Welcome to Pittsburgh Opera's
Arts Event Discovery Packet
for *La bohème!*

Activities and lesson suggestions are designed to supplement an excursion to the opera. Attending a student matinee can be a rich artistic experience—full of meaningful connections between real-life learning and academic skills.

The contents of this packet address all Pennsylvania Academic Standards to enhance existing curricula, to create a real-life environment for learning, and to provide engaging opportunities for active involvement—before, during, and after the event.

Look through the packet to discover strategies that apply to your classroom. Enjoy your trip and your discoveries about the opera!

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Safety First!

Pittsburgh Opera creates new stage sets or sections of scenery. The sets then need to be transported and installed, first in a rehearsal area, then on the stage of the Benedum Center for the Performing Arts. After an opera has run all scheduled performances, the set must be removed from the stage and stored, or shipped to another city for use by another opera company.

- Develop a safety checklist for the people involved in each phase of the set building, installation, and removal process. Include artists, carpenters, electricians, truck drivers, and stagehands. What other people may be involved? Your list may include the following items:
  - o Tools/Equipment Needed
  - o Safety Procedures—Before, During and After Production

- Consider the laws and regulations in effect to protect workers. Check the website of the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) for some ideas about preventing and eliminating hazards in the workplace.

- Organize your workflow by assigning specific tasks to the professionals on your list. Research job titles to help you define the responsibilities of your production crew. Create a management hierarchy and a time table for the work plan.

Trip Logistics

Plan a one-day trip for your class to see an opera. Activities will include the student matinee performance of *La bohème* and lunch at a downtown restaurant. You will need to secure all necessary items for the entire day.

Remember to consider all aspects of a field trip, including:
- Cost of tickets
- Cost of transportation (school bus, public transportation, parent chauffeurs, etc.), including fuel
- Food--reservations, cost, etc.
- Parental consent forms
- Itinerary
- Available resources: human and monetary
- Deadlines for collecting money, purchasing tickets, contracting services, etc.
- Scheduling conflicts
- Arrangements for those who can't pay
- Special medical or health concerns or arrangements

Bonus: You have been given a budget of $1500 from the school principal. Can you work inside this budget or will you and your fellow students have to "chip in" any additional money to cover the cost of the trip?

Challenge!
Create a working budget spreadsheet in Excel to show and monitor the cost of this field trip. Brainstorm what other Microsoft programs would be useful for planning, budgeting, advertising and executing this trip? Consider accessories such as the calendar template. Use these examples to begin your project:

Estimated costs:

Transportation:	Food:
Tickets:	Miscellaneous:

To Do List:

Task	Due Date	Date Completed

Be Ready for Anything

In preparation for your trip, collect and assemble materials for an emergency kit to be taken with you in case of a crisis.

- Make a list of what types of emergencies you might face on a trip with your classmates. What will you need to help yourselves through those situations?
- Where can you get the necessary supplies?
- How much will the supplies cost? How will you pay for them?
- Is anyone in your class certified in First Aid and/or CPR?

Emergency Situation	Necessary Action - Supplies Needed	Packed and Ready?
		☐
		☐
		☐
		☐
		☐
		☐
		☐

Extension: Research and plan for your class to take a CPR, First Aid, or other Health and Safety course from the American Red Cross. What nature of emergencies will these First Aid classes prepare you to handle? What legal protection do people who deliver first aid have? Under what circumstances would someone NOT be permitted or advised to give first aid?

Coming from Everywhere

People drive from all over the Pittsburgh region to attend performances at Pittsburgh Opera. Some drive for an hour and travel approximately 60 miles, while others may drive for an hour and only travel 10 miles. Why?

Create an original map of the Pittsburgh region. Include the physical features of the land and roads.

On your map, draw concentric circles showing the areas from where people have to spend 15 minutes in their vehicles to get downtown. 30 minutes. 60 minutes.
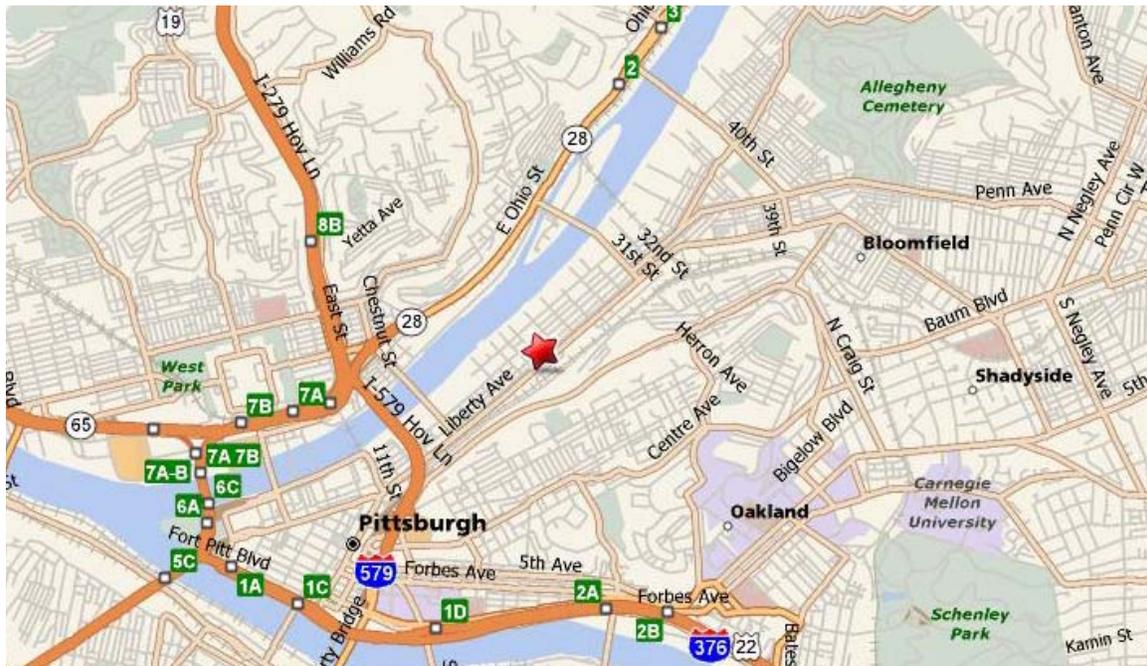
Be sure to consider:
- Road construction.
- Bridges or tunnels along the route.
- Traffic patterns at different times of day.

Exchange and compare maps with your classmates.

Extensions:
- What would happen to the commute times if a bridge were taken out?
- In what ways could you analyze data using a geographic tool such as a map?
- What can you infer from using your map?

Tour the Latin Quarter

Plan a group trip itinerary to Paris, France, with a special stop on the Left Bank—the Latin Quarter. Investigate and compare travel package options offered by local travel agents, and research what historical and cultural sites should be featured in these packages. Choose a medium (computer, pen and paper, clay, found objects, etc.), and create an original map of the route your group will travel. Show landmarks, historic buildings, interesting art, or other significant sites along the way. Share the map with your classmates.

