



Every voice tells a story.



**Student Night at the Opera
Wednesday February 11, 2026**

**Student Night at the Opera is generously supported by
the City of San Diego,
Prebys Foundation, Ellen Browning Scripps Foundation,
and many individual donors who care about introducing the next
generation of opera lovers to this art form.**

*Written by Bernardo Bermudez, Maria Caughey,
and Cynthia Stokes*

***The Barber of Seville* Study Guide Table of Contents**

CONTENTS

Things to know before attending Student Night at the Opera	2
Opera Vocabulary	3
The Characters of <i>The Barber of Seville</i> (In order of appearance)	5
Synopsis of <i>The Barber of Seville</i>	6
About <i>The Barber of Seville</i>	7
About the Composer: Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868)	7
<i>The Barber of Seville</i> in Pop culture	8
Fun facts about <i>The Barber of Seville</i>	9
About the Playwright: Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais (1732–1799)	9
Elementary / Middle School Lesson #1: Preparing to attend the Opera	10
High School Lesson #1: Preparing to attend the Opera	12
Elementary School Lesson #2: Character	14
Middle and High School Lesson #2: Libretto	17
Elementary, Middle and High Schools Lesson #3:	20
<i>The Barber of Seville</i> Design Labs	20
Costume and Set Design Worksheets Elementary, Middle, and High School Students	22
Set Design Worksheet	27

THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE ATTENDING STUDENT NIGHT AT THE OPERA

- Opera is a story that is sung. As you watch and listen to the opera, think about how the words and music mix together to develop character relationships, conflict, and an overall artistic effect. Opera composers use different voice types to create a dramatic or comedic effect. How do the singers' voices impact you as you experience the opera?
- Opera singers sound very different from pop or rock 'n' roll singers because they do not use microphones. Instead, they use their bodies to amplify sound. Opera singers have the ability to make their voices soar over an orchestra and a chorus without any electronic support.
- Opera is often performed in languages other than English. Opera was the most popular art form in Europe before movies, so operas were written in the language of the people who first attended them. Read the synopsis and listen to the musical excerpts before coming to the performance. The Civic Theatre projects supertitles, or translations, above the stage in English and Spanish for audience members to read along as the opera is performed.
- You will attend the final dress rehearsal of the opera. It's the last rehearsal before the public attends. Because this is a rehearsal, there may be starting and stopping, and some singers may "mark" (not sing fully).
- The opera you will attend is a live performance. The performers can see you and hear you in the audience – your polite behavior, applause, and cheers tell them you are enjoying the performance.
- There will be a photographer and videographer present during Student Night at the Opera. If any one of your students is not able to be photographed for any reason, please notify us prior to attending the performance.
- Turn off and put away electronic devices (phones, tablets, etc.).
- Leave large purses and backpacks at home or on the bus. They will not be allowed inside the theatre.
- Food and gum are not allowed in the theatre.
- Give the performance your full attention. You are going to have an amazing time!

Location: San Diego Civic Theatre, 1100 Third Ave. San Diego, CA 92101

Date and Time: Wednesday, February 11, 2026, 6:30 – 9:30 pm.

Running time is 2 hours and 50 minutes including one 20-minute intermission.

Tickets may be picked up in front of the Civic Theatre beginning at 5:00 pm. All attendees must be in their seats by 6:20 pm.

OPERA VOCABULARY

Aria: A song written for one singer, also known as a solo.

Baritone: The baritone is the most common male voice and has a lower range than the tenor. This voice is often described as having a vocal richness and a large vocal range.

Bass: The lowest of the male voices. Bass singers often portray servants or noblemen, as they project wisdom and seriousness.

Bel Canto: Italian for “beautiful singing.” Bel canto is a vocal technique and a source of national pride for Italians. Bel canto operas are a style of early 19th century Italian opera that emphasizes long, *legato* (or smooth and flowing) melodies, vocal agility, and expressive ornamentation like *trills* and *portamento*. Bel canto composers include Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti.

Character: A person in an opera or story.

