

# Tosca

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## LANGUAGE ARTS: What's that word again?

### Students will

- Read “The Characters” and the *Tosca* Synopsis
- Read the *Tosca* Synopsis from the Metropolitan Opera
- Complete and discuss the Activity Worksheets

**Copies for Each Student:** *Tosca* Synopsis, “The Characters”, *Tosca* Synopsis from the Metropolitan Opera, Activity Worksheets

**Copies for the Teacher:** Language Arts lesson plan, *Tosca* Synopsis, “The Characters”, *Tosca* Synopsis from the Metropolitan Opera, Activity Worksheets

### Getting Ready

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

Prepare internet access for the *Tosca* online listening selections.

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

### Introduction

Read the *Tosca* Synopsis and “The Characters” to your students. Have your students read the *Tosca* Synopsis from the Metropolitan Opera specific to their grade level, and complete the accompanying activity worksheets.

### 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 whole class, in small groups, with a partner, or individually. Read the directions on the Activity Worksheet. Provide instructions and model the activity as needed. Have students complete the portion(s) of the Activity Worksheet you have chosen with opportunity for questions.

### Evaluation

Have students share their answers individually or by groups and explain why they gave their answers. The teacher may want to guide the discussion with the sample answers provided.

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## TEKS

### English Language Arts and Reading

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

##### 110.18.B.2 Reading/Vocabulary Development

Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing. Students are expected to:

(A) determine the meaning of grade-level academic English words derived from Latin, Greek, or other linguistic roots and affixes; (B) use context (e.g., cause and effect or compare and contrast organizational text structures) to determine or clarify the meaning of unfamiliar or multiple meaning words; (E) use a dictionary, a glossary, or a thesaurus (printed or electronic) to determine the meanings, syllabication, pronunciations, alternate word choices, and parts of speech of words.

#### 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

##### 110.19.B.2 Reading/Vocabulary Development

Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing. Students are expected to:

(A) determine the meaning of grade-level academic English words derived from Latin, Greek, or other linguistic roots and affixes; (B) use context (within a sentence and in larger sections of text) to determine or clarify the meaning of unfamiliar or ambiguous words; (E) use a dictionary, a glossary, or a thesaurus (printed or electronic) to determine the meanings, syllabication, pronunciations, alternate word choices, and parts of speech of words.

#### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

##### 110.20.B.2 Reading/Vocabulary Development

Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing. Students are expected to:

(A) determine the meaning of grade-level academic English words derived from Latin, Greek, or other linguistic roots and affixes; (B) use context (within a sentence and in larger sections of text) to determine or clarify the meaning of unfamiliar or ambiguous words or words with novel meanings; (E) use a dictionary, a glossary, or a thesaurus (printed or electronic) to determine the meanings, syllabication, pronunciations, alternate word choices, and parts of speech of words.

#### English I

##### 110.31.B.1 Reading/Vocabulary Development

Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing. Students are expected to: (B) analyze textual context (within a sentence and in larger sections of text) to distinguish between the denotative and connotative meanings of words; (E) use a dictionary, a glossary, or a thesaurus (printed or electronic) to determine or confirm the meanings of words and phrases, including their connotations and denotations, and their etymology.

#### English II

##### 110.32.B.1 Reading/Vocabulary Development

Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing. Students are expected to: (B) analyze textual context (within a sentence and in larger sections of text) to distinguish between the denotative and connotative meanings of words; (E) use a dictionary, a glossary, or a thesaurus (printed or electronic) to determine or confirm the meanings of words and phrases, including their connotations and denotations, and their etymology.

#### English III

##### 110.33.B.1 Reading/Vocabulary Development

Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing. Students are expected to: (B) analyze

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textual context (within a sentence and in larger sections of text) to draw conclusions about the nuance in word meanings; (E) use general and specialized dictionaries, thesauri, glossaries, histories of language, books of quotations, and other related references (printed or electronic) as needed.

**English IV**

110.34.B.1 Reading/Vocabulary Development

Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing. Students are expected to: (B) analyze textual context (within a sentence and in larger sections of text) to draw conclusions about the nuance in word meanings; (E) use general and specialized dictionaries, thesauri, histories of language, books of quotations, and other related references (printed or electronic) as needed.

