LANGUAGE ARTS

WORD ANALYSIS, FLUENCY, AND VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Phonics and Phonemic Awareness:

Letter Recognition: Name the letters in a word. Ex. **Aida = A-i-d-a**.

Letter/Sound Association: Name the letters and the beginning and ending sound in a word. **R-amade-s**

Match and list words with the same beginning or ending sounds. Ex. **Aida, Amneris** and **Amonasro** have the same beginning letter “a” and sound /a/; but end with different ending sounds. Additional examples: **Ramades and Ramfis**.

Syllables: Count the syllables in a word. Ex.: **A-mon-a-sro**

Match and list words with the same number of syllables. Clap out syllables as beats. Ex.: 1 syllable 2 syllables 3 syllables **bass = bass tenor = ten-or soprano = so-pra-no**

Phoneme Substitution: Play with the beginning sounds to make silly words. What would a “boprano” sound like? (Also substitute middle and ending sounds.) Ex. **soprano, boprano, toprano, koprano**.

Phoneme Counting: How many sounds in a word? Ex. **bell = 3**

Phoneme Segmentation: Which sounds do you hear in a word? Ex. **sing = s/i/n/g**.

Reading Skills: Build skills using the subtitles on the video and related educator documents.

Examine vocabulary in source material texts: **Aida libretto**.

Examine the different names in the story; what would you name your characters or places?

Define words and expressions in the story that are unfamiliar: triumphal, Pharaoh, Vulcan, “O Mighty Ptah”

Concepts of Print: Sentence structure, punctuation, directionality.

Opera vocabulary: soprano, mezzo-soprano, bass, triumphal march.

Examine contrasting vocabulary.

Find words in **Aida** that are unfamiliar and find definitions and roots.

Find analogies in **Aida**.

Metaphors

Parts of speech: Noun, verb, adjective, adverb, prepositions.

Vocabulary Lists: Ex. **Aida Opera glossary, Music and Composition terms**
**Reading Comprehension:**

Story Development (What’s the beginning, middle and end?): Character desires and motivation; Cause and effect: What made this happen?

The sequencing of events, climax, and resolution.

Read:
*Opera source material*: Source material for *Aida*, *Aida* libretto, biographies, etc.

Watch different versions of the opera on DVD; how do they differ and why?

Research the story of *Aida’s* source material.

How did the tragedy evolve?

Find characters in literature who are tested to prove their loyalty and love.

Read sections of the English translation of the libretto. Write a brief synopsis based on the libretto.

Reflect on your viewing of the opera by sharing your questions about it with the other students.

**Creative writing:**

Interpret the story and create a new version. Create your own characters or change the opera’s time period and setting.

Explore different genres of writing: poetry, song text, libretto, script for media arts, biography, autobiography, short story, historical novel, etc.

Explore literary devices such as the use of point of view, internal/external conflict, repetition of phrases and foreshadowing.

**CREATIVE WRITING**

Reinterpret the story by creating a new version using your own characters, time period and setting.

Explore different genres of writing: poetry, song text, libretto, script for media arts, biography, autobiography, short story, historical novel, etc.

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Analysis and Interpretation: Expository writing, critiques/reviews.


Write about what would happen to the characters if the story continued.

Set the story in a different time and place. Update the dialogue.

Read published letters by famous people; try to reconstruct their lives from the letters.

**LITERARY RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS**

**Elements of a Story:**

Character, plot, setting, conflict.

Chart out the elements of the plot.

Play segments of the opera; students’ journal after listing the segments.
Compare the format of the libretto to the format of the original book.

Students respond to a letter from Aida or Amneris asking them for advice.

Read a synopsis of Act I; how would you complete this story?

Examine the relationship between Art and politics – How do they drive and influence each other? A topic for debate, “Should the arts be political?” http://www.houstonpress.com/arts/the-personal-is-political-6562239

What are the King and Amonasro’s motivations for the people?

Vocabulary:
Reading for understanding using the subtitles on videos and related educator documents.

Genres:
Historical, political dramas and compare to current day examples, featuring historical dynasties, mini-series (Wolf Hall, The Tudors, GoT, Masterpiece Theatre) and soap operas.

Themes: Tragedy - Nationalism, patriotism, religion, duty vs. desire, public vs. private life, conflicting government and personal lives; love, war, jealousy, rivalry, trickery (by characters to reveal things), lying and deception, passion, emotion, compassion and remorse; is the final scene satisfying to the viewer?

Explore the relationship of music to nationalism – how is this reflected in the present day? (ex: sporting events)

Character Actions and Motives:
Examine the character of Radames. What do you think about Radames? Do you like him? What are his motivations? What are his principles? Are you sympathetic to his plight?

Discuss Aida’s motivations. Do you think she makes the right decisions throughout the opera?

Think of five adjectives that describe Aida. Support your choices with evidence.