Commedia dell’arte: An improvised comic play performed in Italy during the 16th to 18th centuries with “stock” or recognizable characters. Actors created dialogue and action based on a few set plots, usually love triangles and mishaps and topical issues. *The Barber of Seville* is based on commedia dell’arte characters

Composer: The person who writes the music of an opera.

Conductor: The person who leads the orchestra and makes sure everyone plays together.

Dramatic Irony: A literary device in which the audience has knowledge that the characters on stage do not.

Duet: A song written for two singers.

Ensemble: A song or musical passage written for a group of singers.

Librettist: The person who writes the story and the words of the opera.

Libretto: The story of an opera written out as a play or poem. It includes all the words sung.

Mezzo-Soprano: The mezzo-soprano is a lower female voice and is almost always the antagonist or secondary role. In the opera *The Barber of Seville*, the female protagonist (leading role) is a mezzo-soprano.

Opera: A dramatic or comedic story told onstage by singers using words and music. Opera productions use sets, lights, and costumes to help create details of the story. Operas are usually accompanied by an orchestra led by a conductor.

Opera Buffa: Italian for “comic opera,” a genre that emerged from funny interludes in serious opera, focusing on everyday people, relatable situations, and witty plots with fast-paced lively music.

Opera Singer: A person who portrays a character in an operatic story by singing and acting.

Orchestra: A large group of musicians who play different instruments together, accompanying the singers in an opera.

Orchestra Pit: The area below the stage where the orchestra sits and plays their instruments.

Orchestration: The assignment and combination of musical instruments in an opera. Orchestration is a tool used by composers to create moods and enhance storytelling.

Overture: An instrumental piece of music often played at the beginning of an opera.

Soprano: The soprano is the highest female voice and is almost always the heroine or protagonist (leading role) of an opera.

Synopsis: A summary of the opera's story.

Tenor: The tenor is the highest of the male voice types and is often, but not always, the lead male role.

THE CHARACTERS OF *THE BARBER OF SEVILLE* (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Fiorello (pronounced fee-oh-REHL-loh) (Baritone)
Servant to Count Almaviva

Count Almaviva/Lindoro (pronounced Con-teh al-mah-VEE-vah, lin-DOOR-oh) (Tenor)
A Spanish nobleman

Figaro (pronounced FEE-gar-oh) (Baritone)
A barber

Rosina (pronounced ro-ZEE-nah)(Mezzo-Soprano)
beautiful young girl, in love with Lindoro/Conte Almaviva

Dr. Bartolo (pronounced BAR-toh-loh) (Bass-Baritone)
Rosina's guardian

Don Basilio (pronounced bah-ZEEL-yoh) (Bass)
A music teacher

Berta (pronounced BEHR-tah) (Soprano)
Bartolo's Housekeeper

Ambrogio (pronounced am-BROJ-yoh) (Speaking role)
Bartolo's Servant

Sergeant (Baritone)

SYNOPSIS OF *THE BARBER OF SEVILLE*

The story is about Count Almaviva, who arrives in Seville disguised as a poor student with the aim of wooing and wedding the beautiful Rosina. Rosina, unfortunately, is the ward of the unscrupulous Dr. Bartolo, who has plans of his own to marry her. Almaviva runs into the barber Figaro, his former attendant, and the two hatch a plot to win Rosina away from Bartolo's clutches. Despite Bartolo's scheming, Almaviva is able to win Rosina and, after revealing his identity at the last moment, the two are wed with much gratitude for the help of Figaro.

ABOUT *THE BARBER OF SEVILLE*

Originally named *Almaviva, ossia L'inutile precauzione* (*Almaviva, or The Useless Precaution*)

Music by Gioachino Rossini

Libretto by Cesare Sterbini

The Barber of Seville is a comic opera (*opera buffa*) in two acts composed by **Gioachino Rossini**. The libretto was written by **Cesare Sterbini** and is based on a 1775 French play *Le Barbier de Séville* by **Pierre Augustin de Beaumarchais**, the first of a trilogy that follows the clever and mischievous barber Figaro. The opera is a masterpiece of wit, comic timing, and dazzling vocal writing, showcasing Rossini's signature style: sparkling melodies, rapid-fire patter, and exhilarating ensembles.