Create an itinerary that includes:
- Travel dates and times
- Group transportation (public or private) and other costs
- Hotels or other accommodations
- Tourist sites of interest, including brief descriptions
- Notable local or regional cuisine
- Information regarding money exchange, typical weather, and appropriate clothing
- Emergency information

Research a local school in Paris, France. Compare the traveling policy of the school to that of your own school. Discuss the differences with your classmates and create a plan for a Parisian school to visit Pittsburgh. Include all of the items from your original plan but be mindful of the details; adjust them where necessary. Don't forget the English phrases that you think are most important!

Study a roadmap of Pittsburgh. Plan a travel route from the Pittsburgh International Airport to the Pittsburgh Opera offices and the Benedum Center for the Performing Arts. Put your plan in a brochure format. Make it as user-friendly as possible by including directions of various types. For example, you might direct the Parisian students by describing landmarks, drawing important intersections, and inserting photographs of target areas.

Challenge!
You may also want to provide your fellow travelers with a social etiquette brochure. Research the Parisian social customs and expectations, such as tipping, what to wear in certain situations, basic greetings and requests in French.

What Does a Production Cost?

Using an Excel spreadsheet, create a budget for your own production of *La bohème,* totaling $650,000. Your budget should include funds for two major areas: artistic and production expenses. It is your job to determine what percentage of your budget that you'll spend in each area. Be prepared to justify your expenses to the General Director of your company!

Challenge!

Are there some costs that aren't listed below, such as union fees, pensions, etc.? How can you find the "going rates" for singers and stagehands?

Your artistic budget will include all costs for:

- Singers and cover artists
- Orchestra
- Chorus
- Conductor
- Travel/ visa costs
- Dancers

The production budget will include all costs for:

- Director and Assistant director
- Stage manager and assistant stage managers
- Stagehands
- Lighting designers
- Costume designers
- Wardrobe personnel
- Wigs and Make-up artists
- Set designers
- Carpenters
- Supplies/ props
- Rental fees
- Transportation fees

Sample of partial Artistic Budget:

	Artist/Character	Fee per performance	# of Performances	Total Fees
Singers/Cover Artists	Rodolfo	$7,000	4	$28,000
	Mimì	$7,000	4	$28,000
	Marcello	$8,000	4	$32,000
	Musetta			
	Schaunard			
	Colline			
Orchestra		$26, 875	4	$107,500
Chorus		$11,500	4	$46,000
			TOTAL	$241,000

Get With the Program

For each opera that Pittsburgh Opera produces, the Marketing Department creates a program that includes information about the production, artist biographies, staff listings, donor listing, ads, and other important information.

All audience members receive a program when they enter the auditorium. How does the Marketing Department of Pittsburgh Opera estimate how many programs to print?
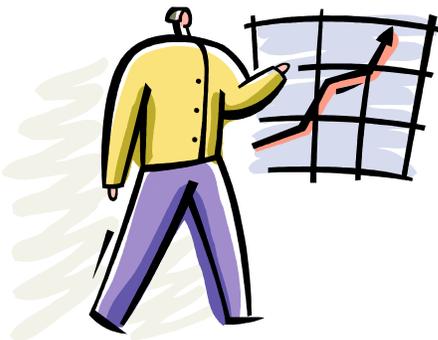
Here are some numbers to consider in your equations:
- The Benedum Center for the Performing Arts seats 2,889.
- Ushers recycle programs that are left in the seats at the end of performances. Approximately 20% of distributed programs are collected after each performance and are redistributed at future performances.

Calculate how many programs should be printed if only 50%, 60%, 70%, and 80% of the tickets are sold.

Extensions:
- Assume that each program includes 56 pages of printer paper. Based on the number of programs ordered, how many pieces of paper are included in your order? Weigh a piece of paper. What would your order weigh?

- The programs are printed in full color on glossy paper. Can extra programs be sent to a recycling facility after all performances are complete? What are the guidelines for recycling paper in your home area?

- In what ways can recycled paper be used? What is the process for recycling paper? Is there a limit to the number of times paper can be reused?

- Contact other arts organizations in the area. How do they use their paper resources? Do they recycle extra programs and paper? Do they recycle trash from their concession sales such as plastic cups, beverage bottles, etc.?

What's the Difference?

Pittsburgh Opera is a type of business called a non-profit organization, or NPO. What do *you* think it means when a business functions as an NPO? What are the tax guidelines for doing business as an NPO?

Research the federal government definitions for non-profit status, and for-profit status. Complete the chart below to compare the characteristics of each term:

	Non-Profit Organizations:	For-Profit Organizations:
Definition:		
They can:		
They cannot:		
Examples of:		

Pittsburgh Opera is officially recognized as a 501(c)3 organization by the IRS. What does 501(c)3 status mean? How is that different from an NPO designation? What does it mean to be tax-exempt? How is that different from 501(c)3 status? *(Hint – check www.irs.gov for some help!)*
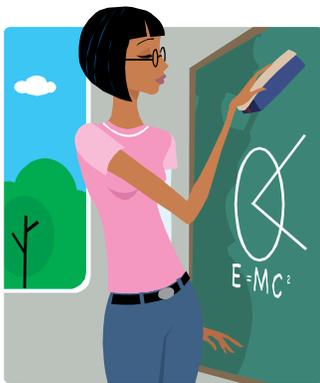
Brainstorm what organizations in your town might also have 501(c)3 designations:

Meanwhile, Right Here at Home....

The Federal government isn't the only entity with which the Opera has to claim NPO status. What are the rules for maintaining NPO status in these regions? Work with a partner to discover these rules and complete the chart:

NPOs in…	Pennsylvania	Allegheny County	City of Pittsburgh
Can:			
Cannot:			
Examples from your hometown:			

Challenge!
Working with small groups, use the information collected to create a graphic organizer to explain the policies of one government body. Add charts, graphic elements, and pictures to your organizer to aid in illustrating your information. In turn, each group will then teach the information to the others in the class, using their organizer as a handout or overhead projection.

What Not To Wear:
Fashion Advice for Every Occasion!

Would you wear a gown and tiara to class, a suit and tie to a baseball game, or a bathing suit to a funeral? Deciding what to wear can be a time-consuming task because knowing what attire is appropriate can be the difference between self-confidence and embarrassment. List events that you attend, then decide under which category these events should go. Under which heading would an opera matinee fall? In which category would opening night be listed?

Casual/Recreational	Informal/Professional	Formal/Special Event

Using magazines select and create a picture montage of clothes that you think illustrate the nature of each category. What do all the clothes in one category have in common? What clothing characteristics did you use as criteria to distinguish between images to be used for each category?

What's on Schaunard's Parrot Playlist?

The music a person listens to can say a lot about that person's character. In Act I of *La bohème*, Schaunard returns to the garret after playing music for a parrot while it was dying. What kind of music would be appropriate for that purpose? Complete the characterization chart below for this opera. After you have analyzed their personalities, brainstorm a list of the songs you think that character has stored on his or her iPod. Why do you think these songs would appeal to this person?

	Defining actions	Adjectives	Playlist & Why chosen
Rodolfo			
Mimì			
Marcello			
Musetta			
Schaunard			
Colline			

Rodolfo's POWER-PAPER-POINT

Before an opera opening, staff members at Pittsburgh Opera create supertitles. Supertitles are phrases that are projected above the stage during each performance. Their purpose is to translate the language of the opera into English. Supertitles are not word-for-word translations of the opera's Libretto; rather the translations are re-written into meaningful phrases that match the mood and sentiment of the singing. These phrases are added to PowerPoint slides and projected from the spotlight booth. A Supertitle operator sits with a copy of the opera's score, changing each slide at the appropriate time by listening and watching the action on stage. In some shows there can be more than 700 Supertitle slides!

