

Music I: The Characters

Students will

- Study and conduct character analysis
- Read the *Don Carlo Synopsis* and **The Characters** information sheet
- Listen to audio selections from *Don Carlo* online
- Discuss and answer questions on the appropriate portion(s) of the **Activity Worksheet**.

Before the Lesson

Print copies for each student of the information sheet **The Characters** and the **Activity Worksheet**.

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

Prepare internet access to the online listening selections.

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

Introduction

Have your students read **The Story of the Opera**. Give each student a copy of the information sheet **The Characters** or display it on the screen. Read through the information, discussing each character and listening to the online selections as you go.

Guided/Independent Practice

Depending on your grade level, the ability of your students and time constraints, you may choose to have your class work as a whole, in small groups, with a partner or individually. Read the directions on the **Activity Worksheet**. Have students complete the portion(s) of the **Activity Worksheet** you have chosen with opportunity for questions. If students are working with a partner or in small groups, give them time to discuss their answers before writing them down. Have students share their answers individually or by groups and tell why they gave their answers.

Evaluation

Have students discuss and evaluate the answers of others. The teacher may want to guide the discussion. After individual or small group responses have been shared and/or turned in, the class can then formulate comprehensive answers with the teacher asking leading questions to guide the discussion.

For Further Study

The teacher may want to have students research the original sources of *Don Carlo*. Students may want to do additional research on Giuseppe Verdi, along with other related topics online or in their school library. Their findings can be shared with the class at the beginning of a later lesson.

TEKS: Music

6th Grade

117.208.C.4 (A) Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture.

7th Grade

117.209.C.4 (A) Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture.

8th Grade

117.210.C.4 (A) Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture.

High School, Level I

117.310.C.5 (A.B) Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture.

High School, Level II

117.311.C.5 (A.B) Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture.

High School, Level III

117.312.C.5 (A.B) Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture.

High School, Level IV

117.313.C.5 (A.B) Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture.

TEKS: Social Studies

History: The student understands the influences of individuals and groups from various cultures on various historical and contemporary societies. The student is expected to: evaluate the social, political, economic, and cultural contributions of individuals and groups from various societies, past and present.

TEKS: Language Arts

Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction: Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to: analyze the development of the plot through the internal and external responses of the characters, including their motivations and conflicts.

Correlates: Language Arts, Social Studies, Drama

Gardner's Intelligences: Verbal-Linguistic, Musical, Interpersonal

Bloom's Taxonomy: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Evaluation, Synthesis

Sources:

Don Carlo Libretto

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

Online Resources:

www.oxfordmusiconline.com

www.metopera.org

www.aria-database.com

Don Carlo
Don Carlo Synopsis

ACT ONE

In the monastery of San Juste, monks pray at the tomb of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. Don Carlo comes to lament his ill-starred love for Elisabeth de Valois, who, for reasons of state, has been married to Carlo's father, King Philip II. He is joined by his friend Rodrigo, Marquis of Posa, who urges Carlo to forget his private grief and join him in Flanders to aid the Protestant population there, oppressed by Philip's Catholic regime.

Awaiting the queen, Princess Eboli amuses the ladies of the court by singing the Veil Song, about a Moorish king and a veiled beauty who turns out to be his neglected queen. When Elisabeth joins them, Rodrigo brings the queen a letter from her mother. He also gives her another note, a request from Don Carlo for a private audience, and distracts Eboli (who thinks Carlo is in love with her) while Elisabeth reads it. She agrees to see Carlo and dismisses her ladies.

Carlo asks Elisabeth to help him gain Philip's consent to leave for Flanders. He cannot refrain from speaking also of their past love. Alarmed by the dangerous change in subject, Elisabeth tells him that, as queen, she must remain aloof, but admits that to live beside him would seem like paradise. Overwhelmed, Carlo sinks to the ground. When he regains consciousness and attempts to embrace her, she breaks away. Carlo flees in despair.