When *The Barber of Seville* premiered in Rome at Teatro Argentina on February 20, 1816, it was a disaster. Supporters of Rossini's rival, Giovanni Paisiello, protested, backstage mishaps ensued, and a cat wandered onstage. However, by the second night the opera became a triumph, eventually earning its reputation as one of the greatest comic operas ever written.

Today, it remains a favorite around the world and continues to influence popular culture appearing in Looney Tunes' "The Rabbit of Seville," in movies such as *Ice age*, TV shows such as *The Simpsons*, *Seinfeld*, and countless commercials—introducing generations to the fun and brilliance of opera.

About the Composer: Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868)

Rossini was born in Pesaro, Italy, on February 29, 1792, to a musical family. His father was a trumpeter and his mother was a seamstress with a beautiful voice. A child prodigy, he wrote six sonatas by the age of twelve and became one of the first composers to succeed without a wealthy patron.

By the time he was 30, Rossini had written more than 30 operas, often reworking themes from his own earlier compositions. His final opera, *William Tell*, was written when he was 37; remarkably, he lived another 39 years but never wrote another opera. Rossini enjoyed his later life traveling, supervising productions, cooking, and hosting legendary parties. Known for his quick wit and love of good food, he famously said, "Eating, loving, singing, and digesting are, in truth, the four acts of the comic opera known as life."

Rossini bridged the Classical style of music (1750-1820), of which Mozart was the leading composer, with the emerging Romantic era (1820-1900), earning the nickname "The Italian Mozart." His music helped make Italian opera both joyfully Italian and universally beloved.

***THE BARBER OF SEVILLE* IN POP CULTURE**

The joyful music of *The Barber of Seville* remains popular to the present day and can be heard in television shows, cartoons, and movies.

Watch the clips below to get acquainted with the music and the story in an entertaining way.

1. Seinfeld: "The Barber" (Season 5, Episode 8)
This episode uses Rossini's dramatic "Overture."
 - **Jerry Cheats on his barber:** In this clip, the "Overture" plays as Jerry anxiously tries to sneak into a different barbershop without being seen by his regular barber, Enzo.
 - [Watch clip here](#)
2. Woody Woodpecker: "*The Barber of Seville*" (1944)
This classic cartoon where Woody takes over a barbershop and sings the "Figaro! Figaro!" aria (*Largo al factotum*) at breakneck speed while terrorizing a customer.
 - [Watch clip here](#)
3. Looney Tunes: "The Rabbit of Seville" (1950)
Perhaps the most famous example. Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd perform the entire overture.
 - **The Rabbit of Seville (Clip):** This section contains the famous frantic chase sequence set to the music.
 - [Watch clip here](#)
4. *Mrs. Doubtfire* (1993)
The opening scene establishes Robin Williams' character's vocal talent and manic energy.
 - **Opening Scene:** He sings "Largo al factotum" while voicing a cartoon bird.
 - [Watch clip here](#)
5. "Tom and Jerry": "The Cat Above and the Mouse Below" (1964)
Tom is an opera singer trying to perform "Largo al factotum," but Jerry (living under the stage) tries to ruin the performance.
 - [Watch clip here](#)
6. *Ice Age: Collision Course* - Buck Sings "Figaro"
Buck teaches a lesson to some bad dinosaurs while he sings the "Figaro! Figaro!" aria ("Largo al factotum") with new lyrics.
 - **Buck's song:** "I am the pint-sized protector of this lost world" to the tune of Rossini's aria, culminating in the famous "Figaro! Figaro!" chant.
 - [Watch clip here](#)

FUN FACTS ABOUT *THE BARBER OF SEVILLE*

- **Premiere (February 20, 1816):** The first performance was a notorious disaster. Supporters of Rossini's rival, Paisiello, booed, jeered, and sabotaged the show.
 - The Count's guitar broke.
 - Figaro's aria was drowned out by noise.
 - Basilio fell into a trap door and sang with a bloody nose.
 - A cat wandered onstage and hid under Rosina's skirt.
 - The audience was so disruptive that much of Act II could not be heard.

