

The Marriage of Figaro

Elementary School Study Guide

Written by Jennifer Trochez-MacLean



Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Text by Lorenzo da Ponte

Based on the play by Pierre de Beaumarchais "La folle journée, ou Le mariage de Figaro"

Premiered on May 1, 1786 in Vienna, Austria

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WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART 1756 — 1791

Probably the greatest genius in Western musical history, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg, Austria, Jan. 27, 1756, the son of Leopold Mozart and his wife, Anna Maria Pertl. Leopold was a successful composer, violinist and assistant concertmaster at the Salzburg court.

Wolfgang began composing minuets at the age of 5 and symphonies at 9. When he was 6, he and his older sister, Maria Anna, performed a series of concerts to Europe's courts and major cities. Both children played the keyboard, but Wolfgang became a violin virtuoso as well.

In 1762 the Mozart children played at court in Vienna; the Empress Maria Theresa and her husband, Emperor Francis I, received them. From 1763-66, the Mozart children displayed their talents to audiences in Germany, Paris, at court in Versailles, and London, which is where Wolfgang wrote his first symphonies and began a friendship with Johann Christian Bach, who became a great musical influence on Wolfgang. In Paris, the young Mozart published his first works, four sonatas for clavier with accompanying violin (1764). In 1768 he composed his first opera, *La Finta Semplice*, which had its premiere in Salzburg. In 1769-70, Leopold and Wolfgang undertook a tour through Italy. This first Italian trip culminated in a new opera, *Mitridate, re di Ponto*, composed for Milan. In two further Italian journeys he wrote two more operas for Milan, *Ascanio in Alba* (1771) and *Lucio Silla* (1772).

In 1772, Archbishop von Schrattenbach died, to be succeeded by Hieronymus von Colloredo. The latter, at first sympathetic to the Mozarts, later became irritated by Wolfgang's prolonged absences and stubborn ways. In 1772, von Colloredo retained Wolfgang as concertmaster at a token salary. In this capacity Mozart composed a large number of sacred and secular works. Wishing to secure a better position outside Salzburg, he obtained permission to undertake another journey in 1777. With his mother he traveled to France, where he composed the Paris Symphony (1778) but he was unable to find a permanent position. His mother died in Paris.

When Mozart returned to Salzburg he was given the position of court organist (1779) and produced a splendid series of church works, including the famous Coronation Mass. He was commissioned to compose a new opera for Munich, *Idomeneo* (1781), that proved he was a consummate master of opera seria. Summoned by von Colloredo to Vienna in 1781 he was dismissed after a series of arguments.

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Mozart's career in Vienna began promisingly, and he was soon commissioned to write *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (1782). His concerts were a great success, and the Emperor, Joseph II, encouraged him and later made him a court composer. In 1782 the now-popular Mozart married Constanze Weber from Germany, much to his father's dismay. The young pair visited Salzburg in 1783; there, the Kyrie and Gloria of Mozart's great Mass in C Minor, composed in Vienna and never finished, were performed. Mozart's greatest success was *Le Nozze di Figaro* (The Marriage of Figaro) (1786), composed for the Vienna Opera. The great piano concertos and the string quartets dedicated to his "dear friend" Josef Haydn were also composed during this period.

Mozart's fame began to disappear after *Figaro*. The nobility and court grew increasingly nervous about the revolutionary ideas they saw in *Figaro*. He sank into debt and was assisted by a brother Freemason, Michael Puchberg. (Mozart had joined the Masons in 1784 and remained an outspoken member until his death).

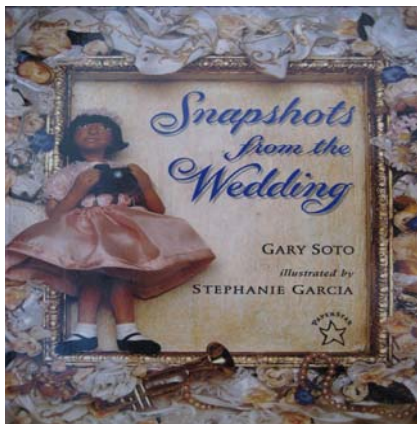
Mozart's greatest operatic success after Figaro was *Don Giovanni* (1787), composed for Prague, where Mozart's art was especially appreciated. This was followed in 1790 by *Così fan tutte*, the third and final libretto provided by the Italian poet Lorenzo Da Ponte; and in 1791 by *Die Zauberflöte* (The Magic Flute), produced by a suburban theater in Vienna. During this period of financial strain, Mozart composed his last three symphonies (E flat, G minor, and the Jupiter in C) in less than 7 weeks (summer 1788). These had been preceded by a great series of string quintets, including the two in C and in G minor (1787).

