

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

Rossini

Language Arts Lesson Plan: Writing Prompt

Students Will

- Read “The Story of the Opera”
- Discuss and answer questions on the appropriate portion(s) of the **Writing Prompt Activity Worksheet**

Copies for Each Student

- “The Story of the Opera”
- **Activity Worksheet:** “Writing Prompt”
- Elements of a Story Information Sheet
- **Activity Worksheet:** “Story Web”

Getting Ready

Decide which section(s) of the worksheet you wish your group to complete.

Gather pens, pencils and additional writing paper as needed for your group.

Introduction

Have your students read “The Story of the Opera” and review the Elements of a Story Information Sheet. As a class, identify each element in the story of the opera.

Guided/Independent Practice

Depending on your grade level, the ability of your students, and time constraints, feel free to use the writing prompt and story web as best benefits your class. The activity can be used as creative writing practice, or it can be taken all the way through the writing process.

Evaluation

Have students share their stories individually or in groups and provide feedback on their use of literary elements.

For Further Study

Students may want to do additional research on Gioachino Rossini, *The Barber of Seville*, or related topics online or in their school library. The students may also read about additional performance and production information by visiting www.dallasopera.org/season. Their findings can be shared with the class at the beginning of a later lesson.

Additional Material: Librettist Bio - Our Librettist “Cesare Sterbini”

TEKS: Language Arts

Grade 6 (110.18.B.15.A)

Writing/Literary Texts. Students write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas. Students are expected to write imaginative stories that include a clearly defined focus, plot, and point of view; a specific, believable setting created through the use of sensory details; and dialogue that develops the story.

Grades 7-8 (110.19.B.15.A / 110.20.B.15.A)

Writing/Literary Texts. Students write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas. Students are expected to write an imaginative story that sustains reader interest; includes well-paced action and an engaging story line; creates a specific, believable setting through the use of sensory details; develops interesting characters; and uses a range of literary strategies and devices to enhance the style and tone.

English I (110.31.B.14.A)

Writing/Literary Texts. Students write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas. Students are responsible for at least two forms of literary writing. Students are expected to write an engaging story with a well-developed conflict and resolution, interesting and believable characters, and a range of literary strategies (e.g., dialogue, suspense) and devices to enhance the plot.

English II (110.32.B.14.A)

Writing/Literary Texts. Students write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas. Students are responsible for at least two forms of literary writing. Students are expected to write an engaging story with a well-developed conflict and resolution, interesting and believable characters, a range of literary strategies (e.g., dialogue, suspense) and devices to enhance the plot, and sensory details that define the mood or tone.

English III (110.33.B.14.A)

Writing/Literary Texts. Students write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas. Students are responsible for at least two forms of literary writing. Students are expected to write an engaging story with a well-developed conflict and resolution, complex and non-

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stereotypical characters, a range of literary strategies (e.g., dialogue, suspense) and devices to enhance the plot, and sensory details that define the mood or tone.

English IV (110.34.B.14.A)

Writing/Literary Texts. Students write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas. Students are responsible for at least two forms of literary writing. Students are expected to write an engaging story with a well-developed conflict and resolution, a clear theme, complex and non-stereotypical characters, a range of literary strategies (e.g., dialogue, suspense), devices to enhance the plot, and sensory details that define the mood or tone.

Correlates

Music, Drama

Gardner's Intelligences

Verbal-Linguistic, Musical, Interpersonal

Bloom's Taxonomy

Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Evaluation, Synthesis

Bibliography

The Barber of Seville Libretto

Warrack, John and West, Ewan, The Oxford Dictionary of Opera, Oxford University Press, 1992.

Holden, Amanda, The New Penguin Opera Guide, Penguin Books, 2001.

The Barber of Seville
The Story of the Opera

Act I

Seville.

Count Almaviva comes in disguise to the house of Doctor Bartolo and serenades Rosina, whom Bartolo keeps confined to the house, beneath her balcony window. Figaro, the barber who knows all the town's secrets and scandals, arrives. He explains to Almaviva that Rosina is Bartolo's ward, not his daughter, and that the doctor intends to marry her. Figaro devises a plan: the count will disguise himself as a drunken soldier with orders to be quartered at Bartolo's house so that he may gain access to the girl. Almaviva is excited and Figaro looks forward to a nice cash pay-off.