About the Playwright: Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais (1732–1799)

Beaumarchais led an extraordinary life. Born in Paris as the son of a watchmaker, he invented a new timepiece mechanism and became the King's Court Watchmaker before buying the title of Lieutenant-General of Hunting. After marrying a wealthy widow, he adopted the name of her estate—Beaumarchais.

A writer, diplomat, political activist, and **secret agent**, he created a fictional trading company to funnel arms and supplies to the American Revolution, often using his own fortune. The U.S. failed to repay him fully; only a fraction of the debt was returned to his descendant's decades after his death.

He is remembered for the three groundbreaking plays that became operatic masterpieces:

- ***Le barbier de Séville (The Barber of Seville)*:** A comedic satire featuring the quick-witted valet Figaro, set in Seville to soften its critiques of French society.
- ***Le mariage de Figaro (The Marriage of Figaro)*:** A radical attack on aristocratic privilege. Napoleon called it "the Revolution in action." This sequel inspired Mozart's celebrated opera.
- ***La mère coupable (The Guilty Mother)*:** The final play in the trilogy, focusing on the Countess's struggles with an illegitimate child and a scheming major, continuing themes of family and social duty. The opera associated with this work is called *The Ghost of Versailles* by composer John Corigliano.

ELEMENTARY / MIDDLE SCHOOL LESSON #1:

PREPARING TO ATTEND THE OPERA

Performance and Audience Etiquette
Music Evaluation
Music Connections

Common Core Standards for Elementary and Middle Schools

Demonstrating Audience and Performance Decorum

Elementary (Grades 3-5) PAE1: Demonstrate performance decorum and audience etiquette for the context, venue, genre, and style.

Middle School (Grades 6-8) PAE: Demonstrate performance decorum and audience etiquette for the context, venue, genre, and style.

Music Evaluation

Elementary (Grades 3-5) MU: Re9.1: Demonstrate and describe how selected music connects to and is influenced by specific interests, experiences, purposes, or contexts.

Middle School (Grades 6-8) MU: Re9.1: Apply appropriate personally-developed criteria to evaluate musical works or performances.

Music Connections

Elementary (Grades 3-5) MU: Cn10.0 & MU: Cn11.0: Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.

Middle School (Grades 6-8) MU: Cn10.0 & MU: Cn11.0: Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

Outcomes:

This lesson will help students learn how the Civic Theater informs opera etiquette (behavior) at a live performance. We will explore what makes opera singers so special and how they work with a conductor and orchestra to tell an opera story.

Lesson Steps:

Step 1: Understand the theatre setting:

As a class look at the images of the San Diego Civic Theatre where you will see San Diego Opera's production of *The Barber of Seville*.

- Look at a picture of the outside of the Civic Theatre.
<https://images.app.goo.gl/xRikMHdGAS7ei4Es7>

- Look at a picture of audience seating in the theatre. All the seats are facing the stage so everyone can watch the opera.
<https://images.app.goo.gl/1Axs9L9DZUuNrxG46>
- This is a picture of the stage. This is where the opera singers will perform. They can see and hear the audience, just like the audience can see and hear them.
<https://images.app.goo.gl/Bi67spU8XX9Mb3QS6>
- This is a picture of the orchestra pit; the orchestra pit is located between the stage and the audience. Up to 90 musicians and an opera conductor can play their instruments in the orchestra pit.
<https://images.app.goo.gl/YoC8Q9F33FVPwDy39>

Step 2: Discuss in small groups why the audience, stage and orchestra pit are set up this way:

- Predict how the set-up of the theatres helps to tell the story of the opera.
- Opera singers can see and hear the audience. How do you think this will affect how you watch the performance? Also, opera singers don't use microphones — they use their trained voices to be heard over the orchestra. Where on stage do you think they should stand to be heard best? Discuss how where they stand may impact the way you react to each performance.

Step 3: Review the role of the conductor:

- The opera conductor helps the singers and the orchestra sing and play together. The conductor uses a baton in their hand to guide the music.
- When you are watching the opera, look for the conductor at the center of the orchestra pit. Describe how the singers keep eye contact with the conductor and other singers on stage.

