The Barber of Seville

CLASSROOM STUDY GUIDE

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE
Department of Education and Community Programs
www.MichiganOpera.org
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Characters

- Rosina, Dr. Bartolo’s ward, mezzo-soprano
- Figaro, a barber and jack-of-all-trades, baritone
- Count Almaviva, a local nobleman, tenor
- Dr. Bartolo, Rosina’s guardian, bass
- Fiorello, a servant to the Count, baritone
- Berta, a servant to Dr. Bartolo, soprano
- Don Basilio, a music teacher, tenor
- Sergeant of the Guard, tenor
- Ambrogio, Dr. Bartolo’s servant

“Figaro’s antics to unite two lovers have left audiences in stitches for generations. Filled with tunes familiar to audiences everywhere, it’s easy to see why this is one of opera’s best-loved works.” - MOT’s Principal Conductor, Stephen Lord
The Story

Act I.

Seville. Count Almaviva comes in disguise to the house of Doctor Bartolo and serenades Rosina, whom Bartolo keeps confined to the house. Figaro the barber, who knows all the town’s secrets and scandals, 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 the man it belongs to— as Almaviva has led her to believe, 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. 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 claims that he has an official exemption from billeting soldiers. Figaro announces that a crowd has gathered in the street, curious about the noise. 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, to give Rosina her singing lesson in place of Basilio, who, he says, is ill at home. “Don Alonso” then 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 lesson. With Bartolo dozing off, Almaviva and Rosina declare their love.

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, which seems to prove that he is in league with Almaviva. Heartbroken and convinced that she has been deceived, Rosina agrees to marry Bartolo. A thunderstorm passes. 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. He accepts that he has been beaten, and Figaro, Rosina, and the count celebrate their good fortune.
Composer:
Giachino Rossini

Giachino Antonio Rossini, (born February 29, 1792, Pesaro, Papal States [Italy]—died November 13, 1868, Passy, near Paris, France), Italian composer noted for his operas, particularly his comic operas, of which *The Barber of Seville* (1816), *Cinderella* (1817), and *Semiramide* (1823) are among the best known.

Giachino Rossini was the son of Giuseppe Rossini, an impoverished trumpeter who played in miscellaneous bands and orchestras, and Anna Guidarini, a singer of secondary roles. Thus, Rossini spent his entire childhood in the theatre. At age 14 he entered Bologna’s Philharmonic School (now the G.B. Martini State Conservatory of Music) and composed his first opera seria— *Demetrio e Polibio* (1806; staged in 1812)—for the Mombelli, a family of singers. At 15 he had learned the violin, horn, and harpsichord and had often sung in public, even in the theatre, to earn money.

Rossini threw himself into the genre of *opera buffa* (comic opera), with the debut of *La cambiale di matrimonio* (1810; *The Bill of Marriage*). The following year, two more of his comic operas were produced in Venice. Rossini broke the traditional form of opera buffa: embellished his melodies, animated his ensembles and finales, used unusual rhythms, restored the orchestra to its rightful place, and put the singer at the service of the music.

(Cont. on page 7)
Rossini first saw the greatest success in Venice with his first serious opera, *Tancredi* (1813), and *L’Italiana in Algeri* (1813; *The Italian Girl in Algiers*), opening doors to La Scala. Rossini’s fame soon spread to Naples, catching the attention of the reigning impresario in charge of the two great Neapolitan theatres, Domenico Barbaia. Barbaia offered him a contract of two operas per year.

The success of Colbran’s first Rossini opera, *Elisabetta, regina d’Inghilterra* (1815; *Elizabeth, Queen of England*) prompted an invitation from Rome to spend the Carnival season of 1816. Rossini’s Rome operas including *Almaviva*, soon to become *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (1816; *The Barber of Seville*), were unsuccessful. The Romans, who knew and loved Giovanni Paisiello’s version of Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais’s play, took a dislike to this new setting, but when it was given elsewhere in Italy it was received with unbounded success. Written in less than three weeks, *The Barber of Seville* is a piece of inspired inventiveness that has delighted opera lovers ever since.