Rosina reflects on the voice that has enchanted her and resolves to use her considerable wiles to meet its owner, whom the count leads her to believe is a poor student named Lindoro. Bartolo appears with Rosina's music master, Don Basilio. Basilio warns Bartolo that Count Almaviva, who has made known his admiration for Rosina, has been seen in Seville. Bartolo decides to marry Rosina immediately. Figaro, who has overheard the plot, warns Rosina and promises to deliver a note from her to Lindoro. Bartolo suspects that Rosina has indeed written a letter, but she outwits him at every turn. Angry at her defiance, Bartolo warns her not to trifle with him.

Almaviva arrives, creating a ruckus in his disguise as a drunken soldier, and secretly passes Rosina his own note. Bartolo is infuriated by the stranger's behavior and noisily claims that he has an official exemption from billeting soldiers. Figaro announces that a crowd has gathered in the street, curious about the argument they hear coming from inside the house. The civil guard bursts in to arrest Almaviva but when he secretly reveals his true identity to the captain he is instantly released. Everyone except Figaro is amazed by this turn of events.

Act II

Bartolo suspects that the "soldier" was a spy planted by Almaviva. The count returns, this time disguised as Don Alonso, a music teacher and student of Don Basilio. He announces he will give Rosina her music lesson in place of Basilio, who, he says, is ill at home. "Don Alonso" tells Bartolo that he is staying at the same inn as Almaviva and has found a letter from Rosina. He offers to tell her that it was given to him by another woman, seemingly to prove that Lindoro is toying with Rosina on Almaviva's behalf. This convinces Bartolo that "Don Alonso" is indeed a student of the scheming Basilio, and he allows him to give Rosina her music lesson. She sings an aria, and, with Bartolo dozing off, Almaviva and Rosina express their love.

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The Story of the Opera cont'd

Figaro arrives to give Bartolo his shave and manages to snatch the key that opens the doors to Rosina's balcony. Suddenly Basilio shows up looking perfectly healthy. Almaviva, Rosina, and Figaro convince him with a quick bribe that he is sick with scarlet fever and must go home at once. While Bartolo gets his shave, Almaviva plots with Rosina to elope that night. But the doctor overhears them and furiously realizes he has been tricked again. Everyone disperses.

Bartolo summons Basilio, telling him to bring a notary so Bartolo can marry Rosina that very night. Bartolo then shows Rosina her letter to Lindoro, as proof that he is in league with Almaviva. Heartbroken and convinced that she has been deceived, she agrees to marry Bartolo. A thunderstorm rages. Figaro and the count climb a ladder to Rosina's balcony and let themselves in with the key. Rosina appears and confronts Lindoro, who finally reveals his true identity as Almaviva. Basilio shows up with the notary. Bribed and threatened, he agrees to be a witness to the marriage of Rosina and Almaviva. Bartolo arrives with soldiers, but it is too late. Almaviva explains to Bartolo that it is useless to protest and Bartolo accepts that he has been beaten. Figaro, Rosina, and the count celebrate their good fortune.

Our Librettist: Cesare Sterbini

Cesare Sterbini (Librettist) was born in Rome in 1784. He worked as a writer and librettist and is best known for writing the librettos of two Rossini operas: *Torvalda e Dorlisk*, in 1815 and *The Barber of Seville*, in 1816. He also provided the libretti for two more operas, one by Giacomo Cordella, the other by Francesco Basili, but they were lesser known. Sterbini also worked as an administrative official for the Roman Catholic Church and was fluent in five languages: Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and German. He died in Rome in 1831.

The Barber of Seville borrows its plot from a popular play written by Pierre-Augustin Beaumarchais. This was common practice at the time. Sterbini and Rossini were not the first to transform Beaumarchais' play into an opera, but they were the first to update the combination of text and music in a more modern style. Other composers continued to draw inspiration from Beaumarchais' work, including the great Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who used the sequel for his famous opera, *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Elements of a Story

Genre	The type of story or literary work
Author	Person who writes the story/book
Setting	Where and when a story takes place
Main Characters	The important people in a story
Themes	The underlying or stated main idea of a story *Often, the author implies the theme through the narrator's/main character's thoughts and feelings. The theme can also be the message the author is trying to send.
Conflict	The major problem in the story Two categories of conflict: 1. External - happens outside of the character, involves more than 1 person, can be observed 2. Internal - happens inside of the character, involves only 1 person, can only be observed in thoughts and feelings Three types of conflict: 1. Man vs. Nature (External) 2. Man vs. Self (Internals) 3. Man vs. Man (External or Internal)
Climax	One large event that changes the outcome of the entire story
Plot	The sequence of all events in a story

Name _____

Date _____

Story Web

Pre-writing exercise: Use the web below to map out the elements of your story.