Step 4: After you attend Student Night at the Opera:

Describe the relationship between the audience and the singers during a live performance and how it is different from watching TV or a movie.

HIGH SCHOOL LESSON #1:

PREPARING TO ATTEND THE OPERA

Demonstrating Audience and Performance Decorum
Music Evaluation
Music Connections

Common Core Standards for High School

Demonstrating Audience and Performance Decorum

High School (Grades 9-12) TH: Pr6.1: Perform a scripted drama/theatre work for a specific audience, demonstrating performance decorum and audience etiquette appropriate to the context, venue, genre, and style.

Music Evaluation

High School (Grades 9-12) MU: Re9.1: Justify evaluation of musical works and performances using criteria, context, and research.

Music Connections

High School (Grades 9-12) MU: Cn10.0 & MU: Cn11.0: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make music; demonstrate understanding of relationships between music, other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life, possibly using research.

Outcomes:

Students will understand the jobs needed to create a live performance.

Activity:

Students will research and discuss various jobs and expertise needed to present an opera.

Step 1:

Imagine you and your classmates are asked to create a live performance. Break into small groups and list all the roles you think are needed for the performance. Remember, many of these roles are not on stage.

Step 2:

As a group, analyze the expertise required for each role on your list. Each group member should choose a role to research, then present a description of that role to the group. (Resource links are provided below.)

Step 3:

Discuss how people acquire the skills needed for these roles. Do you think they learn these skills independently, or do they attend a trade school, college, or conservatory program? Compare the time required for training in different fields.

Step 4:

Create a Venn diagram with your group to identify the common goals shared by everyone involved in a live performance. Discuss how understanding these shared goals affects the audience's experience. Also, consider how the audience's response might influence the goals of those working on the performance.

Step 5:

Choose one role from your discussion that interests you. During Student Night at the Opera, observe and identify evidence of that role in action. Share your observations with your group and teacher.

Resources and information about careers in opera:

<https://www.sfopera.com/learn/about-opera/people-at-the-opera/>

<https://www.berklee.edu/careers/communities/opera>

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LESSON #2: CHARACTER

Characters and Text Music Creation

Common Core Standards for Elementary Schools

Key Ideas and Details – (Grades 3–5)

Grade 3 RL.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

Grade 3 RL.3: Describe characters in a story and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

Grade 4 RL.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Grade 4 RL.3: Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

Grade 5 RL.1: Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Music Creation (Grades 3–5)

3MC2. MU: Cr2.0 (Grades 3–5): Describe how the music relates to its purpose or context and how it conveys expressive intent.

Outcomes:

Students will understand the characters and how they are portrayed through the words and music of the opera.

Activity:

Students work in pairs to read part of a song (aria) sung by the barber Figaro. They then make predictions about the character based on his words and music.

Step 1. Read with a Partner

Read the following aria sung by Figaro, from the beginning of Act I. Take turns reading the aria aloud and answer the questions at the end.

FIGARO

Make way for the factotum* of the city.
Rushing to his shop
For dawn is here.
What a merry life,
What happy pleasures

for a barber
of quality.

Ah, bravo Figaro,
bravo, bravissimo, bravo!
Most fortunate of men,
indeed you are!
Ready for everything
by night or by day,
Always in bustle,
in constant motion.
A better lot
for a barber,
A nobler life
does not exist.

Razors and combs,
needles and scissors,
at my command
Everything's ready.
Then there are "extras"
part of my trade,
business for ladies
and gentlemen ...

Ah, what a merry life,
what happy pleasures,
for a barber
of quality.
All call for me,
all want me,
ladies and children,
old men and maidens.
"I need a wig,
I want a shave,
Leeches to bleed me,
Here, take this note."

All call for me,
All want me.
I need a wig,
I want a shave,
Here, take this note!

Figaro, Figaro, Figaro! My goodness! what a commotion!
My goodness! What a crowd!