In 1823, Rossini moved to England on advice from the manager of the King’s Theatre in London. He was already renowned in Paris and became the musical director of Theatre des Italiens there, and his popularity brought him a contract from Charles X to compose five new operas in the span of a year. Between 1824 and 1829, Rossini composed two comic operas, *Le Comte Ory*, and *Guillaume Tell*.

After *Guillaume Tell*, Rossini took a semi-retirement from operas but, continued to write cantatas and other songs. Rossini went back to Bologna in 1829 after his mother’s death, wanting to spend time with his father. In 1830, he returned to Paris to work on an opera, writing the first six movements of his *Stabat Mater*. Rossini suffered for years from physical and mental illness. He succumbed to pneumonia at the age of 76, at his house in Passy, on 13 November 1868.
Librettist: Cesare Sterbini

Cesare Sterbini (1784–1831) is best known today for his collaboration with Rossini on *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.

Sterbini was born in Rome. In addition to his work as a librettist, he was a poet and an official of the Vatican treasury, and was fluent in Greek, Latin, French and German. He wrote his first libretto, *Paolo e Virginio*, in 1812 for Vincenzo Migliorucci.

Sterbini first worked with Rossini on *Torvaldo e Dorlissa* in 1815, replacing Jacopo Ferretti. He followed this with *Il barbiere di Siviglia* in 1816, adapted from Beaumarchais’ play, which became Sterbini’s greatest and most lasting achievement.

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Playwright: Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais

Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais is the original author of the so-called “Figaro trilogy” of plays. Throughout his extraordinary life, Beaumarchais was not only a playwright, but also a publisher, a musician, an inventor, a diplomat, an arms dealer, and a spy.

(Cont. on page 9)
Beaumarchais was born in Paris in 1732, the son of a watchmaker, and was set to follow in his father’s footsteps. When he was 21, he invented a new mechanism that would make watches both smaller and more accurate. But his idea was stolen by the royal watchmaker, who tried to pass it off as his own. He wrote a furious letter to the Royal Academy, arguing with such skill, that the Academy ruled in his favor. The royal watchmaker was ousted, and Beaumarchais took his place. In a strange and nearly unbelievable twist, the royal watchmaker who stole his idea died not too long afterward, and Beaumarchais married the man’s widow and gained control of his fortune.

After his royal appointment, Beaumarchais taught music to the king’s daughters, became well-known at court, and acquired a title, making him a fully-fledged member of the nobility. Later in his life, he became embroiled in schemes to supply the Spanish armies with munitions, traveled to collect debts for his father and to spy for the French courts, and maintained a correspondence with Voltaire, the famous philosopher and satirist.

In the midst of all of this, he found success as a playwright, producing *The Barber of Seville* in 1775. An English translation premiered in London a year later, which was followed by performances across Europe. Today, the play is largely overshadowed by Rossini’s beautiful opera, but at the time, the play was enormously successful with audiences. The French censors, however, took issue with the “Figaro” plays, and various re-writes became necessary. The second play in the trilogy, *The Marriage of Figaro*, was banned outright by King Louis XVI. Eventually the ban was lifted, and all three “Figaro” plays are still performed today.
The Making of the *Barber*

Gioachino Rossini’s opera *The Barber of Seville* is an adapted version of a play written by a Frenchman named Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais. Although both the play and the opera have been performed for hundreds of years, Beaumarchais’ original play went through multiple rewrites and test performances before becoming the play we know today.

Beaumarchais’ original plan for this story was in the form of an *opéra comique*, which is French for “comic opera.” This version of French opera includes spoken dialogue and sung arias, and usually include humorous or satirical content. One popular example of opéra comique is the often-performed *Carmen* by Georges Bizet.

Unfortunately for Beaumarchais, his first draft was rejected in 1772 by the largest and most popular Parisian opera company. Instead of scrapping the project, he decided to amend the piece to fit a more appeasing style. Instead of an opera, he re-wrote the piece as a straight play that included original music. Although these two styles seem very similar, he finally convinced the company to perform his new piece a year later in 1773.