Analyze the characters in the opera. What motivates their actions? What are their main traits? Do they change over the course of the opera? Radames could be seen as being emotionally weak or physically strong, but easily manipulated; is his love realistic, or misguided? How would you characterize Aida and Amneris’ expressions of love?

Who are the characters that drive the action in this opera?

What are some emotions or feelings the characters exhibit in the story? How do you feel about how they act upon or express their emotions? Dying in the vault.

Examine each character’s appetite. What are they hungry for?

Examine the relationships in the opera, i.e. between Aida and Amneris, between Aida and Amonasro. The relationship between Aida and Radames, compared to Amneris and Radames. How do they interact? How do the characters feel about each other?

Examine the male characters and their particular political attitudes. What do the characters in Aida stand for? How are characters like modern day people?

Archetypes: How does growing up in a powerful family effect behavior? Examine the family dynamic of the characters in Aida. Do any of characters behave differently from what is expected?
**Character Development:** Examine character development: do the characters grow beyond their expected roles?

List some transformations or changes that the characters experience in the story. How do they respond to the changes? How do their characters change? What are Amneris’ intentions? Does she change? Examine the relationship between fathers and daughters. Explore the rivalry between the kings and the daughters.

Compare the characters in *Aida* to characters in stories that you know. Can you find any similarities?

Pick your favorite character in the opera and describe him/her. Write a letter from his/her point of view to another character.

Examine the use of subtext in the opera. Are people always saying what they mean, or is their language intended to mask something?

Radames really wants to be in charge, have you ever wanted to be in charge? What are the pros and cons? What is the intention behind Radames’ actions.

Examine character development: do the characters grow beyond their expected roles?

Compare and contrast the behavior of the different characters in the opera.

Compare Amonasro’s feelings towards daughter and country, compared to Aida’s love of country and father.

How do the different characters speak? What does that say about their social status?

Explore the nuances of the characters in the opera.

How do the characters go about getting what they want in the opera?

Are the female characters in the opera two-dimensional or three-dimensional?

Create a map of the characters. Who are the primary characters? Who are the secondary?

**Alliteration:** Recognize the similarities of sounds and rhythmic patterns in the libretto.

**Figurative Language:** *Simile, Metaphor, Hyperbole, Personification, Allegory:*

Language style and music reflects emotion of characters, and instrumental sounds or musical phrases can be used to symbolize character.

Symbolism/Metaphors: come into the world alone and die alone

**WRITING STRATEGIES**

**Analysis and Interpretation:**

*Aida* production materials: artist biographies, program and program notes, synopsis, expository writing, critiques/reviews, etc.

**Persuasive Writing:**

Write a “me” poem for each of the characters: begin the poem with “I am” and list the characteristics of each person in separate phrases.

Write parrot poems from the point of view of the characters. Parrot poems are conversational poems in which partners write each line in turn.

Persuasive writing: create posters, advertisements for one of the characters.

Write dialogue for two of the characters in the opera. Each character only says one line, but uses different inflections each time he/she says it.

Writing exercise in which feelings are expressed like those in *Aida* arias.
Write a passage expressing several characters’ inner thoughts at the same time.

Rewrite libretto using today as a setting. Use contemporary characters: Who would be Aida today? Amneris? Create a storyboard of Aida as a soap opera.

Scenes, letters, diary or blog pages can be written from a particular character’s point of view; make sure to take relationships between characters into account. Diary pages could focus on how characters convince themselves to do something—internal debate.

Letter writing, copywriting: advertising, fundraising, press release.

Write a different ending for the opera.

Write a letter from one character to another.

Write or draw a deleted scene for the opera; a scene we hear about, but don’t see.

Divide into small groups. Each group writes the story from the point of view of a different character.

Write a prequel to the opera, focusing on Aida’s young life.

Keep journals from the point of view of the characters during the events of the opera. Write this story from the point of view of the women. Rewrite a scene from the opera, switching the genders of the characters. How does the scene change? Rewrite a scene, changing the ethnicities. How does it change?

WRITTEN AND ORAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

Debates between characters. Deliver persuasive speeches, identify tactics used.

Write a monologue with two scenes based on the alternate points of view held by a single character.

Spelling: Spell the names of the characters in Aida.

Facial cues, expressions, gestures can sometimes amplify message being delivered, or can sometimes run contrary to meaning of words (subtext).

What are the different types of drama? What kind of drama is Aida? How does it compare to similar types today?

Watch different versions of the opera on DVD and write reviews. Read example reviews first.

Designate someone as Radames and someone to interview him. Conduct an interview.

Examine the structure of Aida; can you relate it to other stories you’ve read or seen that have the same character(s) in different stories?

Define climax. Define denouement. How are they used in Aida?

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Oral Speaking: Connection between the written words and oral interpretation (recitative and sung), the phrasing and musicality of speech.

Act out main events of the story, in tableaux or longer scenes. Improvise. Give small groups different scenes, and then act out in succession.