**Correlates:** Music, Drama

**Gardner’s Intelligences:** Verbal-Linguistic, Musical, Interpersonal

**Bloom’s Taxonomy:** Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Evaluation, Synthesis

**Sources:**

*Tosca* Libretto

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

**Online Resources:**

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

[www.aria-database.com](http://www.aria-database.com)

The Metropolitan Opera. “*Tosca* Synopsis.” Accessed July 28, 2015.

<http://www.metopera.org/Discover/Synopses/Tosca/>.

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# *Tosca*

## Synopsis

### ACT ONE

*Inside the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle*

Cesare Angelotti, former consul of the Roman Republic and now an escaped political prisoner, runs into the church and hides in the Attavanti private chapel – his sister, the Marchesa Attavanti, has left a key to the chapel hidden at the feet of the statue of the Madonna. The elderly Sacristan enters and begins cleaning. The Sacristan kneels in prayer as the Angelus sounds. The painter Mario Cavaradossi arrives to continue work on his picture of Mary Magdalene. The Sacristan identifies a likeness between the portrait and a blonde-haired woman who has been visiting the church recently (unknown to him, it is Angelotti's sister the Marchesa). Cavaradossi describes the “hidden harmony” (“Recondita armonia”) in the contrast between the blonde beauty of his painting and his dark-haired lover, the singer Floria Tosca. The Sacristan mumbles his disapproval before leaving.

Angelotti emerges and tells Cavaradossi, an old friend who has republican sympathies, that he is being pursued by the Chief of Police, Baron Scarpia. Cavaradossi promises to assist him after nightfall. Tosca's voice is heard, calling to Cavaradossi. Cavaradossi gives Angelotti his basket of food and Angelotti hurriedly returns to his hiding place. Tosca enters and suspiciously asks Cavaradossi what he has been doing – she thinks that he has been talking to another woman. Cavaradossi reassures her and Tosca tries to persuade him to take her to his villa that evening: “Non la sospiri, la nostra casetta” (“Do you not long for our little cottage”). She then expresses jealousy over the woman in the painting, whom she recognises as the Marchesa Attavanti. Cavaradossi explains the likeness; he has merely observed the Marchesa at prayer in the church. He reassures Tosca of his fidelity and asks her what eyes could be more beautiful than her own: “Qual'occhio al mondo” (“What eyes in the world”). After Tosca has left, Angelotti reappears and discusses with the painter his plan to flee disguised as a woman, using clothes left in the chapel by his sister. Cavaradossi gives Angelotti a key to his villa, suggesting that he hide in a disused well in the garden.

The sound of a cannon signals that Angelotti's escape has been discovered. He and Cavaradossi hasten out of the church. The Sacristan re-enters with choristers, celebrating the news that Napoleon has apparently been defeated at Marengo. The celebrations cease abruptly with the entry of Scarpia, his henchman Spoletta and several police agents. They have heard that Angelotti has sought refuge in the church. Scarpia orders a search, and the empty food basket and a fan bearing the Attavanti coat of arms are found in the chapel. Scarpia questions the Sacristan, and his suspicions are aroused further when he learns that Cavaradossi has been in the church; Scarpia mistrusts the painter, and believes him complicit in Angelotti's escape. When Tosca arrives looking for her lover, Scarpia artfully arouses her jealous instincts by implying a relationship between the painter and the Marchesa Attavanti. He draws Tosca's attention to the fan and suggests that someone must have surprised the lovers in the chapel. Tosca falls for his deceit; enraged, she rushes off to confront Cavaradossi. Scarpia orders Spoletta and his agents to follow her, assuming she will lead them to Cavaradossi and Angelotti. He privately gloats as he reveals his intentions to possess Tosca and execute Cavaradossi. A procession enters the church singing the Te Deum; exclaiming ‘Tosca, you make me forget even God!’, Scarpia joins the chorus in the prayer.

### ACT TWO

*Scarpia's apartment in the Palazzo Farnese, that evening*

Scarpia, at supper, sends a note to Tosca asking her to come to his apartment. He has been unable to find Angelotti, but has arrested Cavaradossi. As Cavaradossi is brought in and questioned, the voice of Tosca,

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singing a celebratory cantata in another room in the Palace, can be heard. Cavaradossi denies knowing anything about the escape of Angelotti. Tosca arrives, just in time to see her lover taken to an antechamber to be tortured. He is able to speak briefly with her, telling her to say nothing. Tosca is told by Scarpia that she can save her lover from indescribable pain if she reveals Angelotti's hiding place. She resists, but hearing Cavaradossi's cries of pain, eventually tells Scarpia that Angelotti is in the well in the garden of Cavaradossi's villa.

