PITTSBURGH OPERA EDUCATION

Lesson Plan Stems for 2023–2024
Developed by Opera on TAP, past and present:

Ray Beard
Cheryl Begandy
Athena Bober
Carol Brinjak
Ashly Carney
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Marie Romanelli, Editor
Ralph Roskies
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Curriculum Circle for *The Barber of Seville*

How does the opera ***The Barber of Seville*** by Gioachino Rossini intersect with all academic content areas? Begin with the opera and brainstorm connections to all curricula.

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Lesson Plan Stems for *The Barber of Seville*

How does the opera *The Barber of Seville* intersect with all academic content areas? Begin with a lesson plan stem and connect the opera to classroom curricula.

NOTES: Suggested grade levels are listed to the right of each lesson plan stem.
ES=elementary, MS= middle school, HS= high school

Lesson Plan Stems in the Mathematics and Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening sections are *Common Core Friendly*, and are marked:

Arts and Humanities

State Standards: 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4

Use scarves to show how *The Barber of Seville* Overture moves fast, being careful to move only in your own space. Decide how you will show the "knocking" sounds with your scarf. — PreK

Listen to the storm scene in *The Barber of Seville,* the "Temporale". Describe what the weather looks like when it storms and tell how the music sounds like a storm coming and going. Create a "storm scene" in your class by starting quietly with some finger clicking, adding some clapping, then some stamping to build a "Rossini Crescendo". — PreK

In 1816, the year the opera premiered, Sir David Brewster invented the kaleidoscope. What is a kaleidoscope? Make a kaleidoscope. — ES/MS

The Barber of Seville uses an all-male chorus. Research and listen to all-male choruses used in operas and other kinds of music, such as barbershop quartets. — ES/MS/HS

For the overture to *The Barber of Seville*, Rossini recycled an overture he had already written for a previous, less-successful opera. Choose an overture or a song from any opera or musical and try it in different shows. What works about this technique? What are the challenges? — ES/MS/HS

The Barber of Seville's score calls for a harpsichord. Listen to some harpsichord music. Create a graphic organizer that compares or contrasts various keyboard instruments for sound, construction, appearance, and uses: piano, harpsichord, organ, electronic keyboards, and synthesizers.	ES/MS/HS
The Barber of Seville is considered an "opera buffa." What does this term mean? What are the characteristics of opera buffa? Compare this term to the idea of "commedia dell'arte." How would the work of 20th century entertainers such as the Marx Brothers, Lucille Ball, Charlie Chaplin, and the Three Stooges compare to opera buffa? Which current entertainers could claim to work in this style?	ES/MS/HS
The Barber of Seville contains an orchestral interlude for a storm sequence. Create and perform your own music to represent a storm. What instruments will be important to achieving your storm sound? How would this music be written to be performed by someone else?	ES/MS/HS
The characters in this opera come from different social strata. What clothing and accessories would depict each character's social standing? Find paintings or prints of principal artists that would depict or describe the different kinds of clothing these characters would wear.	ES/MS/HS
Design the costumes and sets for a scene in *The Barber of Seville*. What colors would you chose to dominate your design? What psychological impact should these colors have on the audience? Why will they work with this opera? Costume a doll to represent a character from this opera.	ES/MS/HS
In *The Barber of Seville*, Doctor Bartolo agrees to take Rosina in as his ward because he really wants to marry her. Give examples of the ways Doctor Bartolo can be seen as a bully based on his actions toward others. If you were the stage director, how would you stage those actions?	ES/MS/HS
Select paintings that show life at Versailles or 18th century peasant life. Spend one full minute looking at the painting and making a list of details you've noticed. Describe the painting and have a classmate who cannot see the picture attempt to draw a part of it from your description. Compare the drawing to the original.	ES/MS/HS
Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* is a remake of a well-loved 1782 opera with the same title, composed by Giovanni Paisiello. Why would Rossini remake an already-popular opera? How did the audience react initially to Rossini's version? How do modern audiences respond to remakes of old movie favorites, such as the remake of *Karate Kid*? What challenges and advantages would impact a decision to remake a movie or an opera?	ES/MS/HS
The 2002 Pittsburgh Opera production of *The Barber of Seville* used a set and costumes inspired by the surrealist painter René Magritte. The 2010 production used a more "traditional" design for sets and costumes. What is meant by using the term "traditional" design? How does stage design affect both the feel and mood of the story? How does it impact staging?	ES/MS/HS

