

# THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

music by W.A. MOZART adapted by JOHN DAVIES

## Social Studies: The Tales of Stories and Operas

### Students Will

- Read for information
- Research and identify the lessons of multiple fairytales and folktales of various cultures
- Answer questions about characters cultural significance of fairytales and folktales
- Create an opera based on research

### Copies for Each Student

- “The Story of the Opera”
- “The Characters”
- Activity Worksheets

### Copy for Teacher:

- “The Story of The Opera”
- “The Characters”

### Getting Ready

Prepare materials for presentation, such as class board, PowerPoint Presentation, or butcher paper as needed. Prepare internet access for research for guided practice or group work. Gather poster-board, pens, pencils and additional writing paper as needed for your group.

### Instructional Time

One – two 45-minute class periods

### Introduction

Explain to your students that many cultures use Fairytales and Folktales to both entertain and teach a lesson. Ensure that your students are familiar with the original story of *The Three Little Pigs*. Then, read “The Story of the Opera” to your students or have them read aloud to the class. Provide each student with a copy of the Activity Worksheet or display it on a screen. Give an overview of the assignment, and point out the information your students are expected to research and write about.

### Guided/Independent Practice

Depending on your grade level, the ability of your students, and time constraints, you may choose to have students work as a class, in small groups, with a partner, or individually. Read the directions on the Activity Worksheet being sure to provide examples of fairytales from several different cultures. Have students select fairytales and/or folktales and begin research. Students can research as a class assignment or as an outside assignment. Have students fill in their research information about the stories and characters and tell why they chose their fairytale and/or folktale. Students can share their findings individually or by groups.

### Evaluation

Have students present their ideas to the class for discussion and evaluation. The teacher may want to guide the discussion.

## **For Further Study**

Students may want to do additional research on civilizations and folktales. Their findings can be shared with the class at the beginning of a later lesson. This Social Studies Lesson can be adjusted to fit your individual needs as a teacher.

## **TEKS**

### **Social Studies**

#### **Kindergarten**

(14) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. (A. B.)

(15) Social studies skills. The student communicates in oral and visual forms. (A)

#### **Grade 1**

(15) Culture. The student understands the importance of family and community beliefs, customs, language, and traditions. (B)

#### **Grade 2**

(18) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. (A. B. E.)

(19) Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms. (A. B.)

**Correlates:** Language Arts, Drama

**Gardner's Intelligences:** Verbal-Linguistic, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal

**Bloom's Taxonomy:** Remember, Understand, Analyze, Create

#### **Sources**

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

Freeman, John W., Stories of the Great Operas, W. W. Norton & Company, 1984.

Goulding, Phil G., Ticket to the Opera, Fawcett Columbine, 1996.

#### **Online Resources:**

[www.operatales.com](http://www.operatales.com)

[www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com)

<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter113/index.html>

# The Story of the Opera

*The Three Little Pigs* is a one-act opera adapted by John Davies from the traditional fairy tale featuring music by Wolfgang A. Mozart.

The story begins with three little pigs at their mother's house. Despina, a little girl pig who loves going to the library, is reading a book. Her brothers, Cherubino and Don Giovanni, have not yet learned how useful the library can be. But they are about to find out, for Wolfgang Bigbad, the Big Bad Wolf, is on his way. Despina explains that it is time for them to build their own house, and immediately her two brothers begin to argue about the choice of building materials. Cherubino claims that straw is the best; however, Don Giovanni is sure that sticks would be better. They turn to Despina to settle the argument and she tells them that she is going to the library to check out books that will teach her about building houses. The boys laugh as if it is the most ridiculous idea they have ever heard!

Despite Cherubino and Don Giovanni's doubts, they follow Despina as she makes her way through the woods to the library, where Wolfgang Bigbad himself is pacing back and forth in front of the building. He hasn't eaten all day and would love to get his paws on a small pig, or better yet, two or three! When he sees the three little pigs, he "hides" himself by pretending to be a statue in order to surprise them. Despina goes directly into the library while the boys play outside. Soon they realize that the "statue" is really Wolfgang Bigbad! Cherubino sees that Don Giovanni is terrified, and makes him approach the "statue" to invite him to dinner. The "statue" (Wolfgang) nods his head to accept the invitation.