One at a time,
for pity's sake.
Ho, Figaro! - I am here!
Figaro here, Figaro there,
Figaro up. Figaro down.
Quicker and quicker
I go like greased lightning,

Make way for the factotum of the city,
Ah, bravo, Figaro,
bravo, bravissimo,
On you good fortune
will always smile.

I am the factotum
of the city.

*A factotum is a jack of all trades who can help out with what needs to get done.

** In the period when this opera was written, a common cure for ailments was attaching leeches, or a kind of worm, to the skin to help with bleeding.

Step 2: Find Clues

With your partner, look for clues in Figaro's aria that tell us about his personality.

- Do you think Figaro is different when he is alone compared to how he acts around other people?
- Figaro describes himself as a factotum (Jack of all trades). Why does he do that? What hints does he give in his song that lets you know that he can do almost anything he is asked to do?

With your partner, discuss and describe Figaro's feelings based on what you read in the song. Is he happy? Is he sad? How can you tell by the words he is singing?

Step 3: Listen to the Music

https://youtu.be/WUb3Y1LFFUQ?si=z-IQw6FtM_ZAXVL1

Using the link, watch and listen to Figaro's aria, sung in Italian with English titles.

Step 4: Discuss What You Heard

Talk with your partner about what you noticed in the aria now that you've heard the music.

- How do the words and music give you clues about Figaro's character?
- Can you find parts of the music that match the words in the aria?
- What did the music add to the aria?

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL LESSON #2: LIBRETTO

Common Core Standards Middle School

Key Ideas and Details

Middle School (Grades 6–7) RL.1: Identify textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Craft and Structure

Middle School (Grades 7–8) RL.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.

Middle School (Grades 7–8) RL.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

Outcomes:

In this lesson, students will look for clues in the libretto of *The Barber of Seville* to understand the characters and their relationships.

Activity:

Students work in pairs to read parts of an example from the libretto in *The Barber of Seville* sung by Rosina and Figaro. They then make predictions about the character based on his words and music.

Lesson Steps:

Step 1: Work with a partner or in a small group.

Read the sections below from the libretto and discuss.

ROSINA

But tell me, how shall I speak to Lindoro?

FIGARO

Be patient and soon Lindoro will come to see you.

ROSINA

To speak to me? Bravo! Bravo!
Let him come, but
meanwhile I am dying of impatience!
Why is he delayed? What is he doing?

FIGARO

Poor man!

He is awaiting some sign,
of your affection;
Send him but two lines
and you will see him here.
What do you say to this? Will you do it?

ROSINA

Maybe I shouldn't see him ...

FIGARO

Have courage.

ROSINA

I don't know ...

FIGARO

Only two lines ...

ROSINA

I am too shy.

FIGARO

But why? But why?
Quickly, quickly, give me a note.

ROSINA

A note? ... Here it is.

She takes a letter from her pocket and gives it to him

FIGARO (to himself)

(Already written ... I am such a fool
She could give me a lesson or two!)

Step 2: Discuss with your group

- Based on the text, discuss the relationship between Rosina and Figaro. Look for specific examples that support your ideas.
- What do you imagine is keeping Rosina from being with Lindoro? Is her conflict an internal one or an external one? Look for specific examples that support your ideas.

Step 3: Listen

Now listen to the music and watch the scene. What clues do you get from the text and the music about how each character feels over the course of the scene in the opera?

Rosina/Figaro Duet

<https://youtu.be/hbv3Tu59qM?si=Dhp-IONgh4hcF6E->

Step 4: Expand the Ideas and discuss

- If you were friends with Rosina, what advice would you give her at the end of the scene?
- How is Rosina similar to characters you may know from other stories you have read or see in a movie or TV show?

Step 5: Wrap up

- Write down your predictions and compare them to what happens when you attend Student Night at the Opera.

Libretto Translation:

<https://opera-guide.ch/en/operas/il+barbiere+di+siviglia/libretto/en/>

ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS LESSON #3:

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE DESIGN LABS

Common Core Standards Alignment

Reading Drama and Character Analysis

Elementary (Grades 3-5) RL.3: Describe characters in a story or drama, explaining their traits, motivations, and how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

Middle School (Grades 6-8) RL.3: Describe and analyze how a drama's plot unfolds, how characters respond and change, and how elements of story or drama interact.