In 1816, if you took a musical vacation and traveled from Cambridge (England) to Prague, and then onto the American South, you might have heard 17th century liturgical music from the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, a performance of *Faust* conducted by Carl von Weber, and Ananias Davisson's *Kentucky Harmony*. Create a graphic organizer to compare these three different styles of music.	ES/MS/HS
Louis XVI was a great patron of the arts. How did the Bourbon dynasty shape the art of dance? How did ballet evolve under the influence of the Bourbons? Execute the five formal positions of ballet. Research 18th century courtly dancing, and teach a partner a typical dance from that era. Describe how this kind of dancing differs from popular country dancing from the same era.	ES/MS/HS
In Rossini's famous aria "Largo al factotum," Figaro sings a song about himself in which his name plays a predominant role. Write and perform an aria based on your own name.	MS/HS
Don Basilio is described in the opera as a "music teacher and hypocrite." What does this judgment tell us about Basilio's character or teaching music? How was music an important discipline to learn in the 18th century? Compare the music of these *bel canto* composers: Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini. What are the characteristics of *bel canto* style?	MS/HS
Berta the maid has her own aria in Act II. What is an aria? What purpose does this aria serve, and what do we learn about her through this song? Often, this aria is "cut" from the performance. Why would it be cut? How would cutting Berta's song affect a listener's understanding of the story?	MS/HS
Occasionally, something that is not intended to be part of a production will occur on stage, such as the meandering cat that caused commotion during *The Barber of Seville*'s premiere in 1816. What precautions are taken to avoid this possibility, especially with performances given in outside theaters or spaces?	MS/HS
Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* is a "number" opera. What is a number opera, and how does it differ from a through-composed opera? Which style of opera was used most frequently in the 1800s?	HS
How does stage lighting affect how an audience sees the characters' costumes? What accommodations must be made in fabrics and dyes to maintain a designer's concept for color in a production?	HS

Business, Computer, and Information Technology

State Standards: 15.1, 15.2, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5, 15.6, 15.7, 15.8, 15.9

Look at some images of Gioachino Antonio Rossini on the computer to select the one for an adult to print. Why did you choose the one you chose? Did you choose an image of when he was young or older?	PreK
Pretend you are going to a hair salon or barbershop. Will you be the one getting your hair cut or will you be the hairdresser or barber? Would that job be fun? Do you get tips for service jobs?	PreK
Figaro, as a barber, gets to know the secrets and scandals of the town folk. How would a 21st century Figaro keep abreast of the latest news and scandals?	ES/MS/HS
Create a Facebook page for the characters in *The Barber of Seville*. How would you help Count Almaviva use Facebook to court Rosina? Could Figaro use Facebook to spread gossip or keep informed?	ES/MS/HS
How would Figaro make us of today's computers and information technologies to improve and enrich his sidebar enterprises?	MS/HS
Invent a Facebook game that the characters in *The Barber of Seville* could play.	MS/HS
The Barber of Seville was re-imagined by Warner Brothers as "The Rabbit of Seville." How did they adapt the story and the opera? What computer programs/software did they use? How would the same product be created with today's technology?	MS/HS
Research the legal protections that were available to Figaro if he had set up a business partnership.	HS
Using the synopsis of *The Barber of Seville*, create a PowerPoint that encompasses the technological skills learned in a PowerPoint lesson.	HS
Use a computer application to rank each character by economic class and job description. Research the approximate weekly income each would need to budget. Compute what each character's annual income would be in 21st century standards. What investment possibilities might have been available to the characters? How much risk was associated with those investment options? How safe were banks at the time of the opera?	HS
Figaro wants to modernize his business. To do so, he must computerize payroll, scheduling, and ordering of supplies. What processes does he need to do? What computer applications would best help him?	HS
Create a diagram using computer software, such as WORD or PUBLISHER, that depicts the relationships between the characters in this opera.	HS
Composer a letter in Microsoft WORD that is written in Rosina's voice.	HS

Career Education and Work

State Standards: 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 13.4

Figaro is a barber. Practice doing some of the jobs that barbers did a long time ago, such as giving shaves, cutting hair, wrapping bandages, or pulling teeth.	PreK
Rossini was a teenage boy of 18 when he composed his first opera. Ask some teenagers what they want to do when they grow up. What do you want to do when you grow up?	PreK
Twice in the opera the "police" are called. In Seville at this time, the police force would have actually been the civil guard. What were their duties? When did the idea of a police force come into being? Compare the duties of a modern-day policeman to that of an 18th century civil guardsman.	ES/MS/HS
Figaro works as a barber in this opera. How have the profession and duties of a barber changed since the 18th century? Why is a barber's pole red and white?	ES/MS/HS
In the 18th century, how did women support themselves? How did a woman's position in different social castes impact her ability to earn income? Compare these to opportunities available to men in different social classes in the same era.	ES/MS/HS
In *The Barber of Seville*, Figaro's character is a barber. In *The Marriage of Figaro* he is now the Count's valet. What is a valet? Was this job switch a promotion for Figaro? How have the duties for each position changed from the 18th century to now?	ES/MS/HS
In *The Barber of Seville*, the characters have a variety of positions/occupations: barber, music teacher, servant, governess, doctor, ward, and nobleman. Define each position/occupation and provide a contemporary parallel.	MS
In Act II, Basilio is sent to fetch a notary so that Don Bartolo may marry Rosina. What is a notary? How has the role of a notary changed?	MS/HS
How do costumers deal with multiple performers who portray the same character (such as understudies, dual casting, touring companies), but are physically different from each other?	MS/HS
One of the opera's main characters is Doctor Bartolo. How did a person earn the title of medical "Doctor" in the 18th century? What are the requirements for earning a medical doctorate now?	MS/HS
Create a business plan for a barbershop. What materials and costs would be needed?	MS/HS
What did music lessons cost in the 18th century? What does it cost today to have the same level of lessons? What is the inflationary rate of such costs?	MS/HS