Using an Italian dictionary, translate word-for-word the following lines from the opera *La bohème*. Choose one of the translated lines and format the English text into a meaningful phrase to use as a Supertitle.

An excerpt from Act I of *La bohème:*

Italian	English Translation
Fuoco ci vuole	
Aspetta...sacrifichiam la sedia!	
Eureka!	
Trovasti	
Si! Aguzza l'ingegno.	

Supertitle Slide

Challenge!
Translate the Italian text of Act I word-for-word. Does your English translation adequately convey the emotion of the scene, or do you need to tweak the language?

Creating the *Real Café Momus*

Although French cuisine is famous for its signature dishes, the French people make the most of the foods that are locally available in their specific region. *La bohème* is set in the city of Paris, in the region of Ìle-de-France, and the characters are poor artists who must feed themselves with little money and no electricity. In a *real* French *café,* the sights, sounds, and tastes are truly unique.

Fill in the chart below to answer the question: How could the Bohemians best feed themselves with their limited resources? How could the foods be prepared authentically?
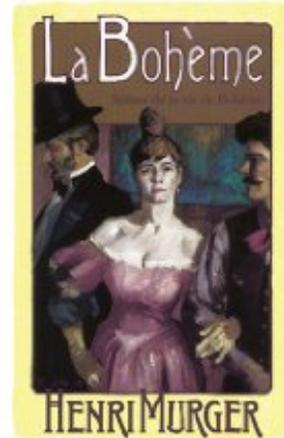
Regional Foods of Ìle-de-France:	Nutrient Analysis (per serving):	Storage and Preparation:

Challenge!
From your research, map a meal plan that is both nutritious and economical. Include foods that supply energy for warmth for the "starving artists" of *La bohème.*

Scenes from *Scènes*

Puccini based *La bohème* on the novel, *Scènes de la vie de la bohème,* by the French writer Henry Murger (who changed his name to Henri Mürger). Mürger, himself a member of the young artistic community of Paris, which was often called *bohèmien* (bohemian in French means gypsy), first published the stories found in his novel in the magazine *Le Corsaire* between 1845 and 1848. In those stories, Mürger focused on the lives of struggling young artists and writers, living and loving in conditions of abject poverty.

Use the characters from the opera *La bohème* and write a sequel to one scene.

Rodolfo – poet   Musetta - singer
Mimì – seamstress   Schaunard – musician
Marcello – painter   Colline – philosopher

Here is an actual excerpt from Henry Murger's book for you to consider:

> **Y**ou shall hear how it came to pass that Carolus Barbemuche, platonist and literary man generally, became a member of the Bohemian Club, in the twenty-fourth year of his age.
>
> At that time, Gustave Colline, the great philosopher, Marcel, the great painter, Schaunard, the great musician, and Rodolphe, the great poet (as they called one another), regularly frequented the Momus Cafe, where they were surnamed "the Four Musqueteers," because they were always seen together. In fact, they came together, went away together, played together, and sometimes didn't pay their shot together, with a unison worthy of the best orchestra.

Challenge!
Translate your scene into French, prepare an authentically-looking old book, and present your "original" Murger sequel as if it were printed in a current edition of *Le Corsaire.*

Uncovering the Plot before it Burns!
(Adapted from the libretto by Giacosa and Illica)

Below are some events from *La bohème*. The story does not make sense because the events are out of order. In the opera, Rodolfo burns his latest play to create a fire for warmth. You don't need to light a real fire to solve this puzzle; just cut out the events and put them in the right order on the bottom part of the page.

Rodolfo confesses to Marcello that Mimì is very ill and that he blames himself for not being able to help her.

Musetta gives a warming muff to Mimì to help her keep warm and Marcello brings Mimì some medicine.

After a celebration at Café Momus, Musetta leaves Alcindoro to reunite with Marcello.

Rodolfo and Mimì search for her key in his garret. She has lost it after Rodolfo helps her to light her candle, which had gone out.

The scene opens with a man happily measuring the space where the bridal bed will fit.

Mimì and Rodolfo agree to stay together until the spring; Musetta and Marcello fight and part.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Challenge!
One of these events is NOT part of this opera--which one does not belong? From what other four-act opera has this event been taken?
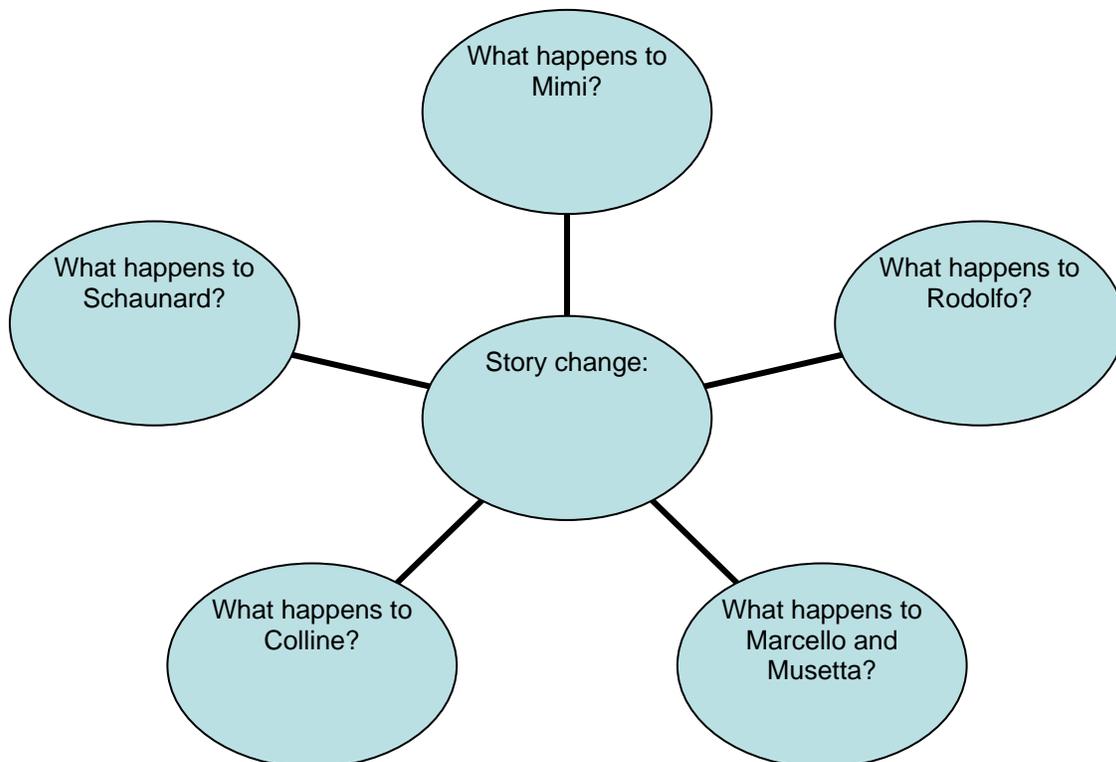
You're the Author: Change the Ending

The drama and wit that makes *La bohème* a crowd pleaser after more than a century is created by a series of exchanges among the six main characters. Imagine how the story would be changed if:

- One of the bohemians was a success?
- Rodolfo was out when Mimì came to the garret?
- Schaunard was not successful with his new client?
- Marcello and Musetta had not met again in the Café Momus?
- Mimì was cured of her illness?