High School (Grades 9-12) RL.3: Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

Writing and Design

Elementary (Grades 3-5) W.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

Middle School (Grades 6-8) W.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

High School (Grades 9-12) W.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Visual Arts and Design

Elementary (Grades 3-5) VA:Cr1.1 & VA:Cr2.1: Elaborate on imaginative ideas; experiment and develop skills in multiple art-making techniques and approaches through practice.

Middle School (Grades 6-8) VA:Cr1.2 & VA:Cr2.1: Formulate artistic investigations of personally relevant content; demonstrate persistence in developing skills with various materials and methods.

High School (Grades 9-12) VA:Cr1.2 & TH:Cr1.1: Choose from a range of materials and methods to plan works of art and design; understand and apply technology to design solutions for drama/theatre work.

Outcomes:

In this lesson, students will analyze the characters' personalities from *The Barber of Seville* to create historically accurate costume designs inspired by early 19th-century Spanish fashion.

They will also design practical set pieces for early 1800s Seville, Spain, making artistic choices about color, accessories, and staging while justifying their design decisions through written explanations.

Lesson Steps:

Step 1: Review

Review the synopsis and character descriptions from *The Barber of Seville* to identify personality traits for each character.

Step 2:

Using the costume design worksheet, select appropriate colors, accessories, and fashion elements from early 1800s Spain that reflect your chosen character's personality. Sketch your costume designs on the provided templates.

Step 3:

Using the set design worksheet, create a stage design of the streets of Seville, Spain, in the early 1800s, complete with a house with a balcony where the lead female character Rosina lives under the watchful eye of Dr. Bartolo. Complete your designs with a ground plan (top view) and front view sketch.

Step 4:

Explain how your design choices support the story and characters.

Step 2: Explore Early 19th Century Fashion (1800's):

- Men: Greatcoats with tiered collars, waist-length jackets, waistcoats, cravats, waist sashes, high-waisted trousers, and tall boots with cuffs.
- Women Full hoop skirts, tiered ruffles, fitted bodices, voluminous "leg-o-mutton" sleeves, overskirts, and neck ribbons.
- Colors: neutral base tones (tan, deep navy, gray, olive) with accents (burgundy, teal, mustard yellow, pastels).

Examples of Spanish 19th-century fashion:

ALMAVIVA
DAVID WALTON
ACT I EXTERIOR



ROSINA
KARA MORGAN



FIGARO
TAKAKI ONISHI



BERTA
KATHERINE HEALY



Step 6: Draw designs

Now that you have reviewed the examples of Spanish fashion in the early 1800's, using the template on the previous pages, draw an outfit for either Rosina or Figaro, Count Almaviva, or Dr. Bartolo.