After all of this work, Beaumarchais encountered another problem; due to legal and political problems, the premiere of his work was put on hold. He was in the middle of an intense legal battle that would decide the fate of his massive debts. Beaumarchais was unable to make his court appearance because he was briefly thrown in jail for an unrelated dispute. His absence further complicated the already chaotic legal battle, and it wasn’t until he gained the trust and adoration of the public that his sentences were overturned. Beaumarchais quickly became a champion for social justice in the public’s eye. As soon as Beaumarchais’ legal situation settled, he was able to premiere *Barber* as a play at the Théâtre des Tuileries in Paris, France in 1775.
The Making of the *Barber* (Cont.)

Beaumarchais’ play quickly gained popularity after its initial premiere. The story became so popular, it inspired the Italian composer Giovanni Paisiello to write an opera based on the play only seven years later in 1782. Although this opera is not often performed today, it inspired more Italian and French composers to take on the story. Two more composers, Nicolas Isouard and Francesco Morlacchi, wrote different operatic versions of *Barber* before Rossini premiered his own version, which the Michigan Opera Theatre will present this season.

It is unfortunate that after so much turmoil and difficulty, Beaumarchais’ play is not performed more frequently today. Other than Rossini’s operatic variation, the other operatic versions mentioned above are also performed very infrequently. If you cannot find a performance of the play, it is readily available to read in multiple English translations.
Adaptations

The Beaumarchais Trilogy And Its Operatic Adaptations

Beaumarchais’s play *The Barber of Seville* is actually the first part in a trilogy of plays. These plays follow the same characters, but tell significantly different stories concerning love, loss, and aristocracy. Each has had a different journey through the opera world, but all three plays inspired different composers to write operas about them in different languages and in different times.

I. *Le Barbier de Séville ou la Précaution inutile*
*The Barber of Seville or the Useless Precaution*

As the first play in the trilogy, this piece introduces most of the main characters for the entire trilogy. In it, we see how Count Almaviva and soon-to-be-Countess Rosine fall in love and get married in Spain. We also see a developing kinship between Figaro and the Count. (See the full synopsis on page 10)

As mentioned on page 10, there are multiple operatic renditions of this piece, with the most popular being Rossini’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.

II. *La Folle Journée, ou Le Mariage de Figaro*
*The Mad Day, or The Marriage of Figaro*

The second play of the trilogy takes place three years after the first. At this point, the Count has already grown bored of his marriage to the Countess, while Figaro is engaged to marry a fellow servant named Suzanne. To make matters complicated, the Count becomes interested in Suzanne and attempts to reinstate an old law that would allow him to consummate the marriage prior to their honeymoon. After much confusion, mishap, and hilarity, the couples wind up together and devoted once more.

Just like the first piece, this play has been adapted for various languages and multiple operas, the most popular of which is Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro*. 
This third installment of the trilogy is the last play that Beaumarchais ever wrote and takes place 20 years after *The Marriage of Figaro*. The family has moved to France and has expanded to include two illegitimate children—one from the Count and one from the Countess. While the two young people fall in love, the Count’s old secretary attempts to reveal both of their secrets and take the family fortune in the process. Thanks to Figaro and Suzanne, who continue to be devoted servants, the secretary’s plans are foiled, and the family becomes close once again. Since the two illegitimate children are not actually related, they are allowed to marry one another.

With both pieces before it, this play was first imagined as an opera in the 1770’s by French composer André Grétry. Unfortunately, this piece never came to fruition, and an operatic version of the play was not performed until 1966 written by another French composer named Darius Milhaud.
During the 18th century, many operas were being written all over Europe. Most Italian operas during this time fell into one of two categories: *opera buffa* (“comic opera”) and *opera seria* (“serious opera”). At the beginning of the 18th century, *opera seria* consisted of a fairly regular musical structure and was considered to be “high art” for the monarchy and the nobility. Although this was not always universal, *opera seria* frequently modeled its heroes on the local nobility, comparing them to Greek gods or Ancient warriors. Many composers of the era wrote *opera seria* including Alessandro Scarlatti, George Frideric Handel, Christoph Willibald Gluck, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

In contrast to this “high art,” *opera buffa* was developed for common people. These operas often depicted more universal problems and included local dialects that the lower class would relate to. *Opéra buffa* broke the mold of opera seria’s strict musical structure and provided a shorter and more free option for composers. The *opera buffa* genre was so transformative that it created a new type of singing character: the *basso buffo*. This character is sung by a low-voice male singer, and frequently includes fast-moving lyrics called “pattering.” As you could guess from the name, this character type is at the center of most of the comic action throughout an *opera buffa*.

Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville* includes many elements of opera buffa, including multiple *basso buffo’s*. All of the lower-class servants are basses—they sing in the lowest male register—and both of the antagonists are also basses. The only male singers that are not basses are Count Almaviva, who sings in the highest male register, and Figaro, who sings in a middle register. A listener in the 18th century would understand that the higher voice denotes a higher-class or nobility, and that the middle voice is somewhere in between.

As more composers continued writing opera during this century, the line between opera seria and opera buffa became fuzzier. Composers and librettists alike started finding inspiration in stories that were both funny and sad, stories that had more dimension. One example is Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro*: the second installment of this Beaumarchais trilogy. Mozart’s opera is at times light and funny, and at other times dramatic and emotional. Although Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville* touches on some deeper topics, the opera stays light and always has some comedic relief around the corner.
The music in Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville* shows up in a lot of popular culture. Some parts of the score have become famous for its fun and upbeat energy that can accompany cartoonish and silly scenes in movies and television. Here are some examples that you may have heard before:

**Mrs. Doubtfire:**
The aria “Largo al factotum della città” is sung by Robin Williams during the opening sequence of the film.

**Loony Toons - Bugs Bunny:**
The overture of *The Barber of Seville* can be heard in the famous *Bugs Bunny* episode “The Rabbit of Seville.”

**Tom & Jerry and Woody Woodpecker**
Many episodes of *Tom and Jerry* and *Woody Woodpecker* use opera as a backdrop to the characters’ adventures. For example, you can hear the aria “Largo al factotum” in the *Tom and Jerry* episode “The Cat Above and the Mouse Below.”

**Family Guy**
Peter from *Family Guy* can be heard also singing “Largo al factotum” in the episode “Dog Gone.”

**Seinfeld**
Throughout the episode “The Barber,” Rossini’s overture can be heard instead of the familiar *Seinfeld* slap-bass incidental music.
Discussion Questions

Part I: Art in Our Lives

- What is art? What is music? How do these fit into our lives?
- Define what opera is, and what it is not. How does it differ from other musical and/or theatrical forms?
- What was your first exposure to opera? What do you remember about it?
- Do you consider yourself an artist? What are the criteria for being an artist?
- Did you identify with any characters in this opera? Why or why not?

Part II: About the Production

- How did you see the technical elements support the story? What did the costumes tell us about the characters, etc.? Did anything in particular stand out?
- How did the music reinforce the action on stage? What musical changes did you note throughout in terms changes in setting and atmosphere?
- How does Rossini’s music help to build the characters in this opera?

Part III: Story and Themes

- The authors of Barber were trying to point out to their audiences that sometimes people in lower positions (like Figaro) are just as intelligent, if not more so, that people in higher positions who may think themselves better than others. In what ways does the story try to show us this? How do the servants of the house try to outsmart their masters?
- Is there a clear “good guy” or “bad guy” in this opera? What aspects of each character could be seen as “good” or “bad”? What do you think the authors are trying to tell us about good and evil?
- What statements, actions, or scenes in the opera relate to ideas of the American Revolution?
Pre- and Post-Performance Activity: Always, Sometimes, Rarely, Never

Assign four corners of the room (or four spaces within the room) to be the location for Always, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never.

When a statement is given, have students move to the location that matches their answer and discuss with their group members why those chose their answer. After several minutes of discussion, choose one group member from each area to share with the whole class why the group as a whole answered Always, Sometimes, Rarely, or Never.