Separate into small groups; each group researches and comes up with evidence for certain characters’ motivations, then defends them in a classroom debate.

Tell the story of Aida in your own words to other members of your class.
Write dialogue for two of the characters in the opera. Each character only says one line, but uses different inflections each time he/she says it.

Write two speeches about the same thing: write one to be delivered to a friend, and one to be delivered to a person of authority. How does your language differ?

Conduct a debate between two characters in the opera.

**Reflection:** What did you see, think, hear and feel? Ex. Verbal & written responses to *Aida*.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Giuseppe Verdi (composer): biographies, timelines of work.

Antonio Ghislanzoni (librettist): biography, timeline of works.

**ACTIVITIES**

Create a character sketch.

Create Reader’s Theater of *Aida*.

Interview characters in *Aida*; write a news story based on the interviews.

Create a news report about *Aida* using HyperStudio.

Write a Dear Abby letter from one of the characters in the opera, and Abby’s response.

Write a letter from one character to another, choosing a moment in the story to write about. Use the “Friendly Letter” format.

Using a letter from one character to another in the opera; edit the letter down to a tweet or Facebook post.

Write a blog post from the point of view of one character.

Write a fake twitter feed for *Aida* or Amneris.

Write a scene of conflict between two people who start out as friends, then end up arguing. Compare it with a scene of conflict in the opera.

Play “Hot Seat”: one student acts as one of the characters from the story, and the other students ask him or her questions based on that character.

Write a prequel for the opera about one of the characters’ life.

Story writing: Adapt existing source material; create story/characters.

Libretto writing: Adapt *Aida* (existing source material) or create a new story/characters.

Create written copy: program, poster design, advertising, biography, etc.

Read and report on feature articles from the opera program.
MATHEMATICS

ATTRIBUTES

Comparisons in Aida
Sorting and Classifying: What characters belong together, which don’t, and why.

MEASUREMENT

Aida’s Use of Standard Units of Measurement in Story & Set Design.
2D & 3D Dimensions: Area, Perimeter, Volume, Scale, Proportion, Ratio.

Weight: Physical, Metaphorical, Balance.

Time: Passage of time (real & theatrical time), times of day (morning, afternoon and night; yesterday, today, tomorrow; time of everyday events such as dinner & bed time), estimation, reading time, age of characters.

Explore proportions and the math within Egyptian architecture, such as the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt. Phi and The Golden Ratio. [http://www.goldennumber.net/great-pyramid-giza-complex-golden-ratio/](http://www.goldennumber.net/great-pyramid-giza-complex-golden-ratio/)

Estimate how many people are in large ensemble scenes. Count the number of people who need to be paid when putting on an opera; use cast and company listings in the program to calculate.

Create a budget for a production of the opera. Students are responsible for accomplishing production and staying within budget.

Create timelines for Verdi’s life, what’s happening in other places at the same time.

GEOMETRY

As found Aida’s character, costume & set design.

Identification of Shapes, Repetition & Pattern, Rhythm & Symmetry.

Planes (Square, Rectangle, Triangle, Circle) & 3D (Cube, Pyramid, Sphere).

Positive & Negative Space, Interior & Exterior Space.

Build a scale model of a set for Aida. What materials and what quantities of them would you need to build it?

Create analogies between polygons and different ensembles in the opera (i.e. a trio is a triangle, a quintet is a pentagon).
**NUMBER SENSE**

*Counting using the production elements and music of Aida.*

Formulas & calculations: Addition, subtraction, multiplication, division.

More, less, or same as.

Concept of zero (absences, disappearances. Ex. rests/silence in music.

Ordering & sequencing.

Recognizing and creating numerical patterns. Ex. beats, ABA pattern in music.

Survey taking: tallying and graphing.

Predictions.

How many people are in an opera chorus? How much space do you need for them onstage?

**ACTIVITIES**

Design and play a board game based on *Aida*.

Design a deck of trading cards based on the characters of *Aida*.

Create costume patterns for *Aida*. Use yourself as a size model and design the patterns to fit you.

Build a scale model of a set for *Aida*. What, and what quantities of, materials would you need to build it?
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SCIENCE

The principals of science used in Aida.

THE FIVE SENSES:
Sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell.
What are senses involved in experiencing opera?
How do senses develop and decline as you get older?
The loss of what sense would most diminish experience of opera.

PARTS OF THE BODY:
Identification of body parts important to performing. Ex. Diaphragm, larynx, throat, mouth, etc.
Identification of body parts associated with hearing music, how ears work.
Identification of body parts associated with viewing opera, how eyes work.
Examine the science of men and women and psychological and physical differences.
Learn about the process of mummification.