Step 3: Select Colors

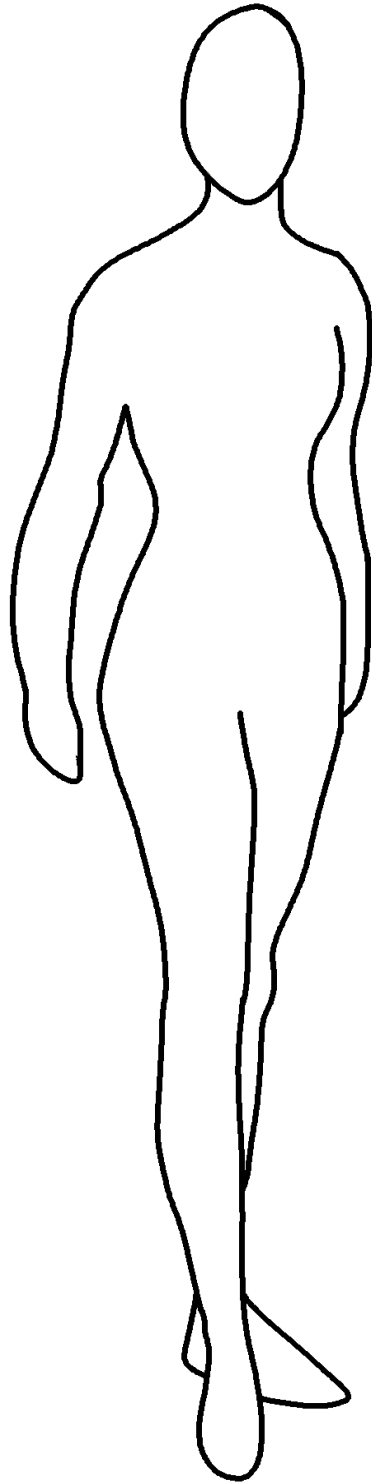
Base Color: _____ Accent Color: _____

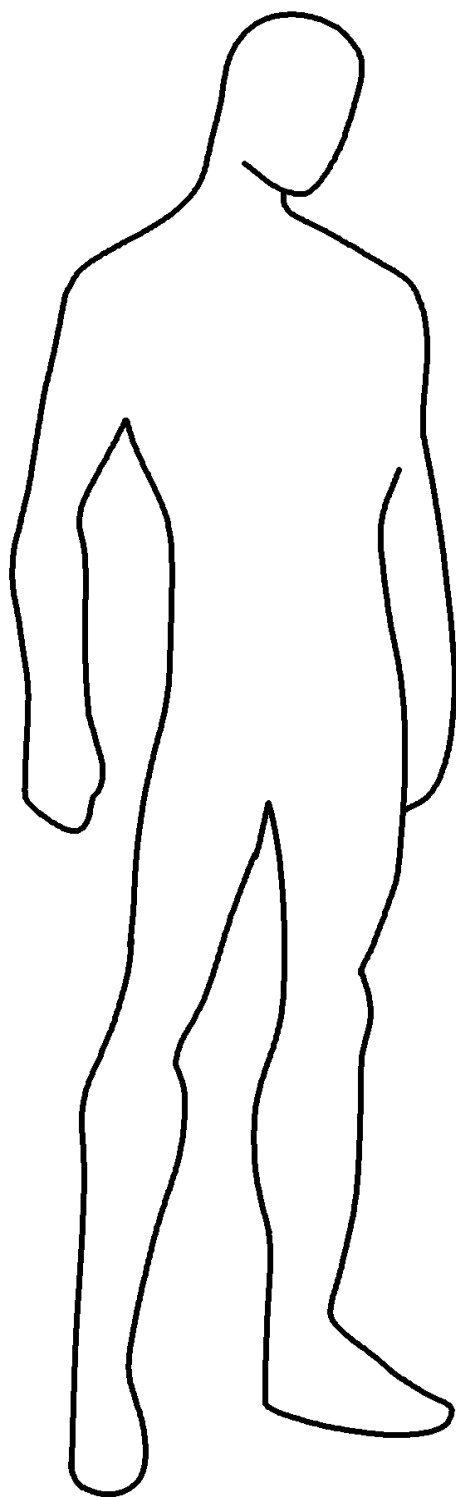
Step 4: Add Accessories: Hat ☐ Cravat ☐ Gloves ☐ Jewelry ☐ Shoes ☐

Step 5: Designer's Note

Explain your design choices:

[illegible]





SET DESIGN WORKSHEET

Design a stage. The setting is early 1800's Seville, Spain. Use your imagination to create a backdrop using different scenic elements. Think of elements that you would find in a plaza in the middle of Seville, Spain during that time period, also how would the streets look, how would they be paved, etc.

Step 1: Touring Vehicles:

Examples Early 1800's Spanish Plaza elements



Step 2: Choose Stage Location:

Town square ☐ Market ☐ Courtyard ☐ Other: _____

Step 3: Design the Set Pieces:

- Backdrop (canvas flat)
- Stage platform (crates, wagon bed)
- Props (tables, benches)
- Costume trunk (doubles as seating)

Step 4: Ground Plan (Top View):

Back of Stage														
Front of Stage														

Step 5: Front View



Please describe the scene you have designed, start with the backdrop, scenic elements and any ideas like color palate and buildings.

Cut out, trace, or use these silhouettes to inspire your set design.