In 1791, Mozart was commissioned to write a requiem that remains unfinished. He was at the time quite ill—he had never known very good health—and imagined that the work was for himself, which it proved to be. His death, on Dec. 5, 1791, which gave rise to false rumors of poisoning, is thought to have resulted from rheumatic fever, a disease which he had suffered from repeatedly throughout his life. After a cheap funeral at Saint Stephen's Cathedral, he was buried in an unmarked grave at the cemetery of Saint Marx. Much has been made of this, but at that time such burial was legally required for all Viennese except those of noble or aristocratic birth.

Mozart excelled in every form in which he composed. His contemporaries found the restless ambivalence and complicated emotional content of his music difficult to understand. Accustomed to the light, superficial style of rococo music, his aristocratic audiences could not accept the music's complexity and depth. Yet, with Josef Haydn, Mozart perfected the grand forms of symphony, opera, string quartet, and concerto that marked the classical period in music. In his operas Mozart's

uncanny psychological insight is unique in musical history. His music informed the work of the later Haydn and of the next generation of composers, most notably Beethoven. The brilliance of his work continued until the end, although darker themes of poignancy and isolation grew more marked in his last years, and his compositions continue to exert a particular fascination for musicians and music lovers.

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BUILDING BACKGROUND:

SNAPSHOTS FROM THE WEDDING BY GARY SOTO

Snapshots from the Wedding
Written by Gary Soto
Illustrated by Stephanie Garcia

Paper Star • Penguin Group, 1998
ISBN 0-698-11752-2

About The Story

Maya, the flower girl, describes a Mexican American wedding through snapshots of the day's events. The day's events begin with the procession to the altar and with her falling asleep in her family's car on their way home from the reception—a wedding to remember!

The events at the wedding ceremony are described by Maya, who introduces her family members with detailed and descriptive accounts about them and their behaviors at the church, on their way to the reception, and at the reception itself. Maya's perspective of what happens at the church and reception provides a humorous insight into how a child may perceive an event that is often seen as an adult activity. In addition, the documentation of Isabel's and Rafael's wedding provides insight to customs and traditions that make this event memorable and meaningful to Maya and her family.

Connections to *The Marriage of Figaro*

The opera of *The Marriage of Figaro* takes place in the castle of Count Almaviva near Seville, Spain, 1778, on the character Figaro's wedding-day. Reading the story of *Snapshots from the Wedding* and using the illustrations can serve as a way to introduce the importance and traditions of a wedding to young children. In addition, Maya's humorous account of Isabel's and Rafael's wedding can serve as a way for young students to connect their personal experiences of a wedding to the story of Figaro and his marriage to his love, Susanna.

Just as *The Marriage of Figaro* is a comedy, the accounts given by Maya of Isabel's and Rafael's wedding day reveal the light-hearted aspects of such an important day in a couple's life. By reading and discussing *Snapshots from the Wedding*, students should be able to draw similarities and differences between weddings they have attended or participated in and Maya's role in Isabel's and Rafael's wedding. Additionally, the concept of traditions and heritage in weddings is introduced in the story.

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As You Read

As you read the story, ask the students if they have ever attended a wedding, or were ever part of a wedding party. Ask students to help identify customs or traditions that are part of Isabel's and Rafael's wedding. Choose a tradition that is highlighted in Snapshot from the Wedding and use it as a starting point for discussion on how different cultures have similar or different wedding traditions. Students can also be guided in a conversation on the importance of heritage and family traditions.

Using the Illustrations

Ask students to look at the illustrations for information about wedding customs and traditions. Ask students to identify how the illustrations of this book are different from other children picture books with which they may be familiar.

Point out to them that Maya is documenting events of the wedding from her perspective by taking snapshots to tell her story. Ask students to describe these "photographs," i.e. how are these photographs the same and different from actual photographs? Ask students to share their ideas about why the illustrator, Stephanie Garcia, may have chosen to illustrate this story by photographing dioramas that depict the events of the wedding. How does this technique help with the light-hearted retelling of Isabel's and Rafael's wedding?

After You Read: Writing Prompt

Ask students to think about and explain an important wedding tradition or custom that their family has. Encourage students to write about a special wedding tradition or custom that is part of their family's heritage. Here's an example of a prompt you might use: "When we celebrate a wedding in my family, we. . ."

When they are done writing, you may ask students to share with others what they have written.