Pick one of these story changes and complete the brainstorming web below:

What happens to Mimi?

What happens to Schaunard?

What happens to Rodolfo?

Story change:

What happens to Colline?

What happens to Marcello and Musetta?
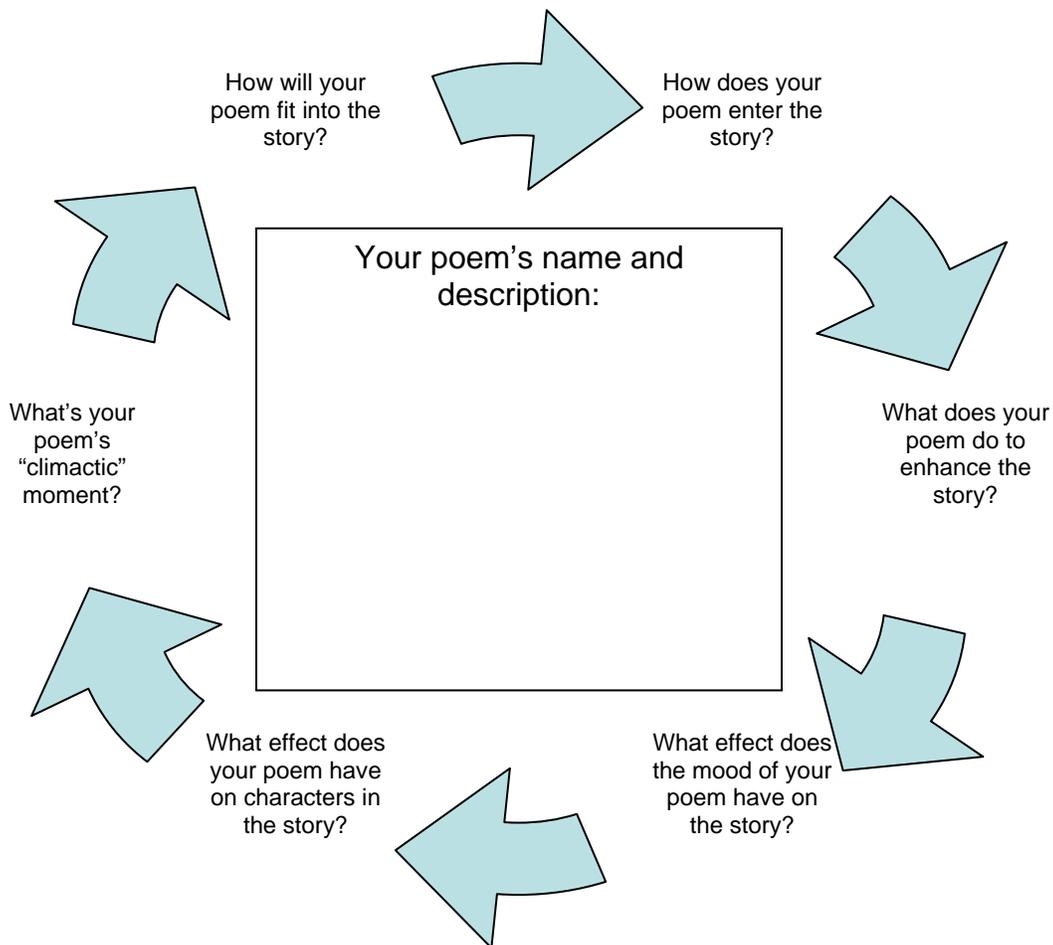
Challenge!
Write a new ending for the opera based on an idea sparked by your brainstorming. Does your new ending change the nature of the opera, for example from tragic to comic? Explain.

Write Yourself a Murger Poem

It's no fun being on the sidelines when all the excitement is happening on stage! Many directors, such as Orson Welles, Clint Eastwood, and Alfred Hitchcock also made appearances in front of the camera, in addition to directing from behind the scenes. You can get involved in your "production" of *La bohème* by writing a poem in the style of Henry Murger, and inserting information into the outline below. You'll need to consider:

- What kind of mood does this poem need?
- How will your poem interact with the other information about the characters?
- Will your poem be performed during a scene in an opera, be recited in advance, or shared only in print?
- How will your poem change the story of *La bohème*?

How will your poem fit into the story?

How does your poem enter the story?

Your poem's name and description:

What's your poem's "climactic" moment?

What does your poem do to enhance the story?

What effect does your poem have on characters in the story?

What effect does the mood of your poem have on the story?

Casting Call!

You're the director and you've decided to recast the opera. Cast each character with your colleagues in your class.

- Using the opera synopsis and libretto, brainstorm what you imagine each character's personality and physical traits to be.
- Which of your classmates might best match each character?
- What performance skills or characteristics must the person have to successfully portray a character from *La bohème*?

Once you have cast your performance, stage a scene from the opera with your new cast.

Characters of the Opera	Cast
The Bohemians	
Rodolfo *(Tenor)* Poet	
Mimì *(Soprano)* Seamstress	
Marcello *(Baritone)* Painter	
Musetta *(Soprano)* Singer	
Schaunard *(Baritone)* Musician	
Colline *(Bass)* Philosopher	
The Townspeople	
Benoit *(Bass)* The landlord	
Alcindoro *(Bass)* Musetta's wealthy escort	

Extension:
What current actors or actresses would you cast in a movie version of this opera?

I'm the Stage Director

Read the four acts from the libretto of *La bohème.*
Identify the main ideas of each scene. Create a chart
and include a synthesis of each idea in one of the
columns.

Think about each scene and its big ideas. If you were
the Director of the opera, how would you stage or set
each scene? For example, is there an action scene?
How would you choreograph the movement of the actors? What type of scenery,
costumes, and staging would be most appropriate and most effective in communicating
those main ideas that you've identified?

Add your scenery, costume, and staging ideas to you chart.

	Act I	Act II	Act III	Act IV
Synthesis of Main Idea(s)				
Staging Ideas				
Scenery/Costume Ideas				
Choreography Plan				

Singing the Part

Unlike film and theater stars who are often cast for appearance as well as ability, opera singers are hired to sing roles according to their voices and not their physical characteristics.

Soprano: Highest female voice. Sopranos sing young women's roles, often playing the heroine or lead female.

Mezzo-soprano: Mid-range woman's voice. Mezzos might sing the roles of a servant, an older woman, the "bad" girl, a best friend, or a trouser role.

Contralto: Lowest female voice. Contraltos portray old, wise, or noble women; they may also play the roles of a witch or mother-in-law.

Countertenor: An unusually high, ethereal male voice, similar to a mezzo-soprano's range, and often confused with falsettos. Unusual voices sing unusual roles: countertenors will sing the roles of adolescent men, spirits, gods, monsters, or male roles that need to be distinguished from the tenors.