Civics and Government

State Standards: 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4

Governments make rules about who should pay taxes and for what purpose. Is there tax collected for haircuts? What is tax money used for?	PreK
What does it mean to be a citizen of the United States? If you are not already a citizen, how can you become a citizen? Can you be a citizen of Spain AND the United States at the same time?	PreK
In Act I, Basilio and Bartolo slander Count Almaviva. What is slander, and what makes it different from gossip or accusation? How is slander defined and determined legally? What is the legal line that separates slander from free speech? How does the First Amendment of the United States Constitution apply to this idea of slander?	ES/MS/HS
During the 1816 premiere of Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, fans of Paisiello's earlier opera set out to disrupt the performance by attending as a *claque*. What was a *claque*, and what did it do to achieve its goals? Is there anything similar to a *claque* in modern performances or politics today? How successful would a *claque* be now? What laws might be used to govern the behavior of a modern-day *claque?*	ES/MS/HS
At one point in the opera, Basilio is threatened at gun-point. In the 18th century, was it legal and/or common for people to carry weapons in public? When were gun restriction laws first enacted? Under what circumstances were these laws passed? What are the laws regulating gun ownership and possession in the United States today? How do these vary from place to place?	ES/MS/HS
What is censorship? How do governments use censorship? Practice censorship: choose a commonly-used word (such as "like") and censor it from conversation. Try holding a discussion without using your censored word.	ES/MS/HS
Doctor Bartolo complains about having to quarter a soldier in his home. What does it mean to "quarter" someone? In the United States, can private citizens be forced to quarter soldiers?	MS/HS
Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* is a remake of a well-loved 1782 opera with the same title, composed by Giovanni Paisiello. Why would Rossini remake an already-popular opera? What impact would copyright laws have had on Rossini's decision to compose an opera using Paisiello's same title and subject?	MS/HS
Beaumarchais was a supporter of both the French and the American Revolutions, which forever changed the systems of government for both countries. Compare the United States government system to that of the French. How have each changed since 1816?	MS/HS

In 1792, Mary Wollenstonecraft wrote “Vindication of the Rights of Women.” What would have been Rosina’s rights in an 18th century marriage? What are modern women’s marriage rights today? Trace the evolution of the women’s rights movement worldwide. Do women enjoy universal suffrage (voting rights) throughout the world today? In which countries do women have the least rights?	MS/HS
Don Basilio is a character who is easily bribed with money and jewelry, or with the threat of negative consequences. Could one say that lobbyists are modern-day Basilios? Explain your answers and give examples.	HS

Driver Education

State Standards: 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 14.4, 14.5, 14.6

The Barber of Seville takes place in Seville, Spain, where there aren’t any main streets that take you to the center of the city. Describe the main streets, side streets, alleys, and country roads near your home.	PreK
Everyone in a car in Spain must wear a seat belt. Practice using a seat belt and helping someone else use one.	PreK
Would Figaro have been able to ride a bicycle around Seville? Should bicycle riders need a license?	ES/MS/HS
If Rossini had chosen to have a “driver” transport him from his home to the theater for the opening of *The Barber of Seville*, what kind of transportation would have been used? Would the driver have a driver’s license?	MS/HS
The Barber of Seville contains an orchestral interlude for a storm sequence. What skills would be needed by a motorized vehicle driver to drive safely in a storm? In snow? On ice?	HS
Investigate driver qualifications for driving in Spain. For obtaining an International Driver’s License.	HS
Figaro is a community-based, small-business owner. Create business and marketing plans for starting a bicycle shop in your community. What capital investments will be needed? What do you expect to earn? What will your financial obligations be (such as taxes, employee salaries, utilities, rent)?	HS