Snapshot from a Wedding: Making a Diorama

Maya documents the events of a wedding by sharing her pictures of that day. Stephanie Garcia uses dioramas to create Maya's "snapshots." To illustrate the wedding custom or tradition that your students wrote about earlier, have your students make a diorama to create a snapshot about the wedding custom or tradition that is important to their family's heritage.

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Before your class begins this activity, explain to students that a diorama is a partially three-dimensional model of a landscape typically showing things like historical events, nature scenes, and cityscapes for purposes of education or entertainment.

In this activity the diorama will be used to teach others about a wedding custom or tradition important to their family's heritage. A list of materials needed to construct the dioramas follows, followed by a set of instructions.

Materials:

- one shoebox per student (ask students to bring a shoebox from home)
- art supplies, such as different types of papers, fabric, clay, pipe cleaners, etc.
- magazines that students can cut out pictures of people—bridal magazines can be a starting point, but may not encompass all different cultures and peoples
- copies of photographs from a family wedding--make sure you inform students' parents that these photographs should not be originals, but instead should be a duplicate photo or a color xerox copy of the photograph, since students may need to cut out individuals from the photograph for their diorama
- tempera paints and brushes
- glue and tape
- scissors
- a blank sheet of paper and pencil per student to draft/plan the diorama
- other embellishments that can be used to decorate the shoebox diorama—encourage students to also bring in items that may be helpful in creating their wedding "snapshot"

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Instructions:

1. Using the illustrations in Snapshot from the Wedding, review the types of dioramas that were created to become the "photographs" in Maya's photo essay of Isabel's and Rafael's wedding. Have students focus on the fact that not all the snapshots show portraits or photographs of complete scenes; some show specific details that focus on a tradition or custom. Encourage students to be creative in how they depict the wedding tradition or custom that is a part of their family's heritage.
2. Have students use a pencil and a blank sheet of paper to create a draft of what their diorama will look like.
3. Have students remove the lid off their shoebox. Explain to your students that the shoebox will be placed on its side and the inside of the box will be used to showcase the scene that will be part of the diorama.
4. Have students decorate the outside of their box. Set the box aside to dry, if needed.
5. Have students use the arts and crafts materials available to them, as well as materials they brought from home, to create the items that will be placed inside their diorama.
6. Have students glue and secure the items inside their shoe box to complete their diorama.
7. Have students share their dioramas with each other.

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SETTING THE STAGE: CREATING A PERSONAL SYNOPSIS

Objectives of Engagement

- Students will work in cooperative groups to familiarize themselves with the synopsis of *The Marriage of Figaro*.
- Students will make a cubic display for their personal synopsis of the opera that will demonstrate an understanding of the four acts in *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Suggested Number of Class Periods: 2

Class Period 1

In the first class period students will work in teams to become familiar with one of the four acts in the synopsis of *The Marriage of Figaro*, as well as prepare a presentation to share with the class. During the second class period, student groups will present to each the act that they have become the "experts" on to the other students. Using what they have learned from each other, students will then complete a cubic display of the synopsis of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Materials for Class Period 1

- Student copies of the synopsis of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Activity

1. Divide the students into four groups, one group per act. Each group will be responsible to work as a team to read their assigned act of *The Marriage of Figaro*. Each group will also be responsible to present their "act" to the other three groups.
2. Tell the students that their group will become an expert on one of the four acts in the story line of *The Marriage of Figaro*.
3. Assign each group one of the four acts in *The Marriage of Figaro*.
4. Hand each student in a group a copy of the act assigned to their group. Each student should have a copy of the act he or she will be responsible to understand in order to create the group's presentation of that act.

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5. Allot time for each group to read and discuss their assigned act. Within the group students can partner up and "buddy read" the act, or the group can popcorn read the act. Choose the reading technique that you feel will enable all your students to understand what happens in their act and that works best with your class and style of classroom management.
6. Check-in with all the groups as they are reading and discussing their act to help ensure all students have access to the information from the synopsis.
7. Allot time for the groups to plan and prepare their 5-10 minute presentation of what happens in their act. The groups should be encouraged to "act" out their assigned act or to find another creative way to "teach" their classmates about what happens in the act.