**Statements about live performance:**
- I (always, sometimes, rarely, or never) think that attending a live performance (an opera, play, concert, or sporting event) is more enjoyable than watching the same event on television.
- I (always, sometimes, rarely, or never) think that attending live performances is an important thing to do.
- Live performances hold my interest (always, sometimes, rarely, or never).
- When I attend live performances, I (always, sometimes, rarely, or never) feel like the story is relevant to my life.
- I (always, sometimes, rarely, or never) wish I could attend live performances more often than I do.

**Notes on this activity:**
Remember to encourage your students to talk about WHY they chose their answers. Follow questions with more questions - for example, if students RARELY believe that operas and live performances are relevant to their lives, make sure to ask why. And how can we change that? Who is telling the stories right now? How do we position ourselves to make sure our stories, and stories that are important to us, get told? What stories would we like to see represented on stage? Also, if this activity is conducted both pre- and post-performance, make sure to encourage students to note if their answer has changed, and why it changed. Encourage them to talk about elements of the performance that may have contributed to their answer changing.
Cross-Curricular Connections: Grades 3-5

English Language Arts

1. Write a review of *The Barber of Seville* and send a copy to the Michigan Opera Theatre.
   
   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

2. Compare the experience of going to the opera with the experience of reading a book. What is the difference between seeing a story on a stage versus reading it on a page? Do you learn more or fewer details about the plot, setting, or characters from either format? What do you like or dislike about each type of storytelling?
   
   CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.5 Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.

   CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.7
   
   Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text (e.g., graphic novel, multimedia presentation of fiction, folktale, myth, poem).

3. Imagine you are one of the servants in the story. Write a schedule of what you think you might do all day around the Duke’s castle. Then, imagine you are one of the royal characters in the story (The Count, or Countess), and write a schedule of this day, too. Then, compare the daily lives of each character. How was life different for a servant that it was for royalty? Why do you think that was?
   
   CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

   CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character’s thoughts, words, or actions).
Social Studies

1. While Beaumarchais was in Europe writing plays like *The Barber of Seville* the American colonies were struggling to attain independence. Write a theatrical scene or compose a poem or song from the point of view of a colonist who was involved with a major event leading up to the Revolution— the Boston Tea Party, the Stamp Act, etc. Make sure that your piece addresses WHY the event happened, and what your character thinks will happen next.

   5 - U3.1.2 Describe the causes and effects of events such as the Stamp Act, Boston Tea Party, the Intolerable Acts, and the Boston Massacre.
Cross-Curricular Connections: Grades 6-8

English Language Arts

1. Write a review of *The Barber of Seville* and send a copy to the Michigan Opera Theatre.

   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

2. Choose a scene from *The Barber of Seville* and rewrite it, changing one detail of the story (you could change what characters are in the scene, what they say, what props are used, where the scene takes place, etc). Then, think about how that small change affected the outcome of the story. How would the opera have turned out differently if events had unfolded the way you imagined them?

   CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3 Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character or provoke a decision.

   CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

Social Studies

1. *The Barber of Seville* was written by a Frenchman, set in Spain, and then composed as an opera by Italians, all during the late 18th century. Select one of these locations and research everything you can about the culture and history during that time. Afterward, team up with someone that chose a different location and compare your findings.

   6 - H1.4.1 Describe and use cultural institutions to study an era and a region (political, economic, religion/belief, science/technology, written language, education, family).

   6 - G2.2.1 Describe the human characteristics of the region under study (including languages, religion, economic system, governmental system, cultural traditions).
Social Studies (cont.)

2. While Beaumarchais was writing play in France, he had a strong connection with the American Revolution. Read the Declaration of Independence and write a reflection on how the document expresses the colonists’ views of government and their reasons for separating from Great Britain.

8 - F1.2 Using the Declaration of Independence, including the grievances at the end of the document, describe the role this document played in expressing colonists’ views of government, their reasons for separating from Great Britain.
Cross-Curricular Connections: Grades 9-12

English Language Arts

1. Write a review of *The Barber of Seville* and send a copy to the Michigan Opera Theatre.

   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

2. Create and present an informational presentation about opera that utilizes video and/or audio clips, Power Point slides, photos, etc.