Philip arrives to find his queen unattended, and angrily banishes her lady-in-waiting, the Countess of Aremberg, for neglecting her duty. The queen bids her friend a somber farewell. Rodrigo lingers behind with the king and begs him to adopt a more tolerant policy toward his Flemish subjects. Philip refuses and warns Rodrigo to beware of the Grand Inquisitor. Nevertheless, he is impressed with this young man who seeks nothing for himself; he confides to Rodrigo his jealous suspicions about Don Carlo and the queen.

ACT TWO

Don Carlo comes to the garden in response to an unsigned note which he believes is from Elisabeth. However, the letter is from Eboli, who arrives dressed in a veil. Mistaking her for the queen, Carlo passionately declares his love. Enraptured, the princess uncovers her face; she quickly realizes, however, that his ardent speeches were not for her. Rodrigo enters and tries to undo Don Carlo's indiscretion. Eboli, furious, threatens to tell the king that Elisabeth and Carlo are lovers. Rodrigo tells the imperiled Don Carlo to entrust him with any sensitive political documents in his possession.

The Spanish populace and royal court assemble to witness an auto-da-fé, in which those condemned by the Inquisition are to be burned to death. Don Carlo approaches his father with a group of Flemish deputies who have come to plead for clemency. Philip is unmoved by their entreaty. Carlo infuriates his father by continuing the discussion, asking that the rule of Flanders be entrusted to him. Seeing that words are of no use, Carlo draws his sword. Philip calls for his guards and nobles to disarm the defiant prince, but no one moves to obey him. Finally, Rodrigo steps forward and asks Carlo for his sword, which he then gives to the king. Philip leads his wife to the auto-da-fé as guards remove Carlo to prison. In the distance, a heavenly voice is heard in prayer for the souls of the condemned.

Don Carlo
Don Carlo synopsis continued

ACT THREE

Philip has spent the entire night in his study in melancholy reverie. His queen, he realizes, never loved him. Don Carlo, whom he suspects of an illicit love for Elisabeth, has now committed open treason against him. The Count of Lerma announces the arrival of the Grand Inquisitor, whom Philip has summoned to discuss Carlo's punishment. The blind, aged man is led into the king's presence. Philip hesitates to invoke the death penalty against his son, but the Grand Inquisitor absolves Philip in advance of all guilt, pointing out that God sacrificed His own son for the redemption of the world. The Grand Inquisitor then denounces Rodrigo as a heretic for his efforts on behalf of Flanders; he demands Rodrigo's death. Philip defends Rodrigo, the only man in his court he can trust. The Inquisitor accuses the king himself of failing in his duty before the Holy Office. Philip's will collapses; he abandons Rodrigo's defense.

Elisabeth bursts in: a box containing her jewels and personal effects has been stolen. Philip points to the box, which is on his table, and asks her to open it. When she refuses, he breaks it open and finds a portrait of Carlo inside. Elisabeth defends her innocence in the face of Philip's fury, but faints when he accuses her of adultery. When Philip calls for help, Eboli and Rodrigo rush into the room. As Eboli looks after the queen, each is troubled by private thoughts. Philip realizes that he has not been betrayed; Eboli repents of her treachery now that she sees its results; Rodrigo resolves that he must sacrifice himself for Spain. When Elisabeth recovers, Philip and Rodrigo withdraw. Eboli confesses to the queen that it was she who gave the jewel box to Philip, in reprisal for being spurned by Carlo. Elisabeth forgives her. Eboli's contrition also forces her to admit that she herself has committed adultery with Philip. At that, Elisabeth commands Eboli to choose either exile or the cloister. Alone, Eboli resolves to save Don Carlo's life before she seeks peace in a convent.