Class Period 2

Materials for Class Period 2

- Student copies of the synopsis of *The Marriage of Figaro*
- Two 8 1/2" x 11" sheets of paper per student; cardstock pre-scored can also be used
- Scissors
- Glue sticks or transparent tape
- Pencils, crayons, etc.
- Four chart papers titled accordingly: Act I, Act II, Act III, Act IV

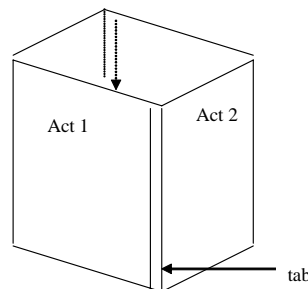
Activity

1. Before the students begin their group presentations, have students make the cubic displays needed today by following steps 2 through 8. A diagram on the next page illustrates what the display should look like once completed.
2. Give each student two 8 1/2" x 11" sheets of construction paper.
3. Have students fold their sheet of paper in half, a hamburger fold, folding one side one half inch shorter than the other side. By doing so a one half inch tab will be created on one side of the sheet. This tab will be used to join the two sheets of paper together in a later step.
4. Have students then fold the long side over the short side of both sheets of paper, making the tabs.

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6. Place the non-folded edge of the second sheet of paper into the crease and fold the glue-covered tab over this sheet of paper. Have students press flat until the glue holds. Repeat step 5 and 6 with the other side.
7. Allow the glue to dry completely before continuing. Alternatively, transparent tape can also be used to eliminate glue drying time for the cube. After the glue has dried, the cube can be collapsed flat to allow students to draw and write on each side of the cube.
8. Each side of the cube will represent one act in *The Marriage of Figaro*. Have students label each side of the cube respectively: Act I, Act II, Act III, Act IV. Once the cubic displays are made, students can set them aside during the small group presentations of the individual acts.
9. The group responsible for Act I can present to the other three groups.
10. After the presentation, have students volunteer a list of events that happened in Act I. A brief group discussion, guided by the teacher, following the presentation of Act I, may be necessary to ensure that students are introduced to the characters in that act, understand the sequence of events in the first act, and so that any clarifications needed can be made. Chart character names and the sequences of events under the chart paper labeled Act I. This will later serve as a reference for students to create their personal synopsis of *The Marriage of Figaro*.
11. For each of the subsequent three acts, repeat steps 8 ,9 and 10.
12. Using the information they gathered from their reading, the presentations, and reference charts created by the teacher, students will create their personal synopsis of *The Marriage of Figaro* using their cubic display.
13. Once all presentations are completed, instruct students to create their personal synopsis of *The Marriage of Figaro*. On each side of the cube, students are to illustrate an image that is representative of a significant event within that act. They are also to write 2-3 sentences underneath their drawing that explains the event. Remind students that they can refer to the charts created from their presentations and discussion to help them with their personal synopsis of the opera.
14. Upon completing their personal synopsis, have your students partner up with a classmate and share their work with each other.
15. Once the students are done sharing with each other, the cubes can be displayed in the classroom. When not displayed, students can collapse their cubic display and store.

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EXTENSION ACTIVITY: “THE MERRY MATCH GAME”

Suggested Number of Class Periods: 1

In the chaos of Mozart's comedy, *The Marriage of Figaro*, keeping the names of the characters straight may be a challenge. By playing “The Merry match Game” in teams of two, students can learn who’s who in a fun way.

Materials for "The Merry Match Game"

- Student copies of the game cards; one set of cards per two students—xerox copies onto cardstock to make cards sturdy
- Scissors and a Ziplock bag for storage of each game set
- Prepared sentence strips with names of characters and another set with their descriptions to play a classroom round of "The Merry Match Game" (optional)

Activity

1. Review the directions on how to make the card set with your students.
2. Once the teams have cut out their cards and are ready to play, review the directions on how to play the game. Directions are on the student handout for this activity.
3. Allow the teams to play a few rounds of "The Merry Match Game." As they are playing they will become familiar with the names of the key characters in *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Optional Activity:

1. Mix up the names and character descriptions and place in a large sentence strip chart, text facing in.
2. After the individual teams have played their rounds of "The Merry Match Game," divide the class into two teams. These two teams will play against each other.
3. A member from each team (this can be rotated per turn) will turn over two cards to show the text. If there is no match, then the cards are turned over again, and the other team has their turn. If there is a match, the team holds on to that pair. That team has one more turn before the other team takes their turn. Teams can help their teammate make a decision on what cards to turn over.
4. The game is over when all pairs of names and descriptions have been matched. The team with the most pairs wins.