Economics

State Standards: 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5

Rossini lived in Italy for much of his life. If you wanted to buy something that was made in Italy, how could you do that? Find out where your clothes and toys were made.	PreK
Rossini's full name was Gioachino Antonio Rossini. Count the number of letters in each name. How many letters are there all together? How many letters are there in all your names?	PreK
18th century clothing would have been made from natural fibers. What fabrics would be indigenous to the Seville region, and how are these fabrics produced? Are any of these still made in that region today?	ES/MS/HS
Many people who have never seen an opera are familiar with arias such as Figaro's "Largo al factotum" because these pieces are frequently used in other media: movies, cartoons, and commercials. Explore the concept of royalties, monies that are paid to performers, distributers, or estates. To what extent do royalties affect a performer's income? Who owns the music from operas as old as Rossini's? Do royalty laws differ from country to country?	ES/MS/HS
The Philadelphia Mint was founded in 1792, the same year that Rossini was born. In what year did the most number of mints exist in the United States? How many exist today and still produce coins? How are coins made today?	ES/MS/HS
Track the value of the US dollar against other currencies. Create a visual representation of currency fluctuation for the past year.	ES/MS/HS
Why does a woman's haircut cost more than a man's haircut?	ES/MS/HS
In 1816, the year *The Barber of Seville* premiered, the first savings banks were established in Boston and Philadelphia. What is a savings bank and how does it differ from a bank? What do we need both?	MS
Create a graphic organizer to show the economic interdependence of the class systems portrayed in this opera: nobility, servants, merchants, workers.	MS/HS
Through his business, Figaro has access to many different people of varying degrees of wealth and influence. What role did Figaro's business play in his community? What modern businesses play a similar role today? Does this vary based on the type of community?	MS/HS
Figaro is a community-based, small-business owner. Create business and marketing plans for starting a barber shop in your community. What capital investments will be needed? What do you expect to earn? What will your financial obligations be (such as taxes, employee salaries, utilities, rent)?	MS/HS

Create a flow chart to show how the American and French revolutions were financed. Compare to how wars are financed today.	MS/HS
The Stock Exchange was founded in 1792, the same year that Rossini was born. What is the oldest stock still traded in today's market? How were stocks traded back then, and how are they traded today? Graph the stock market's progress across a given amount of time. How has technology influenced trading and investing?	MS/HS
Beaumarchais, who wrote the original play of *The Barber of Seville*, presages the growing dissatisfaction with the ruling class prior to the French Revolution. Describe the various phases of the French economic system from the late 1700s to today.	MS/HS
How do Figaro's activities relate to those of the real-life Beaumarchais? Explain in terms of economics, markets, income, and wealth.	MS/HS
In 1792, Rossini was born and the New York Stock Exchange was formed. What is the process that Figaro would take to make his business public through an IPO? How much would he sell stocks for? What percentage of stock would he need to hold to maintain a controlling interest in the company?	HS
In 1792, the year Rossini was born, the Philadelphia mint was founded. With relation to the economy, what is a mint? Who decides how much money is printed? How many mints are there in the U.S. and where are they located?	HS

English Language Arts CORE

State Standards: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5

Lesson Plan Stems in the English Language Arts section are *Common Core Friendly*: CCF

Rossini's name begins with the letter "R". What are some other words that begin with "R"? Which of these words begin with an "R": reading, writing, arithmetic, running, rolling?	PreK
Listen to a short bio about Rossini. Who is the story about? Did Rossini study music when he was a little boy? Did Rossini play instruments? What other facts did you hear in the story?	PreK
In this opera, the use of disguise is prominent. Secretly disguise a classmate; play a game where your classmates have to guess who this mystery person might be, given clues. From your experience with this game, what role does disguise and trickery play in stories? What other works of literature use disguise as an important part of the narrative?	ES/MS

Beaumarchais was sometimes called “The Real Figaro.” Identify aspects of Beaumarchais’s life that reflect the persona of Figaro in his plays. Use a bubble chart to plot these character traits. ES/MS/HS

In Act I, Basilio and Don Bartolo gossip about and slander Count Almaviva. In our culture, how do various electronic media help create and cultivate opportunities for gossiping, slander, and broadcasting opinions? Compare the important role of gossip in this scene to gossip in modern popular entertainments, such as the movie *Mean Girls* or the TV show *Gossip Girl.* ES/MS/HS

Create a graphic organizer to compare and contrast the characters from *The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro*. How does each character change from one story to the other? How are the two stories connected? ES/MS/HS

Everyone except Figaro comments on the crazy day in which this opera takes place. Write a short story about a crazy day you’ve had at home or at school. ES/MS/HS

Research Rossini’s life and write a biographical entry on Rossini for an encyclopedia. ES/MS/HS

During the opera’s premiere in 1816, a cat wandered across the stage. To the superstitious, a cat crossing your path can mean bad luck will follow. What “bad luck” befell the opera’s premiere? What are some other common superstitions associated with performance or theater? ES/MS/HS

Learn some vocabulary words related to *The Barber of Seville*: ES/MS/HS

Admires	Assurances	Billeting	Bribe
Confined	Defiance	Devises	Disguise
Dowry	Elope	Enchanted	Exemption
Notary	Outwits	Pupil	Resolves
Retracts	Scandals	Scarlet fever	Serenade
Slander	Symbolizes	Trickery	Ward

The Barber of Seville is based on a play by Pierre Beaumarchais. What are some other operas or movies that are based on plays or short stories? ES/MS/HS

This opera has a happy ending. What elements need to change in order to make this opera a tragedy? What would have to change to turn this opera into an opera *verismo*? Rewrite a scene from this opera as either *verismo* or tragedy. ES/MS/HS