Rodrigo comes to Don Carlo's prison cell to say farewell. He has obtained Carlo's freedom by claiming ownership of the incriminating papers Carlo gave him. Carlo protests, but Rodrigo is adamant. He is sacrificing himself so that Carlo may live, reign and save Flanders. Suddenly, a gunshot sounds and Rodrigo falls. Mortally wounded, he tells Carlo that Elisabeth knows everything and will meet Carlo the next day at the monastery of San Juste. As he dies, he enjoins Carlo once more to save Flanders. Philip enters to free Carlo, but Carlo turns on him, bitterly accusing him of complicity in Rodrigo's death. A courtier rushes in to tell Philip that an angry mob has gathered, demanding Carlo's freedom. Philip orders the gates thrown open, and the mob fills the room. In the confusion, Eboli, disguised, urges Carlo to flee. The Grand Inquisitor appears and invokes the power of God to quell the disturbance.

ACT FOUR

Waiting in the monastery, Elisabeth kneels and unburdens her heart in prayer. Don Carlo arrives for their last meeting. Rodrigo hovers in their thoughts as they speak of Don Carlo's mission to Flanders. They formally renounce their love and dedicate themselves to their respective duties in a solemn, platonic farewell. Philip enters with the Grand Inquisitor, ready to deliver his son to the Inquisition. From the tomb of Charles V, the figure of a spectral monk emerges leading Don Carlo away into the darkness of the tomb and death.

Synopsis courtesy of Lyric Opera of Chicago

The Characters

King Philip II: (bass) The King of Spain, Don Carlo's father. He is married to Elisabeth who was previously engaged to Don Carlo and is still in love with him.

Don Carlo: (tenor) Infante of Spain, son and heir to the King. He is torn between his love for Elisabeth and his duty to his country during the dark times of the Inquisition.

Rodrigo: (baritone) Marquis of Posa, Don Carlo's friend and the only person King Philip feels he can trust. Rodrigo sacrifices himself for his country and his friend.

The Grand Inquisitor: (bass) The head of the Church during the Spanish Inquisition. He gives counsel to the King.

Elisabeth of Valois: (soprano) The Queen of Spain, married to King Philip. She is still in love with Don Carlo and struggles between her love for him and her duty as Queen.

Princess Eboli: (mezzo-soprano) A Spanish aristocrat, she is in love with Don Carlo and learns of his love for the Queen. Feeling rejected, she tells King Philip.

A monk: (bass) The apparition of the deceased Emperor Charles V.

Listening Examples

Act II: "Dio, che nell' alma infondere" | Don Carlo and Rodrigo share their troubles and swear eternal friendship.

<https://www.metopera.org/discover/video/?videoName=don-carlo-dio-che-nell-alma-infondere-alagna-keenlyside&videoId=686124999001>

Act IV: "Ella giammai m'amò" | Philip realizes that his wife has never loved him and will never love him. He wishes that he could read the minds of others. Alas, though, the crown does not allow him this power and he will only be at peace when he dies.

<https://www.metopera.org/discover/video/?videoName=don-carlo-ella-giammai-mamo-ferruccio-furlanetto&videoId=1472947180001>

Act V: "Tu, che le vanità" | While waiting for Don Carlo to meet her, Elisabeth asks for strength to see him leave her forever for his own safety. Her thoughts then turn to her beloved France where her love for Carlo began.

<https://www.metopera.org/discover/video/?videoName=don-carlo-tu-che-le-vanita-marina-poplavskaya&videoId=686124997001>

Name _____

Date _____

The Characters

Part I

Instructions: The characters in *Don Carlo* deal with many internal and external conflicts throughout the opera. In the chart provided, list five conflicts the characters face and their resolutions, along with the motivation of each character involved.

Conflict	Resolution	Character Motivation

Name: _____

Date: _____

The Characters

Part II

1. In Act II, Don Carlo and Rodrigo talk through their problems and swear eternal friendship. Do their actions later in the opera reflect their pledge? Why or why not?

2. Princess Eboli betrays Don Carlo and Elisabeth out of jealousy and later regrets her choice. What caused her to change her mind? How do you think it will affect choices she makes in the future?

3. How does the music in the experts help express the emotions of the characters and the conflicts they face? Give specific examples from the music.

4. What is the moral of Don Carlo? Provide specific examples from the opera to confirm your statement.