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Solution to The Merry Match Game

<u>Character</u>	<u>Description</u>
Barbarina	To her father's dismay, she was caught with Cherubino, the Count's page.
Cherubino	His downfall is that he easily falls in love with women, but in the end he marries the gardener's daughter at her request.
Count Almaviva	He has his eyes on Susanna, but becomes upset when he finds out Cherubino has a crush on the Countess.
Countess Almaviva	She is heartbroken because she believes her husband does not love her anymore, so she disguises herself as "Susanna" to trick him.
Dr. Bartolo	He is looking to avenge himself on Figaro, but instead is surprised to learn that he is his father.
Figaro	He is to marry Susanna, only if he can repay his debt to Marcellina.
Marcellina	She realizes that she is Figaro's mother when he declares that he was stolen from his parents when he was an infant.
Susanna	She disguises herself as the "Countess," and together with the Countess plots to catch the Count with "Susanna."



MAKING CONNECTIONS

UNCLE PETER'S AMAZING CHINESE WEDDING BY LENORE LOOK

Uncle Peter's Amazing Chinese Wedding
Written by Lenore Look
Illustrated by Yumi Heo

Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2006
ISBN-13: 978-0-689-84458-4

About The Story

Jenny's favorite uncle, Uncle Peter, is getting married. Although everyone in her family is excited about Uncle Peter's wedding to Stella, Jenny is afraid that Stella will replace her as Uncle Peter's number-one girl.

While everyone is running around happily getting ready for a traditional Chinese wedding, Jenny fights hard to hold back her tears as she struggles to accept that Stella will now be the most important person in her Uncle Peter's life.

Right before the traditional tea ceremony, Jenny has an idea; if she can stop the day's events from happening, her uncle will never marry Stella, and she will continue to be her uncle's number-one girl. As the family prepares for the tea ceremony to officially welcome Stella into the family, Jenny begins to carry out her plan.

Despite her attempts to keep Uncle Peter from marrying Stella, the day's events are carried out and it is time for the family banquet and reception. Jenny is heartbroken, convinced that she has been replaced by Stella.

When it is time for the family to say good-bye to the newly married couple, Aunt Stella pulls Jenny outside. It is during this moment, that Aunt Stella tells Jenny that she loves her, her first and only niece. Uncle Peter hugs Jenny, while Aunt Stella hugs both of them, thanking Jenny for allowing her to share Jenny's amazing uncle with her. Jenny welcomes Aunt Stella into the family before Uncle Peter and Aunt Stella get in their car and drive away.

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As You Read

As you read the story, continue the discussion on wedding traditions and customs that was begun with the reading activity for Snapshot from the Wedding. Ask students to help identify customs or traditions that are part of Uncle Peter's wedding to Stella. Point out to the students that just like in *The Marriage of Figaro*, there is a wedding that needs to take place, but there is a character who does not want to see the wedding happen. Who is that character? What motivates Jenny to devise a plan to keep Peter and Stella from marrying? What is Jenny's plan? Is she successful in keeping Peter and Stella from marrying each other? Why is Stella's gesture toward Jenny, near the end of the story, important?

Using the Illustrations

Ask students to look at the illustrations for information about Chinese wedding customs and traditions. Ask students to identify how the illustrations of this book are different from other children picture books in which they may be familiar. How do the illustrations in this book differ from the illustrations in Snapshot from the Wedding?

After You Read

After reading, students will compare and contrast Uncle Peter's Amazing Chinese Wedding and *The Marriage of Figaro* by making a Venn Diagram.

Students in this activity will compare and contrast story elements from Uncle Peter's Amazing Chinese Wedding and *The Marriage of Figaro* by creating a group Venn Diagram led by you. A list of the materials needed for this activity follow, followed by instructions for the activity.

Materials:

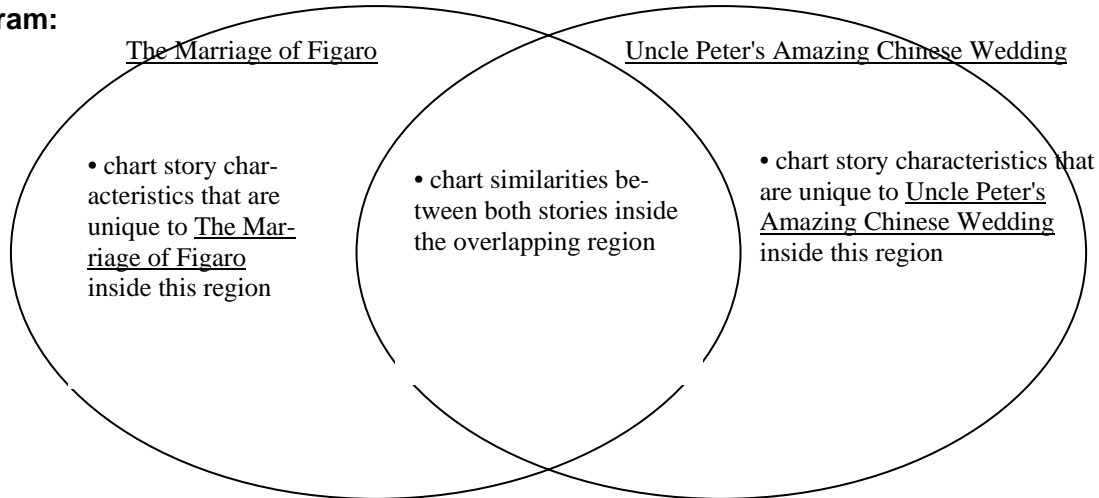
- a large piece of butcher paper or chart paper for the group's Venn Diagram
- chart markers: blue, red, and purple
- blank sheets of paper (optional)