LIFE SCIENCE
Map the genetics of Aida’s family.
How does the body react in times of stress like those that occur in the opera?
What happens to your brain when you’re in love or when you’re angry? How is your body affected?
Research the importance of air, food and water to one’s survival. How long can you go without food? Water? Air?
What happens to the body when one is deprived of the essentials for living?

THE ELEMENTS
Fire, Water, Earth, Metal, Air, Wood.
Weather.
Sun, Moon, Stars.
Explore the colors of Egypt. How were minerals were used to make color pigments.
PHYSICS

Sound: Voice, Instruments, Acoustics, Amplification, Recording.
Concepts of Gravity, Time & Space.
Science and the Spanish Inquisition; religion and science; emotion and science; bias/belief of right.
Explore the physics behind the creation of the Great Pyramids. How might the stones have been moved?
Can you come up with your own creative solutions for moving large stone blocks?
How do scientists today use non-invasive technology to probe the structure of the pyramids.

ACTIVITIES

Create an illustrated version of Aida’s family tree.
Explore the characters’ psychological motivations and the neuroscience of perception and decision-making.
Build your own temple of Vulcan.
Try your hand at creating your own color pigments - green (wadj), red (dešr), black (kem), white (hedj), blue (Khesbedj and irtuu) and yellow (Khenet)
Take a virtual trip down the Nile. Learn more about the river and its natural flooding cycle.
Make a model of the Nile River, and indicate the areas impacted by cyclical flooding.
The Nile is known for it’s fertile soil. Learn about the impact of agricultural practices on soil degradation. Try testing soil samples. https://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/teacher_resources/project_ideas/soil_quality/
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SOCIAL STUDIES

PERSONAL CONNECTIONS
Self-Identity.
Family: Immediate & Extended. Caring brother and sister relationship.
Roles of family members in your life and the choices you make.
Place: Neighborhood, City, State, Continent, World, Universe.

How would it feel to leave your homeland; how does Aida feel about leaving?
What are the characters beliefs about death?
How do the arts influence political, social and moral decision-making?

CIVICS
Social Hierarchy: Class, Status. Ex. kings, slaves.
Government structure
How does the physical theater effect the performance art
How do countries negotiate? What strategies are employed to get to a compromise; role play for students to practice negotiation – Which strategies succeed and when do they fail?
How is class indicated by the music, the costumes and other elements in Aida?
Political events during Verdi’s time. Nationalism, Symbolism - Verdi became disillusioned; Realpolitik

GEOGRAPHY
The Opera’s setting: Where is this place? What is this culture?
Map the locations mentioned in the opera. What are they like today?
Location of Verdi’s birth. Where else did he live?
Trace Verdi’s travels and draw a map of the different places where he lived.
Learn about the geography of Egypt, terrain of the desert plain, climate.

Research landscapes and changes; ancient vs modern lands – comparing and contrasting

Look at a map of the Nile River and note how it flows, and the impact of the river on the land.

Listen to music of the Nile area; past and present day. Learn about The Nile Project. http://nileproject.org/

Create a timeline of the conflict between Ancient Egypt and Nubia.

Research the history of Egypt-Ethiopia relations.

Map of Europe over different time periods, compare and contrast, how have borders changed?

Based on the story, pick a new setting for the opera. How would the story change, if at all?

Review the cast list for this production of the opera; where do the singers come from?

HISTORY

Research when Verdi was born and the time period when Verdi lived. What are the differences and similarities between Verdi’s Europe and Europe today?

Examine class system, government and politics during Verdi’s time.

Research Egyptian Gods and Goddesses; Isis (Goddess); slaves; tombs

Create a Venn diagram: what was true about the time of Aida, what is true about our time, and what overlaps?

Research the story of Aida; was the story based on a real story? What Aida’s reception upon its premiere?

What toll does war have on people? What is the impact of war on people today? Spoils of war

What similarities and differences between war now and then? (slavery, soldiers, and prisoners of war)

History of Opera

• How Opera began, history of San Francisco Opera, history of the Adler Fellow Program.

ACTIVITIES

Map settings in which play and opera take place.

Pick another time period in which to set Aida. Research and design costumes and sets to reflect trends, society at that time.

Write a letter from one character to another using the writing materials used at the time of Aida (quill pens, wax seals, parchment).

Create timelines of events in opera; Verdi’s operas.

Create an organizational chart of the character relationships in Aida.

Researching the backstory or the story that comes after Aida.

Create a timeline of the story of Aida; include events that were happening elsewhere in the world at the same time.

Examine the power relationships in the opera.

The story of Aida could be set in a different time and place. Pick a different setting for the plot of this story.

Research the development of Aida. Why would an artist be commissioned to write an opera? How do new operas get made today?

Create a “tree” of the Gods and Goddesses of Egypt.
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PHYSICAL EDUCATION

What dances could you do to music from the different scenes?
What kinds of dances would you use to represent different characters?
How do you move differently when you’re young and old?