Look at a painting representing life on an 18th century nobleman’s estate. List all the details you can see in one minute. Write a short story about what might happen next, using all the details from your observation. ES/MS/HS

Create an iPhone playlist for each character. What songs best suit each personality? ES/MS/HS

In The Barber of Seville, rumors are an important device used to move the story's plot forward. What effects can rumors have on an individual person, group of friends, a corporation, or a government? Brainstorm times when rumors have had an important effect on someone or some group, and what the outcomes have been.	ES/MS/HS
How would the Count have communicated with Rosina if the story took place in our century? Rewrite the Count's letter to Rosina as a text message. How has modern technology affected the idea of a love letter?	MS/HS
The original title of the libretto for this opera was *Almaviva*, which is more appropriate since the story is focused on the Count. Rewrite a scene from the opera to reflect the title character's—Figaro's—perspective.	MS/HS
Compare the role of Figaro to other barber/beauty salon characters from stories or movies: *Barber Shop*; *Sweeney Todd*; *The Color Purple* (shaving scene); *Steel Magnolias*; *Beauty Shop.*	MS/HS
Beaumarchais texts are somewhat autobiographical. What is an autobiography? What other famous works of fiction are also somewhat autobiographical?	MS/HS
Rosina is <u>enchanted</u> by the voice of Count Almaviva, disguised as a poor student. Compare this enchantment with that of Roxanne, the lady in the story of Cyrano de Bergerac. What was each suiter hiding?	MS/HS
In 1792, the year Rossini was born, the newspaper *The Northern Star* was first published in Belfast, Ireland. Was there a newspaper published in Seville at that time? Compare the content and style of articles written for 19th century newspapers to journalistic writing today. What are the similarities and differences? Find some influential newspapers still publishing in the United States today, and research when they began. What is the oldest newspaper still published today?	MS/HS
Create a list of adjectives that explain why Count Almaviva is an attractive suitor, in spite of hiding his status/rank.	MS/HS
Count Almaviva falls in love with Rosina at first sight. Is there such a thing a "love" at first sight? What is "love" in this scenario? What other characteristics are important in love? Pantomime each of these "kinds" of love.	MS/HS
How do people "disguise" themselves without using masks? Why do characters use disguises in opera? Why do we use "disguises" in daily life? Discuss examples of this theme in literature.	HS

Environment and Ecology

State Standards: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5

Rossini rode in a horse-drawn carriage when he travelled from city to city in Europe, such as Pesaro, Milan, Venice, and Paris. What does a horse need to live? Who took care of the horse? Do you think Rossini liked horses? Do you think Rossini rode in a gondola?	PreK
When a carriage had to cross a river or a stream in Rossini's time, were there bridges? Would the water in the river have been clean?	PreK
What kind of soap would Figaro have used to shave Dr. Bartolo? From what ingredients would that soap have been made? Compare it to modern shaving soap. Which soap is "safer" for the environment? Were any ingredients used to make 18th century soap that are now considered illegal to use? How would Figaro have disposed of his waste water from shaving? How would that impact his local ecosystem?	ES/MS/HS
What products would Berta have used to clean Dr. Bartolo's house? How environmentally-friendly would those products have been? Construct diagrams to post that demonstrate the "greenness" of cleaning products. How safe are each to singers, who are particularly sensitive to chemicals?	ES/MS/HS
In 1816, the same year that *The Barber of Seville* premiered, a freak snowstorm deposited 10 inches of snow in New England on June 6th. Graph the average amount of snowfall or rain for your town across a period of time. Graph the average temperatures for each month in your town.	ES/MS/HS
What was the composition of shaving cream when *The Barber of Seville* was composed? What is the composition of shaving cream today? What implication did each have on the environment? What material is used on stage to represent shaving cream? How does the chemical composition affect different artists?	HS
1816, the year *The Barber of Seville* premiered, was recorded as the "year in which there was no summer." Why did this occur? Could it happen again soon? Could we take steps to avoid this?	HS