Meanwhile, Despina has found all of the books she needs, and the three pigs prepare to build their houses. Don Giovanni has built his house of sticks, which Wolfgang blows down. Cherubino has gone ahead with his plans to build a straw house, but it proves to be even less "huff-proof, puff-proof" than his brother's because Wolfgang blows it down, too! Now that both of the boys' flimsy homes are gone, they run to the safety of Despina's house, which she has made of bricks. Wolfgang, now very, very hungry, cannot blow it down! He tries every trick he can think of to get into Despina's sturdy home, but it is no use!

In the end, after their scary, hair-raising encounter with Wolfgang, Cherubino and Don Giovanni both wholeheartedly agree that Despina's idea of going to the library and reading books is a pretty smart thing to do after all.

## The Characters

**Despina:** (soprano or mezzo) A little girl who loves the library. Despina is hardworking and believes that many problems and questions can be solved by simply learning about it at the library.

**Cherubino:** (mezzo or tenor) Despina's older brother. Cherubino loves to play with his brother. Like his brother, he does not take Despina seriously when she advises them to learn how to build a proper home.

**Don Giovanni:** (bass or baritone) Despina's younger brother. Don Giovanni wants to prove that he is brave when he invites what he believes is Wolfgang Bigbad's statue to dinner.

**Wolfgang Bigbad:** (bass or baritone) The Big Bad Wolf, himself. Wolfgang is eager to eat the pigs as a snack and takes advantage of Despina's brothers when he sees that their homes are not sturdy.

**Link to Musical Excerpts:** <http://www.operatales.com/three-little-pigs.shtml>

## Social Studies Activity

Fairytales and Folktales are used for many different purposes. These stories can be dramatic spins on historic events, fictional tales, or an actual recount of a true story. These tales were often told to children to both entertain and educate, including the stories you read in class and at home. Many of our most popular Fairytales have a lesson for the reader to learn. Think of some popular fairytales such as *The Ugly Duckling* or *The Boy who cried Wolf* as well as popular Folktales. There is a lesson along with interesting things to talk about for each reader. These same lessons are often used in our everyday lives.

Think about the original story of *The Three Little Pigs* and read “The Story of the Opera”. Using the provided Chart, compare and contrast the two stories after you have read both. Then answer the questions about the characters and the use of fairytales.

### Topics to think about for Comparing and Contrasting:

- Characters - Traits and Characteristics about each character
- Main Conflict of the Story
- Solution to the Story
- Reason for the Solution
- Lesson of the Story
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### Activity Worksheet Questions:

Who are the main characters of the story? Name at least one characteristic about each character. Is someone brave, hardworking, funny, lazy, kind, mean, friendly, stubborn, caring, lonely? Tell what you believe each character is like after reading the stories.

- Do any of the characters remind you of someone you know? Perhaps a family member or friend.
- What is the main lesson in the original story of *The Three Little Pigs*?
- What is the main lesson in the opera version of *The Three Little Pigs*?
- Did you learn anything else from the stories?
- Name another fairytale that teaches a lesson. What is the lesson of that fairytale?

Tell about a time a lesson from a fairytale or folktale helped you solve a problem. This lesson can be from any fairytale. (Teachers may need to help students to recognize the lesson learned depending on the grade and ability of the students)

**Bonus Activity:** Use the chart to compare other fairytales and folktales. Then, use one or two lessons to write an opera of your own!



## **Social Studies Activity: The Tales of Stories and Operas**

### **Activity Worksheet**

Answer the following questions after reading “The Story of the Opera” and comparing the original story and the opera. You may use additional paper if necessary.

1. Who are the main characters of the story? Name at least one characteristic about each character.

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2. Do any of the characters remind you of someone you know? Perhaps a family member or friend.

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3. What is the main lesson in the original story of *The Three Little Pigs*?

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4. What is the main lesson in the opera version of *The Three Little Pigs*?

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5. Do you think it was a good idea to provide a different lesson for the same story? Why or Why not?

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6. Can you think of any other lessons from the original story or the opera? If yes, what are they?

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