MOVEMENT

Walking, dancing, jumping, balancing, leaping, lifting, etc. Ex. Move your body in different ways using the example of each character.
Act out how Aida and Radames would walk. What are the differences?
What would dances of the period have looked like?
Choreograph dances for selected scenes in Aida.
Practice dancing to music from the opera. What music selections lend themselves to dancing?

PHYSICALITY OF PERFORMING

Endurance & strength, posture, breathing techniques.
Choreography of fights onstage. Learn how stage combat techniques ensure safety for the performers. Create your own choreography for the Triumphal March.

TEAM-BUILDING

Cooperative games encourage collaboration and build trust.
Play number games, where students have to gather in groups of two, three, and so on. The object is to get together as quickly as possible. They can also be instructed to create pictures with their bodies, or move in unison.
Construct relays around relationships between characters.
Exercises to move together as a group. Building the ensemble.
Partner dancing, changing partners, partnering exercises, mirroring activities.
HEALTH EDUCATION
The unifying ideas of health literacy are as follows:

- Acceptance of personal responsibility for lifelong health
- Respect for and promotion of the health of others
- An understanding of the process of growth and development
- Informed use of health-related information, products, and services

MENTAL & PHYSICAL HEALTH

Taking care of your body. Ex. What do performers have to do to prepare their body for performing?

Conflict resolution. Ex. How do the characters resolve all their problems with each other? How don’t they?

Dealing with emotions, stress. Ex. Explore from the point of view of each character. Who did they talk to about their problems and emotions before the invention of psychology?

Family issues. Complicated family dynamic in Aida.

Gender roles & body image.

Examine the scenarios in the opera where people have choices; what kinds of decisions do they make and could they have been better?

How do the characters in the opera communicate with each other? Could they have improved their relationships through empathy?

How do the characters in the opera try to influence each other? Are they experiencing peer pressure? What pressures act on the characters in the opera? How do they respond?

Love at first sight; can it be powerful? Is it dangerous? How?

What makes a happy marriage? How does Radames deal with his arranged marriage?

How are women depicted in this opera? How do they assert themselves?

Examine the male playwright’s perspective of Verdi’s women and their emotions: How might a female playwright present a different picture of the relationships in Aida?

Do the characters in Aida seem mentally healthy?
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CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Assign jobs from the opera to students in the classroom. What would be the most coveted jobs? What would be the most important jobs?

How are jobs different now from then? How did people get jobs in Verdi’s time?

What jobs would people have had at the time of the story? What would their education have been?

How would people do work differently in Verdi’s time? How would they be limited by available technology?

Explore the murals of RETNA. What is his process for creating new work?

Learn how digital media are changing traditional performing arts.
http://create.adobe.com/2016/5/9/how_digital_media_are_changing_traditional_performing_arts.html

Assign jobs for the production of the opera to different students; each has to present a concept for their part of the design. Create an evaluation rubric for their job performance, including creativity, presentation skills, budget management.

Research the careers of opera singers who have played the roles in Aida.

Jobs at the Opera.

Explore backgrounds and training of people who work at the Opera.

- Wardrobe
  SF Opera: Timelapse - Costume Shop - Distressing - The Trojans https://youtu.be/BH9rCmbpqd4

- Set design, stage plots
  SF Opera Timelapse changeover: Figaro to Aida https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkrLB1Gczik

- Lighting
  SF Opera Don Carlo Teaser - Summer 2016 https://youtu.be/6Dkawv43UsA

Who are the professionals outside the opera who make the opera happen? Police, fire, caterers, etc.

Organizational chart of San Francisco Opera.
VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

MUSIC

STORYTELLING & MUSIC: WHAT IS AN OPERA?
Character and plot development through musical themes. What is the difference between major and minor keys and how do changes between keys help tell the story?

How does orchestral music enhance what characters are singing? How does it act as another character?

How does music associated with a particular character enhance their class status?

What kinds of ensembles are possible with this story and these characters?

Which voice types usually portray which types of characters and why?

How is musical pacing different between dramas and comedies?

Pick out moments when Verdi’s orchestration indicates certain staging ideas or action.

How do instruments represent characters? Identify repetition and variation of themes.

How does orchestral music communicate a character’s state of mind? Set a mood?

How does a duet explore the relationship between characters in a scene, while simultaneously presenting each character’s unique personality and emotions?

Key plot points: The composer and librettist determine the placement of arias within the libretto to heighten emotion in the story.

Examine the sounds of music, native to specific time and place – The Egypt of Aida or Verdi’s Italy or RETNA’s LA.

Learn about the field of ethnomusicology, the study of music in its cultural context. Research folk tunes and historical music representative of Egyptian culture in the time of the story’s setting, Verdi’s time and present day; how was this music passed down from generations, oral tradition as opposed to written composition.

Research “Egyptomania” and Western culture’s fascination with other “exotic locales” around the world. Discuss the difference between cross-cultural influence vs. exoticism in music.