Tenor: Highest usual male voice. Tenors are usually cast to sing a young, handsome hero, or the lead male.

Baritone: Mid-range male voice. Baritones often sing the best friend or crony of the lead, an older man, a servant, the "bad" boy, or a military figure.

Bass: Deepest male voice. Bass singers are usually reserved for roles such as the Devil or a god-like presence, an old man, a noble or wise man, the buffoon, or the father-in-law.

Who do you know that sings like this?
Complete this chart using the information above. If you've never heard your friends sing try to *guess* their voice range, based on their speaking voice.

Voice Type	Characteristics	Opera Singers	Pop singers	Your friends	Your teachers
Soprano:					
Mezzo-soprano:					
Contralto:					
Countertenor:					
Tenor:					
Baritone:					
Bass:					

Special Voices, Special Roles!

Now that you know the basics, opera voices are further subdivided according to loudness, agility, and style. An opera singer's voice can be classified as any combination of these!

Coloratura: A very high (within the range) and agile voice-- one that can sing very fast and add "color" to the music.

Lyric: What most people would call a "beautiful" singing voice--generally high and sweet.

Spinto: Usually used to describe either sopranos or tenors--a spinto voice is a larger, more intense version of a lyric voice.

Dramatic: A big, loud, emotionally-intense voice.

Heldentenor: "Heroic Tenor"--a very, very loud voice that can boom out over an orchestra playing at full tilt!

Tenorino: A very, very light and high-voiced tenor range as agile as a coloratura.

Castrati: An alto-range mature male voice achieved by surgery (and not practiced anymore.) Castrati roles may be sung by countertenors or mezzos.

Basso Profundo: A deep, dark, villainous tone.

Pick a favorite movie and list the main characters' roles and personalities in the movie. What voice type and classification should SING these roles if the movie were to be rewritten as an opera? Research current opera singers whose voices match the kinds of characters in your movie. What costuming or make-up might be needed so these singers will be believable as the characters you wish them to play?

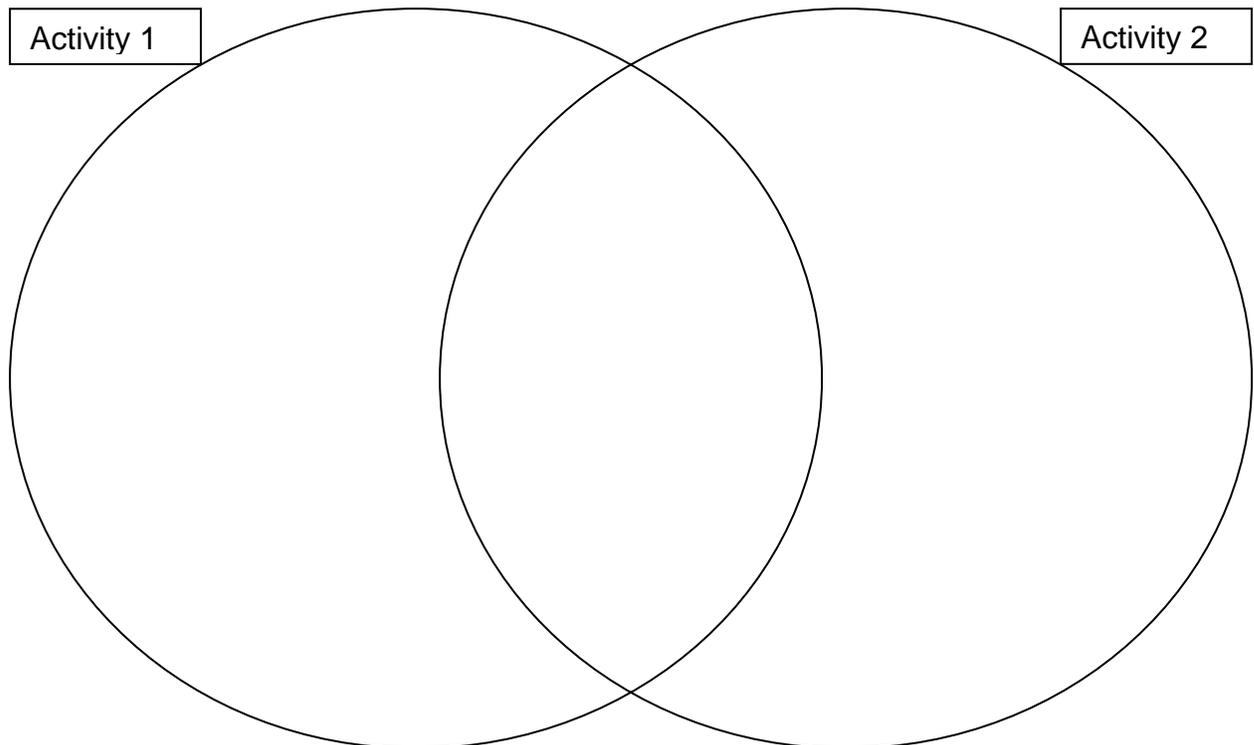| Character Name	Characteristics Or Personality	Role in Story	Voice type & classification	Opera singer	Costume & make-up needed

TB or not TB?

There are many diseases to avoid by promoting a healthy lifestyle. In *La bohème*, Mimì has "consumption", which is known as TB or tuberculosis today. What are some physical activities that promote health and fitness? Keeping a fit body helps to improve all areas of physical accomplishment. How does fitness affect an opera singer's voice? Are singers kept fit by singing or do they need to keep fit in order to sing well?

- Define these three areas of physical fitness: neuromuscular coordination exercise, muscular conditioning, and aerobic exercise.
- Give examples of the body systems that respond to these types of exercise?
- What physical training is needed to perform as a singer? What safety precautions must be taken to guard against damage to the vocal structure?

Choose and compare two different physical activities and their effects on the body. Use the Venn diagram to illustrate your findings.

Activity 1   Activity 2

Challenge!
Brainstorm movies you may have seen that use physically difficult movements in the action scenes. Describe the range of movement illustrated in the scene and suggest a training plan to achieve that physical ability.

Would you rather be a *grisette* or a *lorette?*

Many careers are open to young people today, but in 1830 Paris, few options were available to women and people of the lower classes.

What is a *grisette*? What is a *lorette*? Use the chart to answer some key questions about jobs that you might consider for your future.

My interests and skills	Jobs that interest me	Skills and education required

Challenge!
List ten jobs that you could imagine yourself doing in the future. Interview men and women who have those positions and determine the PROS and CONS of each position.

Deciding Weather Puccini-Style

Puccini and his librettists included cold temperatures and
   snowfall at Christmastime in the story of *La bohème.*
   Investigate the weather patterns of Paris, France to determine
   how realistic the opera's weather is.

Find four separate actual weather forecasts for Paris, one   for
   each season, and complete the chart below. Then, describe how
the opera's story would change if the **real** weather forecasts had
   been used.

Weather Forecast	Effect on *La bohème*
Winter	
Spring	
Summer	
Autumn	

Challenge!
   Rewrite a scene from *La bohème* libretto to reflect the results you found.