Family and Consumer Sciences

State Standards: 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 11.4

What is unique about your family? What special traditions do you celebrate on holidays and birthdays? Would you like to learn about how other families celebrate?	PreK
Have you ever attended a birthday party? Rossini's birthday was February 29, which only appears on the calendar every four years. When would he celebrate his birthday the other three years? What food would he want to eat at his birthday party?	PreK
Rosina is Dr. Bartolo's ward. What is a ward? What are the responsibilities or obligations of someone who has a ward?	ES/MS/HS
Dr. Bartolo wants to marry Rosina for her dowry, not for her love. What is a dowry? Why was a dowry important to women in the 18th century? Are dowries still required for marriage today? What has replaced the purpose of a dowry in modern times?	ES/MS/HS
Determine the cost to a family that must billet a soldier for a month during 18th century Italy or Spain. What provisions would a family have to supply?	ES/MS/HS
Rossini was known for his love of food. What were some of his favorite recipes? Analyze his favorite foods for nutritional content. How might Rossini's favorite recipes have impacted his overall health? Create a sensible meal plan for Rossini, or modify his favorite recipes to reflect a more health-conscious lifestyle.	ES/MS/HS
What are some traditional foods of Seville? What food might be served at Rosina's wedding? Create an 18th century menu of traditional Spanish food for Rosina's wedding feast.	ES/MS/HS
Although Dr. Bartolo was not really Rosina's father, what characteristics and concerns did he possess and demonstrate that a father would for his daughter? Dr. Bartolo takes in Rosina as his ward. What does that relationship mean? Do his intentions to marry her contradict or reinforce that relationship?	ES/MS/HS
What laws and regulations are in place to protect child actors on a movie set or in theaters? Do the laws align with good child development principles?	MS/HS
Rosina and Count Almaviva plan to elope in Act II. What is the difference between eloping and having a traditional wedding? Why might a couple choose to elope rather than have a traditional wedding? How might eloping impact their future lives or reputations? Why do Rosina and Almaviva want to elope? Why do they need a ladder?	MS/HS

Geography

State Standards: 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4

At the end of his life, Rossini lived in his villa in Passy, France. Look at some pictures of villas and the land surrounding them. Where would be a good place to build a villa to have good sights to look at? Find Passy on a map and imagine where Rossini walked. What did he see and hear on his walk in the county?	PreK
Look at a picture of the canals in Venice, Italy. How would you travel from building to building? What would you see from the windows in the building?	PreK
Where is Seville located? Describe the major land features that define the region where Seville is located. For what is the city famous? Describe its climate.	ES/MS/HS
What would a house in Seville, Spain look like in the period in which the opera is set? How was a city "square" used in this same time? What are some famous buildings located in Seville? Describe the different architectural styles that each of these buildings represents.	ES/MS/HS
Recently, the Unites States minted a series of state quarters. If Spain were to issue a commemorative set of coins, what regions would be represented? Design a coin for each region of Spain.	ES/MS/HS
In 1816, the same year that *The Barber of Seville* premiered, Indiana was granted statehood in the United States. How many states existed in the US as of 1816? Create a map of all 50 states and color-code them to signify the year that each was admitted. How many colors will your map need?	ES/MS/HS
The body of Christopher Columbus lies in a crypt in a Cathedral in Seville. Locate a photograph of this crypt and explain its significance. Describe the economic importance of Columbus to Seville.	ES/MS/HS
Beaumarchais spent a few months living in Seville. How would he have traveled from Paris to Seville? Trace a route or create several "Triptiks" to guide Beaumarchais from Paris to Seville for different types of transportation: walking, carriage, boat, train, auto, and airplane. How long would each method of travel take?	ES/MS/HS
In June of 1816, the year *The Barber of Seville* premiered in Rome, New England experienced a freak snowstorm that buried the area under 10" of snow. Graph episodes of cooling and warming for your region from the earliest records to present day.	ES/MS/HS
Where is Seville? To what country did Seville belong in the 18th century? What is the connection between Seville, Christopher Columbus, and the discovery of America? Trace the historical connection on a timeline and the geographical connections on a map or globe.	ES/MS/HS

Health, Safety, and Physical Education

State Standards: 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5

Rossini's father played the trumpet and his mother was a singer. Rossini played the violin, horn, and harpsichord and was also a singer. What parts of his body did he use when he made music?	PreK
Rossini's music often has exciting rhythms. Listen to *The Barber of Seville* Overture and move your fingers/hands/arms exactly the way the music sounds.	PreK
In Act II, Figaro and Bartolo try to convince Basilio that he has scarlet fever. What are the symptoms of scarlet fever? Was this illness common in Rossini's time? How would it have been treated? Would a barber have been called in to help cure the patient?	ES/MS/HS
Using two different sets of vocal exercises*, explore your chest voice and your head voice. How does each sound feel when you make it? What parts of your body are involved in making each kind of sound? Draw an anatomical "voice" diagram of the human torso to illustrate the difference between the two voices. *(See page 48, *Opera for Dummies*, for exercise details.)	ES/MS/HS
Almaviva and Rosina have to climb a trellis to elope. What safety precautions would a stage manager use to ensure that neither singer gets hurt?	ES/MS/HS
In Act I, the Count serenades Rosina and her "heart is enchanted." Why is the heart considered the symbolic source of love and feeling? How does this symbol relate to the human body's physical heart? What is actually the source of love and feeling in the human body?	ES/MS/HS
How has the average height of adults changed since the 18th century? What would account for these changes? Graph the height of your classmates. What is the average height for your age group? How does that compare to 18th century adults?	ES/MS/HS