Scarpia orders the torture of Cavaradossi to cease and the wounded painter is brought back in. He recovers consciousness and, learning of Tosca's betrayal, is furious with her. Sciarrone, a police agent, enters with news of Napoleon's victory at Marengo; Cavaradossi gloats, telling Scarpia that his rule of terror will soon be at an end, before being dragged away by Scarpia's men. Scarpia, left with Tosca, proposes a bargain: if she gives herself to him, Cavaradossi will be freed. She is revolted, and repeatedly rejects his advances. Outside she hears the drums that announce an execution; as Scarpia awaits her decision, she prays to God for help, asking why He has abandoned her: "Vissi d'arte" ("I lived for art"). Scarpia remains adamant despite her pleas. When Spoletta brings news that Angelotti has killed himself, and that everything is in place for Cavaradossi's execution, Tosca, in despair, agrees to submit to Scarpia in return for Cavaradossi's freedom. Scarpia tells his deputy Spoletta to arrange a mock execution, both recalling that it will be "as we did with Count Palmieri".

Following Spoletta's departure, Tosca imposes the further condition that Scarpia provide a safe-conduct out of Rome for herself and her lover. While he is signing the document, Tosca quietly takes a knife from the supper table. As Scarpia triumphantly embraces her, she stabs him, crying "this is Tosca's kiss!". As Scarpia falls dead, she declares that she now forgives him. She removes the safe-conduct from his pocket, lights candles in a gesture of piety and places a crucifix on the body before leaving.

### **ACT THREE**

*The upper parts of the Castel Sant'Angelo, early the following morning*

A shepherd boy sings (in Romanesco dialect) "Io de' sospiri" ("I give you sighs") as church bells sound for matins. Cavaradossi is led in by guards and informed that he has one hour to live. He refuses to see a priest, but asks permission to write a letter to Tosca. He begins to write, but is soon overwhelmed by memories: "E lucevan le stelle" ("And the stars shone"). Tosca enters and shows him the safe-conduct. She tells him that she has killed Scarpia and that the imminent execution is a sham: Cavaradossi must feign death, but afterwards they can leave Rome together, before Scarpia's body is discovered. Cavaradossi is amazed at the courage shown by one so gentle and tender: "O dolci mani" ("Oh sweet hands"). The pair ecstatically plan the life they will live away from Rome. Tosca then anxiously instructs Cavaradossi on how to play his part in the mock execution convincingly. She tells him that he will be shot with blanks by the firing squad and instructs him to fall down as if dead. He agrees to act "like Tosca in the theatre".

Cavaradossi is led away, and Tosca watches with increasing impatience as the execution is prepared. The men fire, Cavaradossi falls, and Tosca exclaims "Ecco un artista!" ("What an actor!"). When the soldiers have all left, she hurries towards Cavaradossi, only to find that he is really dead; Scarpia has betrayed her. Heartbroken, she clasps his lifeless body and weeps. The voices of Spoletta, Sciarrone and soldiers are heard, indicating that Scarpia's body has been found, and that Tosca is known to have killed him. As Spoletta, Sciarrone and the soldiers rush in, Tosca rises, evades their clutches, and runs to the parapet. Crying "O Scarpia, Avanti a Dio!" ("O Scarpia, we meet before God!"), she hurls herself over the edge to her death.

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# The Characters

**Floria Tosca:** (soprano) A celebrated singer and Cavaradossi's lover. Scarpia uses Tosca's love for Cavaradossi to betray Angelotti.

**Mario Cavaradossi:** (tenor) A painter and Tosca's lover. Friends with Angelotti, he helps him hide from Scarpia after his escape from prison.

**Baron Scarpia:** (baritone) The chief of police who is searching for Angelotti after his prison escape.

**Cesare Angelotti:** (bass) Former Consul of the Roman Republic, on the run after escaping prison.

**Spoletta:** (tenor) A police agent.

**Sciarrone:** (bass) Another agent.

## Links to Musical Excerpts:

“Vissi d’arte” (I lived for art, I lived for love): In the midst of an uncomfortable conversation with Scarpia about the fate of Tosca's lover, Tosca sings of the two great driving forces in her life: love and music.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIExoUb8jk>

“E lucevan le stele” (And the stars shone): Cavaradossi trades his last possession, a ring, to get a guard to take a letter to the imprisoned Tosca. As he writes the letter, he sings of his love for Tosca and for life.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mX7ugJ5NM8>