What is “Grand Opera”? How has opera changed over time?

How does the music announce an entrance of a character? What does their entrance music say about them?

After seeing the opera, write a critique of the music. Focus on how the music communicates the mood, the characters, etc.
Listen for the different instruments in the ten-piece orchestra. How big is an orchestra usually?
Listen for the different styles of music in the opera; do different characters sing in different styles?
How is consonance and dissonance used in the opera?
Listen to clips from the opera; what moods do they set?
What did you think about the finale of the opera? Does the music live up to the moment in the story?

Compare the use of recitative in Verdi’s Aida with the use of rap in Lin-Manuel Miranda’s musical Hamilton. How are operas similar to musicals? How are they different? Watch examples of both.

Egypt’s national anthem, composed by Verdi’s countryman Giuseppe Pugioli, was said to be inspired by Verdi’s Triumphal March. Compare the two marches. http://www.nationalanthems.info/eg-58.htm

Source material for Opera: Novels (Puccini’s La Bohème, Tan & Wallace’s The Bonesetter’s Daughter); Films (The Fly), Real-life events (Heggie’s Dead Man Walking, Adams’ Nixon in China; Related genres – Musical Theater (Sweeney Todd, Rent), Rock Opera (Tommy), popular song versions of opera.

**VOCABULARY**

Musical Structure: Solos, duets, trios, choral numbers.
Composition: Arias, recitative, overture, incidental music. Identify characters who have arias in the opera.
Musical Instructions: Tempo, legato; pianissimo; crescendo, cadenzas, etc.
Voice ranges: Soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, baritone, bass-baritone, countertenor, bass.
Names of the Gods (Vulcan, Isis, Ptah), cities, places like the gorges or the River Nile

What is a “Triumphal March”? Where do we hear these kinds of musical fanfares played today? http://www.wqxr.org/#!/story/top-five-most-triumphal-classical-works-ever/

Triumphal March from AIDA BVB 09 vs. FC Nürnberg in 2011 https://youtu.be/Po0qy2zsSYg
Soccer teams entering the field with the Triumphal March from AIDA in 2013 https://youtu.be/dDFINl8NLbM

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

History of San Francisco Opera, the Adler Fellows program.

Giuseppe Verdi: Biography, timeline of works, signature sound within genres: sonatas, symphonies, masses and requiem, operas.
Examine Verdi’s career. What did Aida represent for him?
Compare and contrast operas from Verdi’s different periods - later years: longer, larger cast, greater spectacle
Look at Verdi’s use of the voice (high baritone and dramatic mezzo development)
Compare Aida with other operas that deal with religious wars of the periods, such as Meyerbeer’s L’Africaine.
What were Verdi’s personal motivations for writing Aida?
Read the libretto for Aida by Antonio Ghislanzoni http://opera.stanford.edu/Verdi/Aida/libretto_ie.html
How does the opera use engage the audience in the story of individuals within the big spectacle?
Compare the characters in Aida. Is their complexity of character seen or not seen through their arias?

Research the instruments used in Egyptian times and in Verdi’s time. Create your own instrument.

Research Verdi’s use of custom-made trumpets for Aida’s “Triumphal March.” “Aida Trumpets” are long trumpets with 1 valve in A flat and B natural.

ACTIVITIES

Listen to multiple recordings of Aida and study different interpretations.

Learn and memorize songs from Aida.

Listen to audio-only examples prior to viewing.

Pick modern songs that could tell the story of Aida or describe the characters.

How does the music for different characters identify their social status?

Write themes, motifs for each character; start by writing themes for things in students’ everyday lives.

Create mood music to go along with certain passages of the book.

Play the introductory passages for each character for students before they know the story of the opera; have them respond to each piece of music, then see how it matches up to the story.

Create and perform songs for the characters from the opera. Choose design elements based on the music & text.

Compare two different filmed versions of Aida; which visualization is more effective and why?

Compare Verdi’s Aida with Elton John’s musical, Aida. Discuss the differences between the opera and the musical.

Cast the opera with current-day pop singers. What would play what roles?

RELATED WORKS OF ART

Learn more about RETNA’s influences and his collaborators.

Examine the intersection of street art and graffiti, hip hop culture, and fashion design in the contemporary art world.

How do portraits and details in costume indicate time periods. Look at the paintings of Goya, such as An Inquisition Tribunal, and other paintings that record historic times.