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Instructions:

1. Before the activity, draw the two overlapping circles that create a Venn Diagram. For one of the circles, use the blue marker and for the other, use the red marker. Title each circle: one circle will be labeled "The Marriage of Figaro," while the other will be labeled "Uncle Peter's Amazing Chinese Wedding." As you title the circle, use the corresponding color for its title.
2. After reading and discussing Uncle Peter's Amazing Chinese Wedding, begin to ask students how this story is similar to The Marriage of Figaro. How are they different from each other?
3. Begin to chart student responses. Take care to use the circle's corresponding color to chart unique characteristics of each of the stories; use the purple marker to chart characteristics shared by both stories. Chart these responses in the area where both circles overlap.
4. If you would like your students have their individual Venn Diagrams, have them draw/copy the Venn Diagram you have posted. Once they have had 5-10 minutes to quietly reflect and fill in their Venn Diagrams, then you can lead the charting of the group Venn Diagram. Students can then copy any responses that have been contributed by their classmates.

Venn Diagram:



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JUST FOR FUN: *THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO* WORD SEARCH

Print copies of the word search student sheet and hand to students. The solution to the puzzle is below.

	A					C		C		A				
B		R			U		H		N					
	A		I	R		E		N						
		S	Z	S	R	B	A	R	T	O	L	O		
		I	I	U	T	S								
	O		B	L	U	O					B			
		I		S	I		C				U			
	N	S				O		R			F	S	F	
O			S						A		F	T	I	
M	A	R	C	E	L	L	I	N	A	T	O	N	G	
					T	T					O	A	A	
Y	D	E	M	O	C	N	N				N	V	R	
							U	U			E	R	O	
								O	O		R	E		
A	N	I	R	A	B	R	A	B	C	C	Y	S		

Word (Over, Down, Direction):

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- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| ARISTOCRAT (2, 1, SE) | COUNT (11, 15, NW) |
| BARBARINA (9, 15, W) | COUNTESS (10, 15, SW) |
| BARTOLO (7, 4, E) | CURZIO (7, 1, SW) |
| BASILIO (1, 2, SE) | FIGARO (14, 8, S) |
| BUFFOONERY (12, 6, S) | MARCELLINA (1, 10, E) |
| CHERUBINO (9, 1, SW) | SERVANTS (1, 15, N) |
| COMEDY (6, 12, W) | SUSANNA (5, 7, NE) |

STUDENT HANDOUTS: *THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO* SYNOPSIS

Act 1

A room in the castle of Count Almaviva near Seville, Spain, 1778.

It is the wedding day of Figaro and Susanna. Figaro, the servant of the count, and Susanna, the maid of the Countess, are measuring the room they have received from the Count to use as their bedroom. Susanna dislikes the room, claiming that it is much too close to the rooms of the Count. She then tells Figaro that the Count has his eye on her. The Countess rings and Susanna departs. Figaro resolves that he will thwart his master's plans.

Dr. Bartolo and Marcellina enter. Figaro is in debt to Marcellina and has promised to marry her if he doesn't repay her. Bartolo rejoices in this opportunity to avenge himself on Figaro, who arranged the elopement of the Count and Rosina (the "Countess"), whom Bartolo had hoped to marry himself. As Bartolo exits, Susanna enters and has a brief, barbed encounter with Marcellina, who then departs.

Cherubino, the Count's page, dashes in. He explains that the Count discovered him with Barbarina, the daughter of the gardener Antonio, and he will be sent away. He states that he is in love with the countess as well as every other woman in the palace and asks Susanna to give a song to the Countess. They hear the Count approaching, so cherubino hides behind an armchair. The count, thinking that he is alone with Susanna, begins making advances to her until he interrupted by the arrival of Don Basilio, the music teacher. He conceals himself behind the same chair as Cherubino, who has now moved to the other side and covered himself with a blanket. Basilio gossips about the goings-on in the castle including Cherubino's infatuation with the Countess. The Count becomes angry and reveals himself, discovering Cherubino at the same time. Aware that the boy has overheard his own indiscretions, he vents his anger by giving Cherubino a commission in his Regiment, for which he must leave immediately.