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## *Tosca*

# Synopsis from the Metropolitan Opera

### **Act I**

*Rome, June 1800.* Cesare Angelotti, an escaped political prisoner, rushes into the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle to hide in one of the chapels. Once he has disappeared, a sacristan enters and then the painter Mario Cavaradossi, who sets to work on his portrait of Mary Magdalene. The painting has been inspired by the Marchesa Attavanti, whom Cavaradossi has seen in the church but does not know. While he works, he compares the dark-haired beauty of his lover, the singer Floria Tosca, to that of the blonde Marchesa Attavanti ("Recondita armonia"). Angelotti, a member of the former Bonapartist government, ventures out and is recognized by Cavaradossi. The painter gives him food and hurries him back into the chapel as Tosca is heard calling from outside. Suspicious, she jealously questions Cavaradossi, then reminds him of their rendezvous that evening at his villa. Suddenly recognizing the Marchesa Attavanti in the painting, she accuses him of being unfaithful, but he assures her of his love. When Tosca has left, Angelotti emerges from the chapel. A cannon signals that the police have discovered the escape, and he and Cavaradossi flee to the painter's villa. The sacristan enters with choirboys who are preparing to sing in a Te Deum that day celebrating a victory against Napoleon. Their excitement is silenced by the arrival of Baron Scarpia, chief of the secret police, who is searching for Angelotti. When Tosca comes back looking for Cavaradossi, Scarpia shows her a fan with the Attavanti crest that he has just found. Seemingly finding her suspicions confirmed, Tosca bursts into tears. She vows vengeance and leaves as the church fills with worshippers. Scarpia sends his men to follow her to Cavaradossi's villa, where he thinks Angelotti is hiding ("Tre sbirri... Una carrozza..."). While the congregation sings the Te Deum, Scarpia declares that he will bend Tosca to his will.

### **Act II**

In his study at the Palazzo Farnese, Scarpia sadistically anticipates the pleasure of having Tosca in his power ("Ha più forte sapore"). The spy Spoletta arrives, explaining that he was unable to find Angelotti. Instead he brings in Cavaradossi. While Scarpia interrogates the painter, Tosca is heard singing at a royal gala in the same building. Scarpia sends for her and she enters just as Cavaradossi is being taken away to be tortured. Frightened by Scarpia's questions and Cavaradossi's screams, Tosca reveals Angelotti's hiding place. Cavaradossi is carried in, hurt and dazed. Realizing what has happened, he angrily confronts Tosca, when the officer Sciarrone rushes in to announce that, in a surprise, Napoleon has won the Battle of Marengo, a defeat for Scarpia's side. Cavaradossi shouts out his defiance of tyranny and is dragged off to be executed. Scarpia, calmly resuming his supper, suggests to Tosca that he would let Cavaradossi go free if she'd give herself to him. Fighting off his advances, she calls on God, declaring that she has dedicated her life to art and love ("Vissi d'arte"). Scarpia insists, when Spoletta interrupts: faced with capture, Angelotti has killed himself. Tosca, now forced to give in or lose her lover, agrees to Scarpia's proposition. The baron seemingly orders a mock execution for Cavaradossi, after which he is to be freed. Spoletta leaves. As soon as Scarpia has written a safe-conduct for the lovers, Tosca kills him with a knife she had found earlier on the table. Wrenching the document from his hand, she quietly leaves the room.

### **Act III**

At dawn, Cavaradossi awaits execution at the Castel Sant'Angelo. He bribes the jailer to deliver a farewell letter to Tosca. Overcome with memories of love, he gives in to his despair ("E lucevan le stelle"). Tosca enters. She explains to him what has happened and the two imagine their future in freedom. As the firing squad appears, Tosca instructs Cavaradossi how to fake his death convincingly, then hides. The soldiers fire and depart. Tosca urges Cavaradossi to hurry, but when he doesn't move, she realizes that Scarpia has betrayed her and that the bullets were real. Spoletta rushes in to arrest Tosca for murder. She cries out to Scarpia and leaps from the battlement.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Tosca*

**Activity Worksheet: What's that word again?**

Find eight unfamiliar words in The Metropolitan Opera's *Tosca* Synopsis. Using context clues, write out a definition for each word. Next, look up the words in a dictionary to see if your definitions are correct and find at least 3 synonyms for each word using a thesaurus.

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