History

State Standards: 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4

When Rossini was 14 years old, he entered a special school to learn music. When he was 15 years old, he made music in the theaters to earn money. Do you know anyone who takes music lessons?	PreK
Rossini travelled to many cities where his operas were performed. Where have you travelled? Where will you go in the future?	PreK
Beaumarchais was actively involved in supporting both the American Revolution and the French Revolution, mostly through commercial enterprises such as gun-running and political publications. Create a timeline of Beaumarchais's activities and publications in both Revolutions.	ES/MS/HS
Works of art are one way to preserve history; in fact, some artworks are the only evidence of some cultures' histories that are left (such as the cave paintings at Lascaux or the pre-Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf.*) What history is preserved in this opera? What are some other works of art that also reflect and preserve history, especially art that might preserve our current culture?	ES/MS/HS
In 1792, the year Rossini was born, bubonic plague broke out in Egypt. What other countries have had significant outbreaks of bubonic plague? What was the outcome of these outbreaks on history, government, and culture? Create a world map of bubonic plague outbreaks. Are there any countries that have endured multiple outbreaks of plague?	ES/MS/HS
Pick an image of a painting showing courtly life at Versailles. Look at the painting closely for a full minute. Turn the image over, and list as many details as you can remember that are specific to life at court in this era.	ES/MS/HS
How were live arts events socially important in the 18th century? What roles did attending such performances fill?	ES/MS/HS
Many performances are inspired by historical events. What historical events inspired Beaumarchais, the playwright of the trilogy on which the operas *The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro* are based? What other operas also look to history for their inspiration? Select a current event and use it to inspire an outline for your own opera.	MS/HS
Define what would be meant by "working class" in Seville in the 19th century. What servants would be needed in a noble's household? Describe the duties of each servant. How might these servants have been paid?	MS/HS
In the opera there are several characters who have titles: Doctor, Don, Count. What was the significance of these titles in the 18th century? How do these titles separate these characters from the others in the opera—what do the titles tell us about these characters? Do these titles still exist today, and if so, do they carry the same meaning?	MS/HS

In 1816, the same year that *The Barber of Seville* premiered, Spanish authority was re-established in Mexico. Who had control of Mexico prior to 1816? Create a timeline representing the history of governance in Mexico.	MS/HS
In 1816, the same year that *The Barber of Seville* premiered, Argentina declared its independence. How are Spain and Argentina connected?	MS/HS
How did Beaumarchais' diverse expertise and skills contribute to the success of the American Revolution?	MS/HS
Research the Bourbon dynasty's patronage of the arts. How did the Bourbons use the arts for political purposes? What artistic training did the French royal family and nobility receive?	HS

Mathematics CORE

State Standards: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4

Lesson Plan Stems in the Mathematics section are *Common Core Friendly*:

Gioachino Rossini was born on February 29, which only happens every four years. Count how many birthdays he actually had between 1792 and 1868.	PreK
Look at some images of instruments that Rossini wrote music for and find shapes in the instruments.	PreK
Try this "slanderous" experiment! How many seconds does it take one person to whisper a slanderous comment to another person? If one person tells a lie about someone to two people, and they each tell two more people, who in turn each tell two more, and the process continues for two hours, at the end of the two hours, how many people will have heard the lie? What implications does this word problem help us draw about the nature of slander?	ES/MS/HS
What currency was used in Seville in the 18th century? What would it cost to get a haircut in Seville?	ES/MS/HS
In The Barber of Seville, there are two acts and four scenes. Act I is 90 minutes long, and Act II is 60 minutes long. If the opera were divided into 4 separate acts, how much time would it take? How long would an intermission be? How long can an opera be before the company needs to pay employees overtime pay?	ES/MS/HS
How much money does the average American couple spend on a wedding nowadays? Create a budget for Rosina's wedding to the Count. Graph the budget in a chart that best represents each cost and its proportion to the whole cost of their wedding.	MS/HS

Science and Technology and Engineering Education

State Standards: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4

Rossini's last opera was *William Tell,* which includes a scene where Tell shoots an apple off his son's head. Pretend that you are shooting a bow and arrow and learn how to aim at a target.	PreK
At the first performance of *The Barber of Seville,* a cat walked onstage when it was not expected. Do you have a pet cat or dog? Does it ever do unexpected things?	PreK
What was the role of a barber in 18th century society? Why is a barber's pole striped red and white? When did surgery become part of a doctor's training?	ES/MS/HS
Create a chart comparing how an 18th century barber would have treated certain illnesses common to that era (such as scarlet fever), and how those illnesses are treated today. Create a model of a doctor's "first aid" kit or medical bag for the 18th century. What equipment would have been essential back then?	ES/MS/HS
A secret note plays an important role in this opera's plot. How can a secret message be kept secret? Investigate methods such as code writing and invisible ink. Create your own method for keeping secrets secret. How important are notes to students? How do students communicate secretly with each other during class?	ES/MS/HS
In the opera, a storm occurs in Act II. What are the atmospheric conditions under which a storm is produced? Using objects found in the classroom, create your own storm sounds. Encode your "found" storm sounds, so that your storm can be repeated as you intended it to be heard.	ES/MS/HS
In this opera, the Count writes a love letter to Rosina, as letter-writing was a common form of communication in the 18th century. Trace the evolution of communication methods from the 18th century through today. What technological breakthroughs have aided this evolution? How do we communicate today?	MS/HS
Compare modern aerosol shaving cream to traditional shaving soap. How is shaving cream made? How do aerosol cans work?	MS/HS
In 1792, the year Rossini was born, bubonic plague broke out in Egypt. What causes bubonic plague? What are the symptoms of infection? Compare the precautions take to avoid plagues and the treatment of the infected in the 18th century to today's precautions and treatments.	MS/HS