Figaro arrives, carrying Susanna's wedding veil and accompanied by villagers who sing the Count's praises. Figaro thanks the Count for renouncing the wedding-night custom, and asks the Count to give Susanna the veil as a symbol of purity. Count Almaviva says he would prefer to postpone the ceremony until he can celebrate the occasion appropriately. After the villagers leave, both Figaro and Susanna try to persuade the Count to allow Cherubino to stay, but to no avail. Figaro then tells Cherubino about the rigors of military life.

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STUDENT HANDOUTS: *THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO* SYNOPSIS

Act 2

In the bedroom of the Countess.

The Countess mourns her husband's waning affections towards her. Susanna and Figaro enter and tell the Countess that the Count is trying to seduce Susanna. They devise a plan. The Count will be given a note that says that the Countess is having an affair. While the Count is investigating, Figaro and Susanna will be married quickly. At the same time, they will disguise Cherubino as Susanna and arrange a rendezvous with the Count.

Cherubino arrives and begins trying on his disguise. He sings "Voi che sapete," a love song to the Countess. His commission falls out of his uniform and the Countess notices there is no official seal on it. The Count arrives. Cherubino hides in the dressing room and Susanna hides behind a screen.

The Count is suspicious, as he's just received the anonymous letter regarding the Countess' supposed infidelity. Upon hearing a noise, the Count demands to know who is hiding in the dressing room. When the countess refuses to tell him, he compels her to accompany him to find a hammer to break down the door. Cherubino jumps out of the window, leaving Susanna to take his place in the dressing room. The Countess tells Almaviva that it is Cherubino who is in her dressing room. The Count searches for Cherubino.

Finding no one, Almaviva begs for forgiveness. Antonio, the gardener, bursts in complaining that someone has just jumped out of the window and spoiled his flowers. Susanna and the Countess try to convince the Count that Antonio is drunk again, but it is Figaro who assumes the blame, saying that it was he who jumped from the window.

Antonio produces some papers that Figaro claims were given him by Cherubino to have officially sealed. Marcellina enters with Dr. Bartolo and Basilio to demand justice. Figaro must marry Marcellina, or repay his debt. The Count must investigate.

The Marriage of Figaro

STUDENT HANDOUTS: *THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO* SYNOPSIS

Act 3

A hall in the castle.

The count reflects on the current situation when Susanna enters. She says she's prepared to meet him later that evening in the garden if he will give her the dowry he had promised. With the dowry, Susanna will be able to pay off Marcellina and marry Figaro. Susanna leaves and meets Figaro and assures him they will win their case. The Count overhears and becomes infuriated that his servants enjoy a happiness that he does not.

Figaro, Marcellina and Dr. Bartolo join the count and his notary, Don Curzio, for the judgement: Figaro must marry Marcellina, or repay his debt. Figaro protests that he needs the consent of his parents, from whom he was stolen as an infant. Marcellina realizes that Figaro is her long lost son by Dr. Bartolo. As Marcellina and Figaro embrace, it is decided that the wedding will be a double one; Marcellina will marry Dr. Bartolo and Figaro will marry Susanna.

Meanwhile, the Countess is still mourning the loss of her husband's affections. Susanna enters. She tells the Countess of the outcome of Figaro's case and writes a note for Almaviva to wait in the pine grove. They seal the letter with a pin.

Barbarina and the disguised Cherubino, along with other village girls, arrive with flowers for the Countess. The Count enters with Antonio, who reveals that Cherubino was indeed the one who jumped out of the balcony window into his flower bed. The Count wants to punish Cherubino, but Barbarina pleads that instead, Cherubino be made her husband. After all, the Count promised her "everything she wanted" in exchange for her affections. The Count agrees.

Figaro enters and the wedding march begins. At the wedding celebration, Susanna passes the note to Almaviva who pricks his finger on the pin. Figaro notices that the Count had received a love letter and is amused by the pin prick. The Count promises splendid entertainment for the evening.

The Marriage of Figaro

STUDENT HANDOUTS: *THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO* SYNOPSIS

Act 4

The garden in the castle.

Figaro and Marcellina happen upon Barbarina, who is searching for the pin that the Count asked her to return to Susanna. Figaro realizes that it was Susanna who sent the Count the love letter and gives Barbarina one of Marcellina's pins to find out the location of the planned tryst. Figaro complains to Marcellina about Susanna's supposed infidelity and, while Marcellina tries to explain that all is not as it seems, Figaro plans revenge. Both leave.