Artistic License

Many stage directors choose to reset and adapt opera stories to fit a different era or setting. How would you stage *La bohème?* Brainstorm ideas for setting the opera in a different society, culture, or time period. Be sure your new setting reflects social relationships, political climate, and other details to accurately capture the story of the opera. Who would the characters be if you set *La bohème* in:

- Revolutionary America
- Civil War America
- World War II in Europe
- Present-day Baghdad
- Present-day Pittsburgh

- What three locations would you choose for each act?

- What types of costumes, wigs, and makeup would the singer/actors wear?

- What would your scenery look like?

Using a computer, crayons, found objects, and other media, create set and costume renderings to share with your class. Be prepared to answer any questions about your choice of setting and clearly explain your ideas.
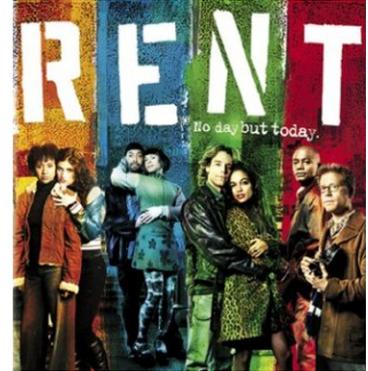
Draw a preliminary sketch here:

Challenge!
Build a set model based on the measurements of your school auditorium's stage. Build the model to scale.

The *RENT* Connection

by Francesco Salpietro

One of perhaps the most famous operas turned musical is
Rent. This modern day musical mirrors Puccini's *La bohème*
in numerous ways. The two operas follow much of the same
story line– the main characters are infected with diseases,
and the songs reflect each one of the character's struggles in
life. While in *Rent*, the principles are all HIV-Positive, in *La
bohème*, the main character suffers from Tuberculosis.
Additionally, while this opera is set in the Latin Quarter of Paris, the modern musical is
set in New York's East Village. In some sense, these two settings are alike, for they
both display the Bohemian Life (hence the name, *Bohème*). Song content as well
displays similarities. As a musical, though, *Rent* takes on a completely different
atmosphere—rock ,pop, upbeat and moving—comared to a formal, classical opera, yet
they both have the same message. A strong story line can carry a show, and in both
cases this holds true. The trials and tribulations of a dying person would most certainly
play strong on human emotions. Despite being an opera or theater fan, to watch or
listen to either of these productions is to enjoy a spectacular, substantial piece of work
that has wowed crowds for years, and will continue to for years to come.

Fill in the chart below to compare the two works of art:

Does the text include any of the following: Personification, simile, metaphor, hyperbole,
irony, satire?

	La bohème	*Rent*
Characters		
Setting		
Diseases		
Style of Music and Songs		
Story Line		

Challenge!
Find some exact quotes in *Rent* that Jonathan Larson borrowed directly from *La
bohème*.

Garrets, Lofts, and Landlords

Everyone has ideas about a dream home or living space. Investigate the cost of renting and buying a loft, apartment, attic room, house, or condominium in your area. Complete the chart below with your findings, and then write an essay about the choice that you would make.

	Frugal budget	Dream budget
Rent a loft		
Buy a loft		
Rent an apartment		
Buy an apartment		
Rent an attic room		
Rent a house		
Buy a house		
Rent a condominium		
Buy a condominium		

Challenge! Compute an entire personal budget that includes not only housing, but also other necessary expenses.

Properly Placing Props

Nothing is left to chance on the stage of an opera production. Every piece of scenery, property, costume, wig, and lighting is carefully planned and diagrammed in advance.

Create a list of props that could be used in the garret scene of *La bohème* and create a detailed diagram for their placement.

Properties List	Placement (Stage Left, Stage Right, With Costumes, other location)

Challenge! Create a **Who, What, Where** chart for each character in *La bohème.*

Costume Design

Choose a character from a particular scene in *La bohème*. With that character and scene in mind, answer the following questions:

1. What is the overall mood of the scene?

2. What are the age, gender, and socio-economic status of the character?

3. What is the time period of the scene?

4. Where is the scene set? What time of day or year will it be?

5. Is the character real or fantastical?

6. What is the character's mood or psychological state?

Write two character traits for your character. How will these influence the way your character is dressed?

TRAIT 1 _____

TRAIT 2 _____

Challenge!
Costume designers create a rendering to illustrate the details of the costume design. The rendering is a necessary step in the costume plan and often has fabric swatches attached. From this small scale rendering a full size costume is built. Create a rendering for your character and include color and fabric swatches along with any notations you feel are necessary to make your plan complete. Could a seamstress use your rendering to build the costume without further explanation?

Costume Trends for Bohemians

Costume design establishes the setting and tone of an opera production and provides useful clues for characterization. Since many of the most popular operas were set in an earlier period, opera directors and costume designers make choices whether or not to use historically accurate costumes or create new designs to represent other aspects of a performance, maybe reflecting a detail about the composer, or creating a stylized stage set inspired by a particular motif.

Puccini's opera *La bohème* is set in Paris c.1830. Research the clothing of that time period and what the six main characters might have looked like.

Rodolfo *(Tenor)* Poet	
Mimì *(Soprano)* Seamstress	
Marcello *(Baritone)* Painter	
Musetta *(Soprano)* Singer	
Schaunard *(Baritone)* Musician	
Colline *(Bass)* Philosopher	

Rapping Rodolfo

What are the characteristics of rap songs? **What do the words *assonance, alliteration, rhythm* and *rhyme* mean?** Look at the libretto for the Italian text of one of the Rodolfo, Musetta, Marcello, or Mimì songs. Can you find examples of poetic devices such as assonance, alliteration, rhythm and rhyme in the original Italian version? Rewrite the text in English (from the libretto.) Do the same poetic devices still exist in the translation?

Italian text	English Translation
Ex: **"Quando men' vo", Musetta's aria from *La bohème*, Act 2** Quando men vo soletta per la via, La gente sosta e mira E la bellezza mia tutta ricerca in me Da capo a pie'... **Your choice:**	 When I walk all alone in the street People stop and stare at me And look for my whole beauty From head to feet

Using the English translation of the aria you've chosen and rewritten above, create a rap version of the piece. Change words where necessary to fit rap style.

Extensions & Modernizing the Dialogue:
- Choose a specific rap artist. Create your rap in his/her style.
- Adapt the text of the aria to be used as lyrics in a different style of popular music: R&B, Country, Heavy Metal, etc.
- Try creating a duet rap from one of the duets in this opera
- Create different versions of this aria--what would a text message of this aria look like? Update the dialogue--how would the aria be written if you or your friends were to compose it?

Convince Me!

Why attend *La bohème?* Of all the different entertainment options available, and the other versions of this story that have been created, why would someone want to attend this opera or any opera in particular?

Write a persuasive piece to convince your classmates to attend a performance of an opera. Include the following in your writing:

- A clear statement of your position.
- Data to support your position.
- Credible arguments.

Write an outline of the main points of your paper:

Challenge!
Take the podium and present your opinion as a persuasive speech. Research basic public speaking guidelines and utilize the technique that best suits the tone of your argument. Afterward take a poll of those in your audience that were swayed one way or another by your speech. Were you effective?

Embroider a Correspondence

Choose a character from the opera *La bohème.* As that character, write a letter to another character describing a scene from your point of view. Add decorative elements that represent embroidery stitches that Mimì might add to a letter.