World Languages

ACTFL Standards: 1 Communication, 2 Cultures, 3 Connections, 4 Comparison, 5 Communities
(National Standards from American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages)

Learn how to say the names of some orchestral instruments in French, German (nouns are capitalized), and Italian: flute, flute, Flöte, flauto clarinet, clarinette, Klarinette, clarinetto horn, cor, Horn, corno violin, violon, Violine, violin bass, contrebasse, Kontrabass, contrabasso	PreK
Rossini spoke Italian and French. Look at some words in those languages and find letters that have extra markings on them.	PreK
Learn the phrase "How much for a haircut" in one of the languages that an 18th century nobleman would have been expected to know. Teach the phrase to your classmates.	ES/MS/HS
Figaro and Dr. Bartolo often sing in patter-song. Create a short monologue in a foreign language that is the equivalent of patter, and learn to speak (or sing) the speech as fluently or as quickly as possible.	ES/MS/HS
FRENCH FOCUS The French national anthem "La Marseillaise" was composed in 1792 by Claude Josef Rouget de Lisle, the same year in which Rossini was born. What is this song about? How did it become the French national anthem? Did Spain have a national anthem at that time? Did the United States? Create a graphic organizer to compare all three national anthems.	ES/MS/HS
Look at the root words in the Count's name. What does the name "Almaviva" suggest? Does the name fit his character? How can one learn about Latin etymology?	ES/MS/HS
How do opera singers learn to sing languages that they do not speak? Are there languages that every opera singer must learn?	MS/HS
SPANISH FOCUS Though *The Barber of Seville* is set in Spain, it is sung in Italian. Compare the similarities and differences between Italian and Spanish.	MS/HS
What is the International Phonetic Alphabet? For what purpose was it developed? How is it used today?	MS/HS
In Act I, Basilio encourages Dr. Bartolo to slander the Count. What was considered to be "slander" in Rossini's time? How would someone have been punished for slander in the 18th century? Research idioms that are used in various cultures to indicate slander. What cultural differences exist?	MS/HS

Character Themes for *The Barber of Seville*

Eleanore N. Childs, a Pittsburgh attorney and child advocate, worked with teachers for more than a decade to research character education and develop the Heartwood Ethics Curriculum for Children. Heartwood's *life lessons through literature* promote understanding and practice of seven universal character attributes, which constitute the foundation of community among all people.

The Heartwood Institute defined seven universal character attributes:

- **Courage** is not only mastering fear; it is the ability to face difficulty or risk with integrity and honor.
- **Loyalty** is being faithful to a person, group, or ideal based on understanding that we are all part of something greater than ourselves.
- **Justice** is being guided by a balance of truth, reason, and fairness to all.
- **Respect** is regard for all life on earth. It calls us to value all people and their contributions, viewpoints, and differences, such as culture, religion, age, race, and ability.
- **Hope** guides our future through faith and aspiration, helping us to rise above selfishness and despair.
- **Honesty** is being truthful and honorable, the foundation for friendship and community.
- **Love** is deep care and concern for others, encompassing all the attributes. The more love we give, the richer we become.

Discuss two attributes—honesty and love—after reading the synopsis of *The Barber of Seville.*

1. In order to woo Rosina, Count Almaviva uses several disguises. What does the Count's use of these disguises tell us about his concept of honesty? Would an honest person behave as Almaviva does? How might his current behavior affect his married life with Rosina?

2. Does Rosina love anyone? Do you agree with her idea of love? Does Count Almaviva truly love Rosina? How would the Count define love? How would Dr. Bartolo define love? How many different kinds of love are shown in this opera?

3. Given the above definition of honesty, chart the behaviors of each main character in this opera. Are there any honest characters in this opera?

4. Consider the behaviors of each character. What do you think Rossini and Beaumarchais are saying about the nature of love and honesty? Does their portrayal of both character attributes add to the comedy of this opera? Would their portrayals work equally well in a tragedy?

5. Figaro may be viewed as a "busybody" who knows all that is happening. Is this trait recognizable in others today? How did Figaro display honest (or dishonesty) in his antics?

6. The *Barber* characters run in all directions at the end of Act II, resulting in chaos, but the opera ultimately ends happily. Were the characters thinking of the whole community at the beginning? Does this happen in modern situations?