Study the work of visual artists who have designed performing arts productions: Gerald Scarfe, David Hockney, Julie Taymor, Marc Chagall, Maurice Sendak, Oskar Kokoschka, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, William Kentridge, Gianni Versace, Bill Viola.
THEATRE

STAGING
Stage vocabulary: Upstage, downstage, levels, blocking.
Theater Exercises: Tableaux, pantomime, events of *Aida* using instruments and voices.
Stage etiquette & audience behavior.
Examine storyline, character development through theater games (similar to writing exercises in ELA connections).
Practice movement required for crowd scenes. How do individuals act like individuals in a crowd scene?
Explore different tones/feelings in monologues vs. dialogues vs. crowd scenes.
List different emotions that the characters display in the operas; how would you act out the emotions without using words?
How does the opera mark the passage of time? How does the audience know time has passed between acts?
Research the history of portrayal of non-European cultures in opera (ex: *Aida*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Turandot*). How has opera historically depicted Egyptian culture through makeup and costumes? After 124 years, the Metropolitan Opera announced that they would end the use of black face with their 2015-2016 production of “Otello.”
Research diversity in opera, and in the arts in general.
How would you stage *Aida* in a different culture? Kabuki, etc.
Experiment with hair and make-up to age a performer.
How do performers move onstage differently than offstage? How do they have to move so that the audience can translate their movements? Stage a crowd scene.
How do the performers act when they’re singing their thoughts vs. singing to each other?
Create entrances and exits for different characters in opera; what would their music be?
Opera Production Team: Director, stage manager, choreographer, designer, diction coach, choreographer, lighting, supernumeraries, etc.
In-House Personnel: Marketing, accounting, ticket takers, ushers etc.

ACTIVITIES
Act out scenes about the themes from the opera: love and marriage, jealousy and revenge, class and wealth, etc.
What do you think was done to the singer playing Aida to make him look like the character? How could you do the same in your classroom?
Create props required by the opera.
Create movement and gestures to react to particular lines of the libretto.
Create movement to react to particular musical moments.
Watch different cast versions of the opera; how do the performers make you see the story differently?
Cast the roles in the opera with your classmates. Who plays what role and why?
Practice moving as a large ensemble.
VISUAL ARTS

How are line, color, shape, and texture used in costumes and sets of Aida?

LINE
Use of line qualities: soft or hard, wavy or angular, silly spirals.

COLOR
Symbolism of color; color associated with particular characters.
The emotion of color. Ex. red=passionate, blue=calm, yellow=cheerful.
Personal associations with color.
Revealing character traits through the use of color—how do the characters’ costumes, including fabrics and colors, reflect their status? Anita Yavich: Designing a World http://theatrewomen.org/anita-yavich-designing-a-world/
The use of lighting to establish mood and setting.
What colors would you use for different moments in the opera?

SHAPE
The use of shape in character design.
Positive & Negative Space—the stage is a frame.
Explore the evolution of letter forms used in writing, from pictographs to typefaces.

TEXTURE
Texture: Material use in sets and costumes.
Anita Yavich Stage & Story Gallery http://www.stageandstory.com/artist_anita_yavich.html
The Character of Cloth: Costumes From Houston Grand Opera https://youtu.be/jTahfDrVZjo
Visual Texture: Pattern and repetition in sets and costumes. How is texture used to convey status?
Study clothing of the time and setting for Aida. What materials would have been used?

SPACE
Set design: From 2D plans to 3D construction.
Learn more about the artifacts and architecture of ancient Egypt.
Study virtual models of Egyptian artifacts from the British Museum with downloadable, 3D print files from Sketchfab. https://sketchfab.com/britishmuseum

LIGHT
The use of lighting to establish mood and setting.
Examine contrast of light and dark; use of lighting.
How does time of day affect the lighting and the mood on the stage?
How are shadows and shading used in the opera to convey meaning?
Study use of lighting in production design.
PRODUCTION DESIGN

RETNA (b. Marquis Duriel Lewis, 1979) uses a distinctive language of calligraphic forms to create a deeply personal poetry, drawing from a variety of typographies, including Arabic, Egyptian, Hebrew, Old English, and Native American. RETNA on Instagram @ironeyeretna

RETNA’s The Future Of The Past - Mummies and Medicine @ the Legion of Honor

Research Retna. Where are his installations and murals located?

Research the history of the mural, from cave paintings, hieroglyphics to graffiti. http://www.widewalls.ch/what-is-a-mural-the-history-and-meaning/

Learn more about street art and graffiti.

- KQED Art School: Know Your Graffiti Vocab. What’s the difference between a tag and a piece? https://ww2.kqed.org/artschool/2014/05/22/now-your-graffiti-vocab/
- KQED Art School: Bay Area Graffiti: The Early Days. Neon discusses the pioneers of Bay Area graffiti, the most popular places to paint, and the styles that originated locally.
  https://ww2.kqed.org/artschool/2014/03/31/bay-area-graffiti-the-early-days/
- KQED Art School: Apexer on Street Art Murals. Apexer abstracts letterforms to create complex dynamic compositions. https://ww2.kqed.org/artschool/2016/05/03/apexer-on-street-art-murals/
- Style Wars: Embracing the Spirit of Hip Hop – 1983 film captured the look and feel of New York’s ramshackle subway system as graffiti writer’s public playground http://www.stylewars.com/

ACTIVITIES

Free-association drawing to music. Ex. Maurice Sendak’s Fantasy Sketches.