Now, turn the text of that letter into poetry for use as an aria. What are the challenges a librettist faces when changing prose into poetry? What changes will you need to make to your text in order for it to become an aria?

Dear _____, (Rodolfo, Mimi, Marcello, Musetta, Schaunard, or Colline)

Yours truly,

Challenge!
Pair with a classmate who chose to write as the opposing character and turn your letters into a duet for both characters by interweaving your poetry.

Be a Critic

Read the following article by Alice T. Carter, critic and arts reporter for the *Pittsburgh Tribune Review.*

A Critic's Role

When most people use the word "criticism", it's as a synonym for picking something apart to point out its faults and defects. But for those who review dramas, criticism is an effort to examine the elements of a production so that we can better understand, evaluate, and appreciate it.

In doing so, it's helpful to have some knowledge of theater and its history—a sense of its possibilities and a method for analyzing what we saw. It means going beyond generalized observations—"It was boring!" or "I really liked it!"—to understand why you felt that way.

Start by asking yourself three questions: "What was the artist trying to do? How well has he or she done it? Was it worth the doing?" Think about the play and what the playwright hoped to accomplish. Was it believable?

How did the performers, costumes, props, and scenery contribute or fall short? What parts held your interest most? How did they do that? Which characters did you like or dislike? Why do you think that was?

Did anything surprise you or make you think differently? Did you learn something new about the world or yourself?

Talk to others who have seen the production and listen to their opinions and impressions. Read what professional critics say and figure out why you agree or disagree with them.

Remember that everyone is entitled to an opinion. But to get others to respect yours, you have to back it up with facts, examples, ideas, and thoughtful observations.

Used with permission of Alice T. Carter, critic and arts reporter for the *Pittsburgh Tribune Review*

Based on Alice's advice, develop a list of questions for critiquing an opera. Write a critique of the student matinee performance of *La bohème* and share it with the Education Department of Pittsburgh Opera. Send them to:

Pittsburgh Opera Education Department
2425 Liberty Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

You Be the Critic!

1   List facts that you observe about this performance:
 Example: The costumes for the principal characters are very colorful.

- Artists' singing

- Orchestral music

- Costumes

- Scenery

- Lighting

- Other elements

2   Give your opinion, based on the facts you listed:
Example: I think the design team did an excellent job of showing conflicts between characters through differences in their costumes. The male characters wore loose-fitting costumes that looked like nobility and the female characters wore tight-fitting costumes that looked like they had low social status.
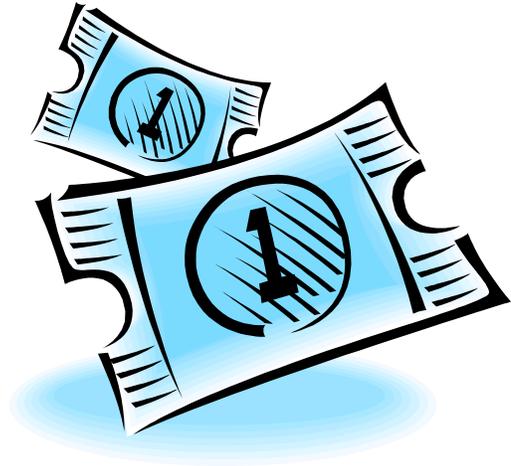
- What idea or theme was the design team trying to show?

- Was it effective? Explain your opinion.

- What were the strongest and weakest parts of the performance?

3   Write a newspaper headline and the first two sentences of your review of this performance.

4   Compare and contrast your review/opinions with another critic.

How much are the Tickets?

Ticket sale revenue does not cover the cost of producing an opera, but is a major component of keeping the budget balanced. With that in mind, how does Pittsburgh Opera decide what to charge its patrons for tickets? Currently, Pittsburgh Opera has tickets priced at 10 levels ranging from $16.50 to $130.50. Price is determined by seat location in the Benedum Center.
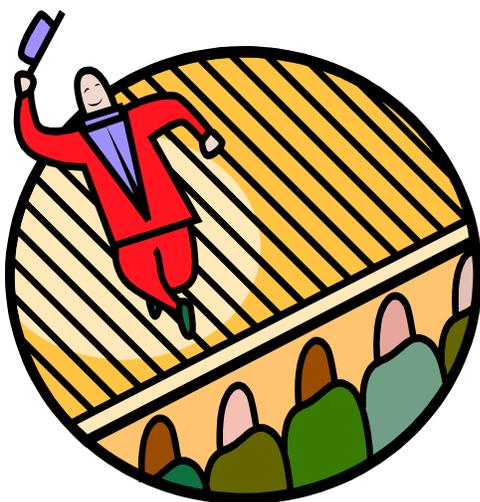
Your job is to compute the pricing structure of the auditorium with the goal of making $150,000 over 4 performances. Your lowest ticket should cost $16. The highest should cost $100.

- Decide how many levels of ticket prices you'll need between $16 and $100 and how many seats are in each level.
- Set your ticket prices. Calculate how many of each ticket you'll have to sell to meet your goal.

Consider the following:

- The Benedum Center for the Performing Arts seats approximately 2,800.
- Base your budget and pricing structure on selling 75% percent of the tickets available--it's good to be conservative and not anticipate a complete sell-out of each performance.
- Check out Pittsburgh Opera's website (www.pittsburghopera.org) for some ideas about their seating levels.

Challenge!
Consider the task of tracking ticket sales and managing a sales team. Build an Excel spreadsheet to keep a running total of sales. The formula should accept new sales totals for each business day. Add other items to the spreadsheet that benefit your sales team as they enter information. Examples might include the sales tax collected or the seat numbers that are filled.

Charts, charts, charts

The following chart is taken from Pittsburgh Opera's website (www.pittsburghopera.org). Many adults have trouble understanding charts and graphs, which are used in daily life. Study the information and then see if you can answer the questions below.

Saturday Evening Quartet

Section	Price Each
⬜ Price Scale 1	$562.00
⬜ Price Scale 2	$562.00
⬜ Price Scale 3	$402.00
⬜ Price Scale 4	$402.00
⬜ Price Scale 5	$302.00
⬜ Price Scale 6	$302.00
⬜ Price Scale 7	$162.00
⬜ Price Scale 8	$82.00
⬜ Price Scale 9	$82.00

BENEDUM CENTER SEATING CHART

1. What is the difference in price between Section 1 and Section 2?

_____

2. How much will two subscriptions in Scale 5, three subscriptions in Scale 1, and one subscription in Scale 4 cost?

_____

3. Why are the tickets in Section 8 the least expensive?

_____

4. If you could afford any price of ticket, in which section would you want to sit? Why?

_____

More Charts

Challenge!
Find out the percentages of amusement tax, processing fees, and any other additional charges that are added to the basic price of the tickets in the above chart. What is the REAL cost of a ticket in each section? What is the percentage difference between the base cost and the total actual cost once all the fees have been assessed?

