

AFTER SCHOOL OPERAS

What's Different?

This section explains the differences between in school and after school operas

The Role of the Drama Specialist/Lead Teacher: In the after school setting, the drama specialist becomes “the boss.” Meaning, that the drama specialist not only fulfills all of their usual duties, but they perform the role of teacher as well. It is the drama specialist’s responsibility to oversee every aspect of the creative process from beginning to end. The drama specialist must be in attendance everyday and make sure that nothing is overlooked. This means that the drama specialist is accountable for props and costumes etc.

It’s also strongly recommended for the drama specialist to ‘check out’ their classroom and performance spaces early on. Just to make sure that everything is in order and the space compatible to work in. What is considered suitable classroom space to one person may be something quite different to another. You need to make certain that you are prepared. You never know what you might find behind a stage curtain, or the situation may very well be that you do not have a stage at all and you must create a performance space. This is why it’s essential to visit your site, meet those involved and check out your space before your class meets for the first time.



Another one of the drama specialist’s jobs is to communicate with all involved and make sure that everyone is on the same page early on. The drama specialist will interface with, the students, the site coordinator, the music specialist, the art specialist, the school administrators, the UFO education department, and more than likely the parents. It is imperative that the drama specialist *preplan*, instigate open lines of communication, and be professional.

The drama specialist has a great need to gain the respect of the students from the beginning, especially in the after school program. The more prepared and professional you are from the onset the less behavior problems you should expect in the long run. We advocate having a contract for your students to be handed out and reviewed on the first day of class.

This contract should outline your expectations of the students and define the opera rules. It’s a good idea to have the students return the contract to you with their signature and their parent’s signature within the first few days of opera class. We also suggest that you post a copy of this contract in your classroom. When the students return the signed form, you now have a binding contract. Therefore, if the student misbehaves or violates one of the opera rules, all you need to do is point to the contract, identify which rule has been violated and remind the student that they agreed to those guidelines. Review the rules at the end of each class period to ensure all the rules have been kept each session.

Here is an example of a proposed student contract:



Great Expectations



- 1) *One of the most important elements of the opera program is commitment. This is a community effort and in order to succeed in creating the best production possible, the ENTIRE community must participate. ?*
?
- 2) *We expect to see you present and participating during every meeting. If you know that you are going to be absent, please let the administration know in advance. No more than two absences will be allowed.?*
?
- 3) *Respect your instructors and fellow students.?*
?
- 4) *Arrive promptly and leave at the appropriate time. ??*
- 5) *HAVE FUN, this is a creative experience! There are no wrong answers.?*
- 6) *Etiquette:?*
 - ?? *Respect the premises; do not injure, mar, or in any way deface the facility.*
 - ?? *Keep the classroom in its original state of cleanliness.?*
 - ?? *Remain in your assigned space. Do not wander through the building.?*
 - ? *Do not disturb members of other after school programs.?*
 - ? *No gum, food or drink.?*

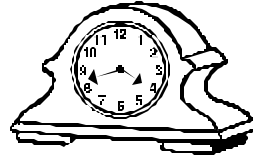
LAWS TO LIVE BY:

- A- No One Gets Hurt (Physically or Emotionally)!**
- B- Treat Everyone With Respect!**
- C- Everyone Participates!**
- D- This is your opera- OWN IT!**
- E- Nothing Vulgar or Disgusting!**

STUDENT SIGNATURE _____

PARENT SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____



Writing the Story: You will soon find that time is a very precious commodity in the after-school opera program and this in turn usually affects the story-writing process. Therefore, it is a great idea for the drama specialist to come prepared with a list of possible *non-copyrighted* story titles on the first day. These stories could include fables, folklore, or even fairytales. If the students do choose to use one of these already existing *non-copyrighted* stories, then much time in the process will be saved. The already existing story provides a nice framework and beginning point, with characters, setting and all.

It is recommended that students write a sequel to an already existing *non-copyrighted* story or create their own version of a fractured fairy tale. This is recommended because it allows students to exercise their creative freedom.

Since this is an after school program, you can usually expect to have quite a range of ages in your group. Typically, you will not have a set curriculum for an after school group and thus stories do not need to be based on course content standards. With a broad range of ages, it is always a good idea for the drama specialist to come prepared with a variety of activities. This includes age appropriate theatre games as well as different ways of presenting aspects of the opera process.

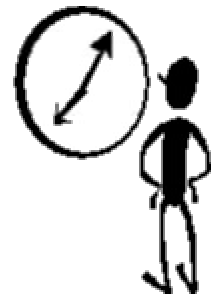


Group work will become your best friend in the after school program. You can split them into groups by age, putting the younger students together and the older students together, or you mix and match and let the older students be mentors for the younger students. Both ways are appropriate.



Voting: Remembering that time is typically limited in an after school setting, it is permissible for the drama specialist to “lead” the voting somewhat. One way to do this is to initially put a cap on how many ideas you will take for a certain topic. If the students do seem to be getting off track it is vital for the drama specialist to point that out and help to get back on the rail. In other words, the *Spirit of the Law is more important than the Letter of the Law*. Therefore, use your own judgment, just try and make sure that all students have the opportunity to be recognized and make their ideas known.