Look at the designs for the sets of Aida; contemporary vs. traditional versions. Create your own production.

Explore the history of typefaces; design the title in an appropriate typeface.

Write your own name using hieroglyphics.

Create illustrations and storyboards outlining the plot of Aida, posters and advertisements for the opera, or costume designs for a particular character in the opera.

Design your own brochure for San Francisco Opera’s Aida
https://issuu.com/sanfranciscoopera/docs/sanfranciscoopera2016___17seasonbro

Create posters and advertisements for a performance of Aida, or for a particular character in the opera.

Design paper dolls of characters. Dress them for different eras.

Design a production: dioramas, scale models, backdrops, props, costumes.

Design character make-up, costume, sets and props for classroom operas.

Puppetry: Create your own version of Aida using puppets (paper bags, stick puppets, shadow puppets, marionettes, and bunraku).


Design sets and costumes for a production of Aida set in a different time and place of your choosing. Or pick a setting out of a hat. Make sure the costumes reflect the characters.

Design character make-up, costume, sets and props for classroom operas.
DANCE

Dance and Creative Movement in Stage-Blocking. Ex: spinning scene.

Research dances of the period. How do they relate to the dances of today?

How is dance incorporated into the opera, into the music of the opera?

How is age and gender communicated through the way performers move in a dance?

What are the roles of choreographers, dance captains and dancers?

Research the French origins of ballet in opera. Learn about Paris Opera Ballet today.
https://www.operadeparis.fr/en/lopera-de-paris/history

How many ballets take place in Aida, and what is their purpose in the story? Ballet historically served as the intermission for an opera. Does the ballet in Aida move the action forward or slow the action down? Could the opera work without it? Choreograph your own ballet for Aida.

Research stage movement during Verdi’s time.

ACTIVITIES

Character Dances: Mirror dancing–partners and symmetry.

Match movement with vocabulary. Ex. glide, slither, leap, tremble.


Create movements for characters’ emotions.

Interpreting the instruments through dance– improv to music.

Work with media arts students to create a ballet with projected backgrounds.

Create dances to your favorite parts of the opera.

Create a dance for Verdi’s music in a different genre.

Choose a dance style that best represents each character. Choreograph movement in which the characters relate to each other.

Create pair dances for the different pairs in the opera.

What is a Triumphal March? At the 1871 world premiere of Aida in Cairo, the Triumphal March included 12 elephants! How would you create a Triumphal March for this opera?

Create a dance that tells the story of the opera in abridged version.

Show how characters’ movements change when they’re in different situations.

Create movements for the themes in the overture.
MEDIA ARTS

Watch DVD of *Aida* and other operas. Watch different productions and compare.
Research clips of *Aida* found on the Internet, including animated versions.
Do the sets in this production of *Aida* remind you of movies? What and why?
Learn about projectors and projections, various ways to project light. Create media that can be projected. Explore how images can influence mood.
Explore ways to explore negative space through media. Create media pieces inspired by *Aida*.
Research how innovations in technology have influenced the development of Opera: Acoustics and Lighting, Audio Recording, Film and Video, the development of Supertitles, Internet.
Learn about technology currently used by SFO: technology used in staging, SFO’s Media Suite, podcasts, cinemacasts, simulcasts, opera vision, etc.
Learn about experiments in future technology use involving opera, such as the development of Personal Opera @ MIT Media Lab, *Death and the Powers*.
Use television, films, web content to teach media literacy.
How is opera advertised? Research San Francisco Opera’s advertising and media efforts.
Opera & Popular Culture: Cartoons (Bugs Bunny in *What’s Opera, Doc?*, *The Rabbit of Seville*); Television (*Sesame Street*); Movies (*Pretty Woman*); Commercials (Nike’s 1993 ad *Charles Barkley of Seville*); Event themes (*Nessun Dorma* - 1994 World Cup).

RELATED WORKS OF ART
Films & DVD of *Aida* and other Verdi operas, related films

ACTIVITIES
Film and Animation: Explore photographic stop motion techniques. Ex. Use digital media to create 1-minute scenes from *Aida*.
Create a poster to advertise a performance of *Aida*. What information needs to be included? What typeface would be appropriate?
Use digital audio to record student readings, musical performances.
Create a 30-second audio spot, a one-minute podcast, and/or a *Aida* activities website.
Create a montage for *Aida*.
Create podcasts from the points of view of various characters.
Create video interviews of various characters.
Create a fake blog or Facebook page for one of the characters.
Create Facebook status updates for characters in the opera.
Create a fake Twitter feed for one of the characters in the opera.
Create YouTube video testimonials for characters in the opera.
Create your own 3D rendering of the Temple of Vulcan.
Media Literacy - Learn about online misrepresentation; creating new persona, online masking, online bullying