



San Francisco Opera's Rossini's *THE BARBER OF SEVILLE*

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.

What are the men's relationships like in *Barber of Seville*? The women's? How are they different? What does that say about gender stereotypes then and now?

CIVICS

Social Hierarchy: Class, Status. Ex. royalty, servants. How is class indicated by the music, the costumes and other elements in *The Barber of Seville*?

What are the relationships between the servants and the nobility in this story? Is there such a class system now?

Examine the power relationships in the opera. What is the position or status of Count Almaviva? Trace how his status changes through the Beaumarchais trilogy? Why? What was happening in the world that was reflected by the plays?

Examine the position of the military at the time of the opera. How is Almaviva able to insist to be bivouacked in Bartolo's house? How has the position of the military changed today?

What is a notary? What would a lawyer's job have been at the time of the opera?

What is a ward? What is a guardian?

What are the different views of marriage in the opera?

GEOGRAPHY

The Opera's setting: Where is this place? What is this culture?

Map the settings of the opera.

Location of Rossini's birth. Where else did he live?

Based on the story, pick a new setting for the opera. How would the story change, if at all?

Review the cast list for this production of the opera; where do the singers come from?

HISTORY

Research when Rossini was born and the time period when Rossini lived.

Research Beaumarchais; what other careers did he have beside playwright?

During what time period was *Barber of Seville* written? What was the government of Italy at the time?

What was happening in Italy when the opera was written? What were the social structures in Italy at the time?

Examine class system during Rossini's time.

Research the development of *The Barber of Seville*. Why would an artist be commissioned to write an opera?

How do new operas get made today?

Research reception of *Barber of Seville*, the play and the opera.

What would the audience during Rossini's time have known about these characters before seeing the opera?

What would they be expecting from characters like the Count and Figaro?

Dr. Bartolo and Figaro are both doctors, of a kind; how has the practice of medicine changed since the opera was written?

How has the status of women changed from when the opera was written?

Many of the characters and plot points in *Barber* come from Commedia dell'Arte. What is the history of Commedia? What is the history of comedy in theater?

Create a Venn diagram: what was true about the time of *Barber of Seville*, what is true about our time, and what overlaps?

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

How does news travel in the opera? How is that different today? How does that change the pace of our life?

History of Opera: How Opera began, history of San Francisco Opera, history of the Adler Fellow Program.

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.

Research the stories of *Barber of Seville*; what were the stories based on?

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

Map settings in which play and opera take place.

Create a board game or card game that would have been typical of the era involving the characters from *The Barber of Seville*.

Pick another time period in which to set *The Barber of Seville*. Research and design costumes and sets to reflect trends, society at that time.

Write a letter from one character to another using the writing materials used at the time of *The Barber of Seville* (quill pens, wax seals, parchment).

Create timelines of events in opera; Rossini's operas.

Create an organizational chart of the character relationships in *The Barber of Seville*.

Researching the backstory or the story that comes after *The Barber of Seville*.