Timeframe: It has been mentioned before that *preplanning* is key. It is strongly suggested that the drama specialist create a proposed timeframe for her opera class. This timeframe should be shared with all specialists, students, and volunteers working with the opera. It is also a good idea to apprise the parents of red-letter dates (i.e. art days – which are typically much longer than regular days, and performances including times and locations etc.). These proposals can be subject to change but it is best if the performance and art dates are solid from the beginning.



Here is an example of a proposed timeframe:

<p><u>Day 1 – Intro to Opera/Musical Theatre.</u> Instructor: (Drama Specialist)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Go over student contract ? Theatre game ? What is opera ? Opera highlights video ? Watch video-clips of good current musicals <p>Assignment: Watch another video if possible (make suggestions, check out from the library, make them available if possible) Ponder the elements of a musical play.</p>
<p><u>Day 2 – Begin to write the story.</u> Instructor: (Drama Specialist)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✍ What is the problem? ✍ Choose Characters, setting, time <p>Assignment: Imagine a solution to the problem</p>
<p><u>Day 3 – Finish writing the story.</u> Instructor: (Drama Specialist)</p> <p>Select the solution to the problem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✍ Finish writing the story. ✍ Split story into three distinct scenes. <p>Assignment: Be thinking of characters in terms of who needs to speak and what should they say in order to tell the story in play-form.</p>
<p><u>Day 4 – Begin to turn it into a play</u> Instructor: (Drama Specialist)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Discuss character development through dialogue ? Start on dialogue for scene one all together as a class ? Split into 3 groups and assign each group a scene to work on the dialogue <p>Assignment: Think about what types of music would best portray different sections of your dialogue.</p>
<p><u>Day 5 - Finish dialogue for Scenes 2 and 3</u> Instructor: (Drama and Music Specialist)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Continue to create dialogue for the characters ? Consider where songs will go ? Expand the dialogue where necessary <p>Assignment: Imagine the personalities of the characters. Be thinking of where duets, choruses, solos and other songs might be inserted to tell “how the characters are feeling.”</p>
<p><u>Day 6 - Begin Music Composition</u> Instructor: (Music Specialist)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Discuss basics of composition ? Select appropriate places for songs and dances. ? Compose a short song for one or two characters in Scene one. <p>Assignment: Imagine songs for other characters. Envision an appropriate place for a good all-cast dance.</p> <p><i>Students who are interested in music notation could arrange a separate time to study either <u>Finale</u> program with their music specialist. They may choose to write the accompaniment for the musical. Students who are interested in forming a small orchestra to accompany the opera should make this known at this time.</i></p>
<p><u>Day 7 – Finish composing songs for Scenes 2 and 3.</u> Instructor: (Music Specialist)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Finish Composing songs ? Discuss the elements of creating scenery <p>Assignment: Visualize the appearance of the characters and the sets. Make small drawings to bring to the next meeting.</p>
<p><u>Day 8 – Sets and Scenery</u> Instructor: (Visual Art Specialist)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Present ideas to Visual Artists ? Build and paint the sets <p>Assignment: Decide if you want to assist with choreography. If so, come prepared to dance next meeting. Think about ideas and assisting with costumes.</p>
<p><u>Day 9 –Preparing for Auditions</u> Instructor: (Music and Drama Specialists)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Go over score with students ? Make adjustments if needed

?	Sign up for auditions
<i>Assignment:</i> Listen to recording of songs. Prepare to audition.	
<u>Day 10 – Sing-through & Auditions</u>	
Instructor: (Drama and Music specialists)	
?	Talk about Characterization
?	Read and Sing through audition pieces as a class
?	Begin Auditions
?	Audition for the group for any part desired – may audition for more than one.
<u>Day 11 – Continue Auditions</u>	
Instructor: (Drama and Music specialists)	
?	Theatre warm-up
?	Resume Auditions
<u>Day 12 – Choreography</u>	
Instructor: (Dance Specialist)	
?	Those who are interested will participate in creating at least one dance for the group – or for part of the group – dependent up on what has been decided during the composition phase.
<i>Assignment:</i> Plan how your character should be costumed. Create a sketch at home and bring to class tomorrow. Prepare or bring costume materials from home if possible.	
<u>Day 13 – Choreography</u>	
Instructor: (Dance Specialist)	
?	Everyone will participate in learning and practicing the dance(s)
<i>If you are interested in assisting members of the cast in preparation of their costume, make this known.</i>	
<u>Day 14 – Staging</u>	
Instructor: (Drama Specialist)	
?	Basic Stage history and stage directions
?	Discuss elements of staging
?	Stage Scene 1
<i>Assignment:</i> Rehearse and memorize words and songs at home. Continue preparations for costume.	
<u>Day 15 – Staging</u>	
Instructor: (Drama Specialist)	
?	Stage Scenes 2 and 3
<i>Assignment:</i> Rehearse and memorize words and songs at home. Continue preparations for costume.	
<u>Day 16, 17, 18 Rehearse</u>	
Instructor: (Drama Specialist)	
?	Run through show with music
?	Discuss
?	Run through again
Instructors: (Drama and Music Specialists)	
<u>May 21 Perform</u>	
?	Perform for school and possibly in the evening for parents
?	Cast party



Congratulations!

