most retold stories across cultures? What can we learn from this story about relationships and choices?

Compare and contrast the various cultural stories of *Cinderella*.

In Act II, Dandini says the opera is really a tragedy – why does he say this?

What elements of the opera are comedic and tragic? How is comedy used to deal with a serious storyline?

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 *Cinderella* arias.

Write a passage expressing several characters' inner thoughts at the same time. Use stream of consciousness writing.

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.

Write stage directions for the scene when Alidoro tells Cinderella that he will take her to the Ball, or another scene of your choice.

Rewrite a scene from the opera, switching the genders of the characters. How does the scene change? Rewrite a scene, changing the ethnicities. How does it change?

Rewrite libretto using today as a setting. Use contemporary characters: Who would be Alidoro today? Cinderella?

Divide into small groups. Each group writes the story from the point of view of a different character.

There are many rhymes in Italian in the opera; write a rhyming couplet in another language.

Write passages describing how different characters in the opera move.

Write a "serenade by proxy" when one person pretends to be another.

Write a patter song, like "*Zitto, zitto, piano, piano,*" for a different part of the opera.

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.

Keep journals from the point of view of the characters during the events of the opera.

Write a letter from one character to another.

Create a storyboard of *Cinderella* 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 — internal debate.

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 *Cinderella*.

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.

Examine the structure of *Cinderella*; can you relate it to other stories you've read or seen that have the same character(s) in different stories?

Cinderella comes from a trilogy of plays; what are the other ones? Have any of those been made into operas?

Define climax. Define denouement. How are they used in *Cinderella*?

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

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

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

Why do the characters talk to the audience?

Why do the characters reveal their thoughts to the audience throughout the opera?

The opera is filled with moments where the characters reflect and think – how does Rossini pair music and time with talking and silence.

Persuasive language: How does Magnifico try to persuade Dandini (in disguise as Don Ramiro) that he should marry one of his daughters (Clorinda or Tisbe)?

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.

Separate into small groups; each group researches and comes up with evidence for certain characters' motivations, then defends them in a classroom debate.

Tell the story of *Cinderella* in your own words to other members of your class.

There is a lot of repetition in *Cinderella*; act out a scene with repetitive scenes, in which each character adds a new word to the phrase.

Characters often make “asides” in *Cinderella*. What are asides? Have one character say one phrase and have another respond with an aside.

The opera's libretto is written with a great deal of rhythm and pattern; have one person start a story with a sentence that begins with “A”; have the next person continue the story with a sentence that begins with “B”, and so on.

Dandini uses a different voice when he pretends to be the prince, Don Ramiro; how would you change your voice to disguise it?

With their voices, the singers express the characters' emotions. How would you express love, happiness, exasperation with your speaking voice?

Try reading some lines of recitative; how does it sound without the music? How does the music change it?

Conduct a debate between two characters in the opera.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Gioachino Rossini (composer): biographies, timelines of work.

Who wrote the libretto for Rossini's *Cinderella*? (Jacopo Ferretti) What is the story of *Cinderella*'s composition? What other librettos did Ferretti write and which other composers did he collaborate with?

What was the initial reception of the opera?

ACTIVITIES

Create a character sketch.

Create Reader's Theater of *Cinderella*.

Interview characters in *Cinderella*; write a news story based on the interviews.

Create a news report about *Cinderella* using HyperStudio.

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

Write a letter from one character to another, choosing a moment in the story to write about. Use the "Friendly Letter" format.

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

Write a fake twitter feed for Cinderella or Don Ramiro.

Play "Hot Seat": one student acts as one of the characters from the story, and the other students ask him or her questions based on that character.

Write a prequel for the opera about one of the characters' life.

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

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

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

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

Read and report on feature articles from the opera program about *Cinderella*.