Barbarina returns, as she has a date with Cherubino, but is frightened by a noise and runs into one of the pavilions. Figaro returns with Bartolo and Basilio as witnesses to his wife's infidelity. Figaro tells them to hide until he gives the signal and then Figaro moves to another part of the garden, still defending the jealousy of men and determining not to trust women.

Marcellina, Susanna, and the Countess enter. Susanna and the Countess have switched clothing. Susanna, aware that Figaro is listening, sings about her approaching happiness with her lover. The Countess (now disguised as Susanna) awaits the planned tryst with the Count. However, Cherubino happens upon her and begins flirting.

The Count enters and begins seducing "Susanna." The real Susanna (disguised as the Countess) is confronted by Figaro, who tells her that the Count is with his Susanna. She asks Figaro to be quiet, but forgets to disguise her voice. The truth begins to dawn on Figaro, who then pleads passionate love to the "Countess." A furious Susanna slaps Figaro who tells her that he knew she was in disguise all along. Continuing the prank, Figaro and the "Countess" loudly confess their love and the Count rushes in to catch the two lovers.

Basilio, Bartolo, Don Curzio, and Antonio all rush in to investigate the ruckus and the Count denounces his faithless wife. All beg the Count to forgive his wife, but he refuses until the real Countess unveils herself. Almaviva realizes that he has fallen prey to a prank and begs forgiveness. The Countess forgives him and all celebrate the end of a crazy day.

The Marriage of Figaro

STUDENT HANDOUTS: "THE MERRY MATCH GAME" CARDS

Cut out the cards on the next two pages. Once the cards are cut, you can play "The Merry Match Game."

To play: Turn the cards over to expose the blank side of the card (text face down). Mix them up and then arrange the cards into four columns by four rows. Each person will take a turn to turn over any two cards. If the cards show a name of a character in *The Marriage of Figaro* and the correct description of that character, then you have a match. If you match correctly, remove the pairs of cards and set them aside. You can then take one more turn. If you do not match the character with the correct description of the character, then turn the cards over again, and the next player takes a turn.

The game is over once all characters have been matched with their description. The winner is the person with the most matching pairs at the end of the game.

The Marriage
of Figaro

<p>Figaro</p>	<p>He is to marry Susanna, only if he can repay his debt to Marcellina.</p>
<p>Barbarina</p>	<p>He has his eyes on Susanna, but becomes upset when he finds out Cherubino has a crush on the Countess.</p>
<p>He is looking to avenge himself on Figaro, but instead is surprised to learn that he is his father.</p>	<p>Count Almaviva</p>
<p>Dr. Bartolo</p>	<p>To her father's dismay, she was caught with Cherubino, the Count's page.</p>

The Marriage
of Figaro

<p>Countess Almaviva</p>	<p>She is heartbroken because she believes her husband does not love her anymore, so she disguises herself as "Susanna" to trick him.</p>
<p>She realizes that she is Figaro's mother when he declares that he was stolen from his parents when he was an infant.</p>	<p>Cherubino</p>
<p>Marcellina</p>	<p>She disguises herself as the "Countess," and together with the Countess plot to catch the Count with "Susanna."</p>
<p>His downfall is that he easily falls in love with women, but in the end he marries the gardener's daughter at her request.</p>	<p>Susanna</p>

The Marriage
of Figaro

NAME: _____

The Marriage of Figaro Word Search

W	A	T	H	C	O	C	D	C	K	A	J	E	E	Q
B	R	R	Q	E	U	W	H	S	N	R	Q	B	V	O
P	A	P	I	R	D	E	V	N	E	S	K	M	I	D
R	E	S	Z	S	R	B	A	R	T	O	L	O	V	C
S	X	I	I	U	T	S	P	K	D	S	D	D	F	Y
I	O	D	B	L	U	O	R	K	N	A	B	X	C	Q
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M	A	R	C	E	L	L	I	N	A	T	O	N	G	A
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Y	D	E	M	O	C	N	N	H	O	J	N	V	R	D
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N	U	Y	G	O	T	E	F	O	O	A	R	E	W	N
A	N	I	R	A	B	R	A	B	C	C	Y	S	J	C

ARISTOCRAT
BARBARINA
BARTOLO
BASILIO

BUFFONERY
CHERUBINO
COMEDY
COUNT

COUNTESS
CURZIO
FIGARO
MARCELLINA

SERVANTS
SUSANNA