Contributors receive special seating preference according to level.	GALAXY $3,000+	BENEFACTOR $1,000-2,999	PATRON $500-999	SPONSOR $250-499	FRIEND $120-249	DONOR $50-$119
Invitation to Cast Parties	■					
Complimentary VIP Parking	■					
Galaxy Dinner	■					
Galaxy Lounge Admission & Complimentary Refreshments	■					
Benefactor Brunch	■	■				
VIP Ticket Concierge Service	■	■				
NEW! 8 Complimentary Beverage Vouchers	■	■	■			
Dress Rehearsal Passes	■	■	■			
Invitations to Sitzprobes	■	■	■			
Meet the Artist Events	■	■	■			
Invitation to Attend Master Classes	■	■	■	■		
Backstage at the Benedum Tours	■	■	■	■		
Listing in Opera Programs	■	■	■	■	■	
Meet the Pittsburgh Opera Center Event	■	■	■	■	■	
Priority Ticket Handling*	■	■	■	■	■	
Discount Coupons on Single Ticket Purchases	■	■	■	■	■	■

*SPECIAL BENEFIT..
Donors beginning at the Friend level will receive priority handling in seating upgrades, subscription, and the purchase of additional tickets.

1. How many benefits would you receive if you donated $2,700? What is your gift level?

2. What new benefit was added this season? How many gift levels receive that benefit?

3. List the benefits of someone who is at the gift level of Patron.

4. Which gift levels receive two additional benefits more than the level before?

Start Your Own Opera-Related Business!

Starting your own business requires more than just a great idea—it requires a future business owner to do some extensive thinking and writing to produce a business plan. Team up with a couple classmates to create a plan for starting your own opera-related business. Use the checklist below to track your progress as you work on your plan.

Checklist

Action	Drafted	Revised	Completed
Brainstorming: (What service do you think Pittsburgh Opera needs?)			
Investors:(Who would want to invest in your company?)			
Business Plan Outline: (Divide responsibility for these among group members)			
Executive summary			
Table of contents			
Company Description			
Product/Service Description			
Market Analysis			
Marketing Plan			
Operations Plan			
Financial Plan			
Management			
Exit Strategy for Investors			
Appendices			

Challenge!

Once you have written your business plan arrange an "investment meeting" with your "venture capitalists" – i.e., classmates. Complete a presentation of your plan and have the class vote as to whether or not they would invest in your new business. Investors should be prepared to justify their decisions.

Tracing the Quartet's Love Lives

Rodolfo, Mimì, Marcello, and Musetta have varying degrees of success as couples. Create a graphic illustration to show the four characters and their relationships. Be sure to include how their relationships change over the course of the opera *La bohème*.

Extension:
Develop four original characters and sketch their interactions through a plot; include their first meeting, their realization of love, their fights, their breakups, their makeups, and the final outcome of the relationship.

Buon Appetito! (Puccini was Italian)
Buon Appétit! (*La bohème* takes place in Paris)

Imagine you have been hired to be the chef at Café Momus. What were some typical foods served in the 1830s in France? Is Paris known for a specific type of cuisine or beverage? What kinds of food and drink would you serve to Rodolfo and his friends? Research some recipes and plan the menu for the Christmas Eve feast enjoyed in Scene II of *La bohème*. Alcindoro is a wealthy gentleman; what might he expect to pay for the feast today? Consider the numbers of people at the café and what foods they might have ordered.

- Make a menu to show what you'll be serving for each course.
- Work up a per-plate or per-person cost for each course and the whole meal
- Translate your menu into French

CAFÉ MOMUS

ITEM	PRICE
ITEM	PRICE
ITEM	PRICE
ITEM	PRICE
ITEM	PRICE

Challenge!
What local restaurants, if any, serve that type of food today? Could this lead to another field trip? Do some research and make a proposal to your teacher. Remember to plan a way to cover all costs!

All Pennsylvania Academic Standards

- Arts and Humanities
  - 9.1 Production, Performance and Exhibition of Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts
  - 9.2 Historical and Cultural Contexts
  - 9.3 Critical Response
  - 9.4 Aesthetic Response

- Career Education and Work
  - 13.1 Career Awareness and Planning
  - 13.2 Career Acquisition (Getting a Job)
  - 13.3 Career Retention (Keeping a Job)
  - 13.4 Entrepreneurship

- Civics and Government
  - 5.1 Principles and Documents of Government
  - 5.2 Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship
  - 5.3 How Government Works
  - 5.4 How International Relationships Function

- Economics
  - 6.1 Economic Systems
  - 6.2 Markets and the Functions of Governments
  - 6.3 Scarcity and Choice
  - 6.4 Economic Interdependence
  - 6.5 Work and Earnings

- Environment and Ecology
  - 4.1 Watersheds and Wetlands
  - 4.2 Renewable and Nonrenewable Resources
  - 4.3 Environmental Health
  - 4.4 Agriculture and Society
  - 4.5 Integrated Pest Management
  - 4.6 Ecosystems and their Interactions
  - 4.7 Threatened, Endangered and Extinct Species
  - 4.8 Humans and the Environment
  - 4.9 Environmental Laws and Regulations

- Family and Consumer Sciences
  - 11.1 Financial and Resource Management
  - 11.2 Balancing Family, Work and Community Responsibility
  - 11.3 Food Science and Nutrition
  - 11.4 Child Development

- Geography
  - 7.1 Basic Geographic Literacy
  - 7.2 The Physical Characteristics of Places and Regions
  - 7.3 The Human Characteristics of Places and Regions
  - 7.4 The Interactions Between People and Places

- Health, Safety, and Physical Education
  - 10.1 Concepts of Health
  - 10.2 Healthful Living
  - 10.3 Safety and Injury Prevention
  - 10.4 Physical Activity
  - 10.5 Concepts, Principles and Strategies of Movement

- History
  - 8.1 Historical Analysis and Skills Development
  - 8.2 Pennsylvania History
  - 8.3 United States History
  - 8.4 World History

- Mathematics
  - 2.1 Numbers, Number Systems and Number Relationships
  - 2.2 Computation and Estimation
  - 2.3 Measurement and Estimation
  - 2.4 Mathematical Reasoning and Connections
  - 2.5 Mathematical Problem Solving and Communication
  - 2.6 Statistics and Data Analysis
  - 2.7 Probability and Predictions
  - 2.8 Algebra and Functions
  - 2.9 Geometry
  - 2.10 Trigonometry
  - 2.11 Concepts of Calculus

- Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening
  - 1.1 Learning to Read Independently
  - 1.2 Reading Critically in All Content Areas
  - 1.3 Reading, Analyzing and Interpreting Literature
  - 1.4 Types of Writing
  - 1.5 Quality of Writing
  - 1.6 Speaking and Listening
  - 1.7 Characteristics and Function of the English Language
  - 1.8 Research

- Science and Technology
  - 3.1 Unifying Themes
  - 3.2 Inquiry and Design
  - 3.3 Biological Sciences
  - 3.4 Physical Science, Chemistry and Physics
  - 3.5 Earth Sciences
  - 3.6 Technology Education
  - 3.7 Technological Devices
  - 3.8 Science, Technology and Human Endeavors

- World Languages
  - 12.1 Communication in a Target Language
  - 12.2 Communication in a Classical World Language
  - 12.3 The Role of Culture in World Language Acquisition
  - 12.4 The Role of Culture in Classical World Language Acquisition
  - 12.5 World Languages in the Community
  - 12.6 Classical World Languages in the Community