   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.5 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4 Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

3. Select one of your favorite scenes from the opera and read the correlating selection from Beaumarchais’ play. Do the characters and plot seem the same? Does knowing that Beaumarchais’ work came first change the way you view either passage?

   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6 Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.9 Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).
Social Studies

1. While Beaumarchais was in Europe writing plays like *The Barber of Seville*, the American colonies were engaged in the Revolution to bring independence from Great Britain. Create a chart comparing the economic and political systems of early Americans under Great Britain’s rule and after independence.

   WHG 6.1.4 Compare the emerging economic and political systems (industrialism and democracy) with the economic and political systems of the previous era (agriculture and absolutism).

Italian Language

1. Compare the Italian text and English translation of an aria from *The Barber of Seville*. How do the two differ? Do the jokes land in both languages? Are there any Italian idioms that an English-speaker wouldn’t understand? Is there any meaning that has been changed or lost in translation?

   CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
Introduction

Michigan Opera Theatre (MOT), the state of Michigan’s premier opera company, which, through its commitment to producing and presenting the very best professional productions of opera, dance, musical theater, and arts education programming, serves as a statewide cultural resource.

The vision of Founder and Artistic Director Dr. David DiChiera, and led by President and Chief Executive Officer Wayne S. Brown, MOT offers an essential, vibrant contribution to the quality of life for Detroit-area residents and to communities throughout the region. This dynamic cultural resource exemplifies artistic excellence. Since its founding in 1971, MOT has offered southeast Michigan the finest arts and cultural performances, concerts, education, and entertainment. By presenting culturally significant productions relative to the diverse populace of the region, such as Porgy and Bess, Anoush, King Roger, Dead Man Walking, and the world premiere production of Margaret Garner, MOT has brought the magic of live theatre to thousands of people.

In April of 1996, on the Company's twenty-fifth anniversary, the ribbon was cut for the grand opening of the Detroit Opera House. Michigan Opera Theatre joined the ranks of major opera companies worldwide with the multi-million renovation of a 1922 movie palace. Michigan Opera Theatre is one of only a few opera companies in the United States to own its own opera house. The product of Dr. DiChiera's dream, the Detroit Opera House is comparable to the world's greatest houses in visual and acoustical beauty.

Our Mission

Michigan Opera Theatre is the premier multi-disciplined producer and presenter for opera, musical theatre, and dance in the Great Lakes Region. Based in the city of Detroit, the organization engages artists of national and international stature for stellar main stage and outreach performances, and provides compelling cultural enrichment programs for the diverse audiences and communities that it serves, making it one of Detroit’s pillars of arts and culture.

Select Awards and Honors

Best Opera: Cyrano, Wilde Awards 2017 | Best Opera: The Passenger, Wilde Awards 2016 | Best Opera, Elektra, Wilde Awards, 2015 | Founder and Artistic Director Dr. David DiChiera named the 2013 Kresge Eminent Artist | Opera Honors Award to Dr. David DiChiera, National Endowment for the Arts, 2010 | Outstanding Service in the Field of Opera for Youth, National Opera Society, 2006 | Success in Education Award, Opera America, 2002
Michigan Opera Theatre's Department of Education and Community Programs

The Department of Education and Community Programs has brought its varied musical programs to every age group in Michigan for nearly 40 years. Artists visit schools, community centers, and stages throughout Michigan, performing shows that range from lively children’s operas to musical revues.

Founded by Karen V. DiChiera, the Department of Education and Community Programs serves the entire state with quality entertainment and education. Since its inception, the Department of Education and Community Programs has been honored with awards and recognitions including the Governor’s Arts Award, a Spirit of Detroit Award, and multiple Philo T. Farnsworth Awards for Excellence in Community Programming, among others. Touring productions, concerts, workshops, and residencies have reached many thousands of people throughout the state of Michigan, and programs have extended as far as Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and Canada. With an ever-growing repertoire of productions, an exciting roster of up-and coming singers, and a circle of experienced and passionate teaching artists, the Department of Education and Community Programs continues to provide people of all ages with opportunities for access, growth, and learning through the arts.
Contact

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